Aliento, Appui, Zuspruch, Encouragement:
Supporting Plurilingual Language Learners in Ontario French Classrooms

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Abstract

Inclusive practices for all learners involve perspectives from educators that currently combine theory and practice. The research looked to in-service Ontario Core French educators for their beliefs and insight into their practice teaching plurilingual learners. Their insight provides a deeper understanding of the linguistic and cultural diversity in Ontario French language classrooms. Participants described their first-hand experiences with plurilingual learners during semi-structured qualitative interviews. Additionally, participants shared strategies that validated individual experiences in the classroom, drawing on learners’ cultural and linguistic backgrounds. They also addressed notions of exchange, learning with and from language learners. Working with learners of varying linguistic and cultural heritage, they were able to identify and implement plurilingual pedagogies - strategies that allow all learners to form connections in their dominant language. In closing, implications provide potential explanations for educators with plurilingual learners in the classroom. In keeping with plurilingual pedagogies, recommendations include partnerships with the school community, parents and school staff included.

Key Words: plurilingualism, plurilingual pedagogies, home language validation, minority languages
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# Table of Contents

Abstract ii
Acknowledgements iii
Table of Contents iv
Preface: Language and Vocabulary Choices 1
Chapter One: Introduction 2
  1.0 Research Context 2
  1.1 Articulation of the Research Problem 5
  1.2 Purpose of the Study 8
  1.3 Research Questions 9
  1.4 Reflexive Positioning Statement 9
  1.5 Overview of the Master of Teaching Research Project 10
Chapter Two: Literature Review 11
  2.0 Introduction 11
  2.1 Plurilingualism and Language Acquisition 11
    2.1.1 Language acquisition of plurilingual learners 11
    2.1.2 Plurilingual learners and home language inclusion 17
  2.2 Language Teaching Methods in the Ontario Context 21
    2.2.1 Communicative language teaching and plurilingual learners 22
    2.2.2 Plurilingual Pedagogies 24
    2.2.3 Supporting language minority learners 26
  2.3 Language Access for Plurilingual Language Learners in the Canadian Context 27
  2.4 Conclusion 28
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter Three: Research Methodology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.0 Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Research Approach and Procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Instruments of Data Collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.1 Sampling criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.2 Participant recruitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.3 Participant biographies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Data Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 Ethical Review Procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.1 Informed consent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6 Methodological Limitations and Strengths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7 Conclusion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter Four: Research Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.0 Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Language Educators Foster Understandings of Plurilingual Learners' Linguistic and Cultural Heritage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.1. FLL educators foster understandings of learners’ linguistic and cultural heritage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.2 FLL educators share their language learning experiences to build connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.3 Co-curricular activities foster spaces for learner and educator to share</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Plurilingual Pedagogies Allow Language Educators to Maintain Instruction in the Language of Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.1 Plurilingual pedagogies help overcome perceived language barriers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2.2 Peer and home language support in plurilingual learning environments 58

4.3 Language Educators Intentionally Exchange Values with Learners to Develop Pluricultural Understandings 61

4.3.1 Language educators aim to create a classroom environment built on open-mindedness and respect for others 61

4.3.2 Educators encourage learners to make meaning through social justice issues 64

4.4 Conclusion 67

Chapter Five: Conclusion 69

5.0 Chapter Introduction 69

5.1 Overview of Key Findings and Their Significance 69

5.2 Implications 71

5.2.1 The educational community 72

5.2.2 Professional identity and practice 73

5.3 Recommendations 75

5.4 Areas for Further Research 77

5.5 Concluding Comments 77

References 79

Appendix A: Letter of Consent 96

Appendix B: Interview Protocol 99

Appendix B: Protocole d’interview 102
Preface: Language and Vocabulary Choices

This section defines terms found across the research study.

Plurilingualism and plurilingual learners

Plurilingualism encompasses various aspects of a learner’s prior experiences, including cultural traditions and norms. In the Ontario context, learners who are plurilingual may also have a home language that is neither French nor English which are majority languages in Canada. They may not have had opportunities to develop their linguistic skills outside the home when living in an English- or French-majority context. Plurilingual learners are speakers of various languages who are able to access languages in everyday conversation and in academic settings. The level of proficiency may vary from individual to individual. It is not necessary to have high mastery of the language in written form or oral form to be considered plurilingual.

Plurilingual pedagogies

The purpose of plurilingual pedagogies is to avoid the instinct of reverting to translation when learners do not understand a concept in a language classroom. Rather, these pedagogies seek other ways of conveying meaning through prior knowledge activation, visual aids, and physical gestures. In this way, plurilingual pedagogies allow learners to access their home language or another dominant language, while still having exposure to the language of study. Plurilingual pedagogies validate home languages and embrace learners’ cultural traditions, validate learner languages, integral parts of their identity. They remove requirements to speak the same language(s) as learners and allow the educator to communicate in the language of study. While educators may have their personal set of activities and methodology, plurilingual pedagogies encompass a set of principles that guide the educator’s pedagogy. They intend to uncover and to focus on learner needs to develop their language awareness.
Chapter One: Introduction

1.0 Research Context

With personal identities shaped by language learning and language education, aspirations arise to find the appeal of language learning in others. In order to do so, language educators draw on learners' cultural knowledge. The inclusion of culture fosters a holistic understanding of language. Language educators know that pupils may continue their own lifelong journey with languages. Languages form connections between individuals and groups. All pupils in Canada should have access to both official languages. Each member of the Canadian mosaic brings unique skillsets and cultural experiences to the community. They should have equitable access to learning opportunities in French and English. The present research study explores the accessibility of French language learning (FLL) to speakers of languages other than French or English, plurilingual learners.

Being a bilingual nation does not guarantee bilingualism in each province. The Canadian Official Languages Act of 1985 presented legal access to information in both official languages. The province of Ontario has a population of approximately 13.6 million people, six million of whom live in the Greater Toronto Area. One fifth of Ontario’s population speaks a language other than English at home (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014). In Ontario, over 13% of Ontario inhabitants identified a home language other than English or French. These inhabitants comprise plurilingual learners in Ontario classrooms. Furthermore, 11% of Ontario’s population speaks English and French (Statistics Canada, 2011). While there is an Ontario mandate to provide legal documents in both French and English, 86% of Ontario residents hold English to be their only language (Statistics Canada, 2011).
Naturally, schools in Ontario reflect this linguistic diversity. Most Ontario residents enrol in the public education system for their Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD). The Ontario Ministry of Education’s (OME) curriculum includes compulsory French language learning to grade nine. At a minimum, the student body will take courses in the Core French programme (OME, 2014). Recent curriculum documents respond to ongoing changes in the Ontario context (OME, 2014). There are several possibilities that might help gain access to French language education, irrespective of prior French exposure. One avenue, proposed in this paper, is plurilingual pedagogies. Plurilingual pedagogies have the ability to respect and preserve one’s home language and cultural traditions.

FLL programmes in Ontario currently use the communicative approach to French language education. This approach emphasizes the development of French oral communication skills (OME, 2014). The home language does not have an explicit role in communicative language teaching (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011). The Ministry of Education (OME) voices commitment to all students (OME, 2014). The FLL curriculum communicates that both official languages play a large role in Canada. They do not present an impetus of home language use. This is not to say that home languages cannot find a way into pedagogical strategies, only that French maintains a level of superiority in the everyday classroom.

The Ministry of Education’s commitment to lifelong learning allows educators to draw on metacognitive strategies. Metacognition enhances the learner's understanding of themselves and their cultures. The Ministry attests that prior language learning experiences can facilitate and accelerate additional language learning (OME, 2014). At the same time, OME insists on maintaining French as a language of instruction at all times (OME, 2014, p. 9). Their statement does not acknowledge the additive benefits of accessing home languages and does not advance
comparison among languages in a plurilingual learners’ repertoire. These techniques would allow learners to form connections in various ways, engaging them in authentic language learning. An activity welcoming home languages includes prewriting or brainstorming activities. Language educators employing plurilingual pedagogies act to prevent subtractive bilingualism, or home language loss (Cummins, 1979; Cummins, 2001). These educators recognize the large role of home language literacy as a metacognitive learning tool.

The FLL educator is the sole consistent model of oral production in an English-dominant environment (Cummins, 2001; OME, 2014). To maximize French learner production, the curriculum encourages tasks that are relevant to student life (the action-oriented approach) (OME, 2014). From a plurilingual standpoint, then, tasks incorporating learners’ available languages are relevant and beneficial in language learning. They are not used to their full metacognitive potential in policy, which then does not reach language classrooms.

On the other hand, research supports the inclusion of minority languages in language learning (Mady, 2010). The current practice involves learning the dominant language according to geographic location. The dominant language in many Ontario schools is English. The provinces and territories have not used their authority to create many formal policies that provide access to official language education in French (Mady & Black, 2012). The absence of official documents to guide language learning in Ontario leads to inconsistent and inequitable access for plurilingual learners to FLL (Lapkin, Mady & Arnett, 2009; Mady, 2010; Mady & Black, 2012). Explicitly incorporating plurilingual pedagogies in language classrooms may help overcome these policy barriers.

Plurilingual learners in Ontario schools may not have the opportunity to learn both official languages. Ontario has the highest immigrant population in Canada. Well over three
million people are born outside the country (Mady, 2007). A small percentage of recent immigrants learn both official languages, while the majority come to Canada with a non-official first language (80%). Afterwards, 83% of those individuals adopt English as their first official Canadian language. Conversely, 3.2% of recent immigrants become capable of using both languages (Mady, 2007). Half of the students entering Ontario schools speak a non-official minority language. The school administration considers learner needs before language placement. In current practice, the priority is to learn English (Cummins, 2013; Mady, 2007). An emphasis on English language learning prevents individuals from accessing French language instruction. The complexity of language learning and Canada’s official language practices suggests space for an examination of plurilingual pedagogies in Ontario Core French classrooms.

1.1 Articulation of the Research Problem

In this context, it is important to continue learning about the experiences of FLL teachers who work successfully with plurilingual learners. Ontario features French Immersion, Extended French, and Core French (FLL) options. This study focuses on the Core French programme, as a Ministry requirement, for all learners. At the secondary level, 77% of students enrolled in Ontario FLL courses are in the Core French programme (OME, 2013a). The Core French objective is to increase a student’s ability to use French effectively. Its intention is for learners to better understand language learning and strategies in order to become proficient language learners (OME, 2014). Graham Fraser, the Commissioner of Official Languages (2012) claims that learners with special education needs and children from immigrant families are often excluded from French immersion programmes, following advice from school boards and administration. This practice is maintained even though the evidence shows that the immersion experience can be positive for immigrant children, who end up learning both official languages.
Mady (2010) stresses the need to address plurilingual learners' integration in Core French, while research challenges the laudable goal of official language bilingualism. The federal government strives to “double the proportion of secondary school graduates with a functional knowledge in their second official language” (Government of Canada, 2003, p. 27, as cited in Mady, 2010). Cummins (2014) cites that no more than 3% of grade nine Ontario Core French students continue with the program to grade twelve. The statistic on its own does not note that many schools do not offer FLL courses after mandatory grade nine. Furthermore, graduates have little ability to converse in French in authentic scenarios, which may inhibit their ability to engage in learning and communication outside of the classroom.

Additionally, few students interact with and in French outside of the school context (Cummins, 2014). Their limited interactions could include oral conversations and the media. After the initial grades, reading in French tends to be from textbooks. Printed text is not particularly engaging for students. With this model, learners rarely seek additional resources related to their interests. Thus, there are few opportunities for students to extend their exposure to French outside of educator-directed learning experiences. Without increased exposure, they are unable to expand their vocabulary and grammatical command. Cummins (2014) states that classroom materials do not promote daily FLL integration. Not only that, learners are not encouraged to use and showcase their home language in schools. Learners' home languages do not have a significant role in current FLL curriculum documents. The scarcity of plurilingual tasks may unwittingly exacerbate a deficit to their literary competence. As may be expected, language educators play a key part in these learning experiences.

FLL educators feel unprepared to teach minority language learners who have not yet ‘mastered’ the English language (Cummins, 2014). These expectations promote a selective
practice as FLL classes become designed for literate English speakers. Cummins (2014) also points to school administration's lack of knowledge. Uninformed, they are unable to cater to the needs of plurilingual learners. OME promotes equity and social justice, yet has not published policies for minority languages (Cummins, 2014).

In most cases, plurilingual learners must enrol in FLL courses to access the French language. However, Lapkin, Mady, and Arnott (2009) argue that FLL excludes plurilingual learners. Though open-level courses now exist for learners with minimal exposure to French, there is no requisite to provide these courses in all school contexts. There is no policy to protect plurilingual learners' access to both official languages. While there is policy in place for students with limited prior schooling, its scope is limited to English language courses. Lapkin, Mady, and Arnott (2009) speak to parents’ fear of exclusion from FLL. This lack of meaningful institutional support for FLL is one aspect of student life that has yet to be comprehensively addressed.

The 2014 curriculum (OME, 2014) no longer defines exemptions from FLL courses. Nonetheless, these do occur at the principal’s discretion (Lapkin, Mady & Arnott, 2009; Mady, 2007). For example, there is potential to replace an FLL course where a learner does not meet the minimum French-language instruction in elementary school. Those learners then lose access to Core French language learning. They receive further ELL support in the form of English literacy courses (Mady, 2007).

Plurilingual learners are not encountering the same opportunities as their peers (Lapkin, Mady & Arnott, 2009). Rather, school staff all too often counsel them out of FLL courses. After secondary school, options for FLL include adult learning courses that may not be accessible to all. Regardless of the opportunities to learn French outside of secondary schooling, each student has the capability and right to achieve. Hébert, Guo, and Pellerin (2008) state that “students
whose native language is neither English nor French need to have their cultural and linguistic knowledge recognized, respected, and integrated into school programming and social practice” (p. 64). The exclusion of these learners results in a disservice to the learner and to Canada as a whole.

In sum, current practice places priority on English language mastery. Afterwards, plurilingual learners have entry to FLL classrooms. Current practice speaks to the exemption and exclusion of plurilingual learners, who have competency in other languages that may benefit their overall language development. Schools should offer FLL courses appropriate to their level. In this way, learners would be better prepared to enter a competitive Canadian job market. Channeling learners into an English-dominant stream, regardless of their background, poses risks. Future employers seek employees with communication skills in many languages, particularly in our global context (Cummins, 2015).

1.2 Purpose of the Study

This research paper focuses on Ontario FLL educators using plurilingual pedagogies. The expertise of select Ontario FLL educators provides insight into language accessibility. The purpose of this qualitative interview study is to explore Ontario secondary level FLL educators’ experiences teaching plurilingual learners. The study aims to uncover opportunities that plurilingual pedagogies can create in language learning classrooms. The study will focus on educators’ perceptions of an inclusive FLL classroom environment, pedagogical practices, reported barriers and supports, and reported strategies to build relationships with plurilingual learners. Study findings will include strategies for future educators to implement in supporting these students. With less than a fifth of the population of Ontario communicating in French, the
public education system is a valued entity that encourages learners to excel in FLL. For many students, this can begin in the Core French programme.

1.3 Research Questions

The central research question that guides the study is:

• How are FLL educators reportedly supporting plurilingual learners’ education with the French language through plurilingual pedagogies?

Questions that support the research question are as follows:

• How do FLL educators perceive plurilingual learners’ literate legacies?

• How do FLL educators understand tensions surrounding a strictly French environment and the importance to engage with learners’ linguistic backgrounds?

• What supports and barriers do FLL teachers experience when employing plurilingual pedagogies?

1.4 Reflexive Positioning Statement

I was incredibly fortunate to study with the teachers and peers I met in the French immersion programme. We looked forward to our classes together. Core and Extended French programmes differed, in that enrolment fluctuated. There was no guarantee to have your close friend in the same section as in immersion. However, as I look back at my school experience and classrooms, I notice a heightened sense of being different from my peers. There was no one that shared my heritage and home language.

Learning Spanish and English simultaneously, and later French, resulted in times that I was not able to rely on my teachers to help me make connections between words and larger texts. There were moments where I felt alone in my native tongue, without resources to best support me in the classroom. That being said, I did not experience barriers to learning as have been
expressed by some researchers. According to my parents, the enrolment process was not a
difficult one for recent immigrants still learning English, perhaps as one of my parents studied
French.

I recognize that my experience is not the standard, and that not all students have parents
who encourage language learning as mine did, nor are all principals welcoming to these students.
Additionally, I acknowledge my personal biases as a result of my experiences, such as the notion
that Ontario is primarily Anglophone making it challenging for plurilingual learners to access
resources such as dual-language dictionaries or books other than English. I write this for my
future pupils and fellow educators that are looking for ways to create inclusive classrooms that
foster the linguistic diversity within Ontario, Canada, and the world.

1.5 Overview of the Master of Teaching Research Project

To respond to the research questions, the researcher used qualitative research methods.
They applied purposive sampling to interview FLL educators at the secondary level on ways they
include plurilingual learners' experiences. Interview participants were educators from three
Ontario school boards with linguistically diverse learners and those with a majority of
monolingual Anglophone learners. Chapter two reviews the literature in the areas of language
learning and inclusive pedagogy. The researcher elaborates on the research design in chapter
three. The fourth chapter reports research findings in light of the existing research literature.
Finally, chapter five identifies the implications of the research findings for personal identity and
practice, and for the broad educational research community. The final chapter also points to areas
for future research.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on literature in the fields of education and language learning. Specifically, themes found across these fields and included in this literature review are plurilingualism, language acquisition, language teaching methods, language access in the Ontario context, and supportive learning environments. Wherever possible, studies included in the review speak to the Canadian context. Owing to the broad scope of plurilingualism, the literature review utilises international research, including considerations from different provinces, language foci, and time periods.

Although the study aims to focus on strategies for the Core French programme, it is important to note the emphasis on the French immersion programme in the literature overall. This is still an important factor, as it remains part of the Ontario curriculum. Language learning tools and strategies form an essential foundation for educators who may find themselves teaching any or all of the three Ontario FLL programmes. The literature review concludes with a summary and an introduction to the research methodology chapter.

2.1 Plurilingualism and Language Acquisition

The field of language acquisition and plurilingualism will draw from various geographic settings, including Canada and Europe. The first section discusses literature pertaining to plurilingual learners and additional language acquisition. These include studies with in-service educators in secondary schools. The section then closes with home language inclusion, a key component to creating spaces for plurilingual learners in language classrooms.

2.1.1 Language acquisition of plurilingual learners
Abdelilah-Bauer (2006) brings forth the notion of different learning styles and communication in a new language as a social stratagem. For some, similarities between languages can be beneficial. To others, this provides barriers to language learning. Specifically, Abdelilah-Bauer speaks to pronunciation problems across all languages. That is, being of the same language family or not, learners and educators need an emphasis on pronunciation to communicate. Abdelilah-Bauer maintains a necessity for cross-cultural discussion of dialects and culture. An example is language comparison. Owing to the fact that all languages have their rules and exceptions, these frequent errors may go unnoticed by the learner (Abdelilah-Bauer, 2006).

The educator, on the other hand, will notice errors in syntax from a learner’s best effort. For plurilingual learners, it can be difficult to distinguish words from their various languages and use them in isolation. They consistently make word and phrase associations (Abdelilah-Bauer, 2006). Their minds are not making linear connections between the words and their meanings. Rather, images, symbols, and physical objects for manipulation improve the language learner’s capacity to make word associations. These strategies are akin to conversational development in kindergarten. This train of thought is in line with Cummins’ (1979) threshold hypothesis. The threshold hypothesis states that individuals require literacy in one’s home language before learning an additional language. Once a learner acquires literacy skills in one language, there is opportunity to transfer this knowledge to additional languages.

In order for learners to make associations in a language and across language, their home languages require a solid foundation. This is crucial in additive bilingualism and early bilingualism (Cenoz, 2013). Once literacy is added to a learner’s repertoire, they are able to activate prior knowledge and make connections across languages (Cenoz, 2013; Cummins, 1979; Cummins, 2001). Associations include similarities and differences in pronunciation, syntax,
script, and phrases. In language education, while instruction may rely on the language of study, learners subconsciously and consciously forge links to their home or dominant language (Cenoz, 2013). Without literacy in the home language, even strong language learning environments may cause learner’s overall literacy to suffer (Cummins, 1979; Cummins, 2001). To ignore a language learner’s present linguistic repertoire in order to build on their knowledge would lead to language loss, or specifically subtractive bilingualism (Cenoz, 2013).

In the classroom, it is important to create a safe space that is welcoming and produces confidence in the learners (Bernaus, Moore & Cordeiro Azevedo, 2007). This designation is crucial to language learning, which involves oral components and risk-taking (Reed & Railsback, 2003). Motivation and effort stem from the positive learning environments. Only then can learners focus on the content (Bernaus et al., 2007). This study focused on learner self-awareness, and their findings demonstrated that learners who rate their own language proficiency as high in Catalán also reported high levels of effort outside the classroom. External motivation induced lower levels of anxiety inside and outside of the classroom. The study suggested a positive correlation between self-evaluation of language mastery and motivation. In contrast, lower language proficiency predisposed low levels of language anxiety (Bernaus et al., 2007). The question then becomes how to motivate learners to see the value of language learning. In the Ontario context, this relates specifically to compulsory French language courses and creating an FLL programme that builds confidence using French in the workplace.

Current policy for language learners does not reflect nor recognise linguistic varieties of languages with which Ontario youth have had contact. Nor do they reflect complex social identities that form part of their linguistic repertoires (Byrd Clark et al., 2014). Mady (2012) points to the educator open-mindedness that is necessary to cater to plurilingual learner needs.
This includes those whose mother tongue is a minority language in Ontario. However, the curriculum does include a component of metacognition under each strand (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Metacognitive components highlight ways that learners identify themselves (Byrd Clark et al., 2014; OME, 2014). While current academic research and Ministry policies identify metacognition as crucial to student learning, incorporating this skill into classroom with plurilingual learners needs further examination.

A critical element of plurilingual language learning includes transfer of language learning skills. In Norway, Haukås (2016) conducted a focus group interview with twelve secondary school educators. Participants' language backgrounds consisted of Norwegian, Latin, and English. They had qualifications to teach French, Spanish, or German. Haukås’ analysis uncovered a strong belief in collaboration among language educators. They advocated for cooperation across languages and language groups. However, they did not have a critical praxis to embody this belief. Participants declared that learners were not aware of language transfer skills as they studied English alongside Norwegian from an early age. Despite having language learning strategies available to them, learners are not given the opportunity to develop the initial language skills into their additional language studies, i.e. French, Spanish, or German. Haukås also found that language educators could easily identify advantages in their own multilingualism. However, they did not see the same in their learners. Language educators did not wish to bring other languages into the classroom and disrupt their language learning environment. In their view, languages are separate in the brain and should remain so in classroom practice. Furthermore, participants saw few learners seeking higher exposure to French, German, and Spanish, in comparison to English. They did, however, mention a desire for learners to improve their metacognition in their respective language study.
Furthermore, Auger (2008) conducted an ethnographic analysis in Southern France using interviews with newcomer centres, school staff, as well as collected data through class observations. Similar to Haukås, Auger uncovered high proportions of staff that saw advantages in developing learners’ metalinguistic competencies to support additional language learning. In the case of Montpellier and Nîmes (Auger, 2008), educators engaged in these competencies with learners were actively seeking ways to think about culture and language with one another. While Auger found that newcomer groups found their plurilingualism to be problematic, even a deficit, staff at the centres and in schools worked to combat these thoughts.

Rather than focus on one particular geographic context, De Angelis (2011) conducted a quantitative study across three European countries. They administered a questionnaire to 176 secondary school educators from a range of subject areas in Austria, Italy, and Great Britain. Though living in different cultural contexts, De Angelis found common beliefs among educators. Notably, they saw value in learning languages, however outside of their classroom environment. They did not invite other languages or cultures into their curricula. That being said, the UK appeared to be more open to simultaneous language learning. De Angelis proposed that owing to their varying pedagogical training, educators outside the field of language learning may have identified their own beliefs regarding language learning.

Taking qualitative and quantitative data collection, Garbati (2013) interviewed nine Ontario Core French educators and administered a survey to 76 participants. In their mixed methods study, Garbati discovered that while educators strongly support the inclusion of plurilingual learners in their classes, they equally believe that their success is reliant upon an improvement in resources for plurilingual learners. Not only that, participants shared their perceptions of plurilingual learners adding to their workload. They felt unprepared owing to lack
of training and resources to support plurilingual learners in the Core French classroom. One can infer from these sources that educator beliefs on the value of plurilingualism informs the extent to which they implement it in their practice.

Returning to European studies, Heyder und Schädlich (2014) conducted a quantitative research study with 297 language educators. Their research uncovered language learning and culture as interdependent. Participants had positive notions of plurilingualism in the classroom, though were unsure of concrete measures to include plurilingualism in their practice. In a similar vein, Jakisch (2014) interviewed three secondary school educators of the English language, also based in Lower Saxony. Their experience ranged from three to fifteen years in the profession. They had high levels of proficiency in Latin, German, and English; others also spoke French and Spanish. When asked if they believed English to be a pathway to individual plurilingualism, participants answered that English is able to motivate further learning and discovery, though not the sole language to do so.

Using their understanding of the CECR, le Cadre Européen Commun de Référence pour les langues, Piccardo (2013) conducted research in Canada. Group discussions with twelve Canadian educators in Piccardo’s study focused on how the CECR reflected in curriculum and specifically evaluation in the Canadian context. They found that Canadian educators were familiar with CECR and their positive ‘can do’ metacognitive statements. Their goal was to communicate and bridge in part with CLT, Communicative Language Teaching. Canadian educators held the desire to assist learners in personal goal-setting in a way that held the autonomy of the educator. Piccardo proposed reflection as a means to do so. They also included commentary on the problematic aim of achieving near native-speaker proficiency by the ‘final’ level of the CECR. Though this particular tenet has a role in multilingualism, it is not so in
plurilingualism, defined as varying levels of proficiency in various languages. In keeping with the aim of the FLL programme in Ontario, learner focus should be authentic communication in the language.

While some of the studies mentioned above focused on multilingualism, Otwinoska (2014) combined multilingualism and plurilingualism in a mixed methods study. The first part included 233 Polish secondary school educators in a survey that sought to identify the influence of educator multilingualism on learner plurilingualism. The second part interviewed five secondary school educators in Central Poland. Otwinoska’s findings discovered educators with higher levels of proficiency in additional languages held higher language awareness, including the incorporation of plurilingualism and pluriculturalism. They sought application of what learners knew in the classroom, viewing languages as ‘cooperative.’ Educators with lower levels of proficiency in additional languages discouraged learner use of languages seen as less prestigious than others.

While the studies presented in this section of the literature review speak to contexts in and outside of Canada, they provide insight into educators’ general understanding of language learning. The next section will address the studies explored above and explicitly address the question of home language inclusion in educational settings.

2.1.2 Plurilingual learners and home language inclusion

Scholars in the field of language learning and plurilingualism draw attention to society’s view of diverse home languages as “problematic” (Cummins, 2001, p. 20). Common misconceptions include “cognitive overload, semilingualism (the underdevelopment of language), confusion of languages, split identities, poor socioeconomic status, and the list goes on” (Bono & Stratilaki, 2009, p. 209). Rather than holding languages to be a deficit to language
learning, plurilingual scholarly positioning is that individual’s home languages validated
“students’ linguistic repertoires and plurilingual identities” (Stille & Cummins, 2013, p. 634) and
provide scaffolding amongst an interdependence of the language of study and the home language
(Bismilla, 2011). Excluding home languages from the FLL classroom, in turn, can communicate
a diminished status for minority language speakers (Hall & Cook, 2012). They also point to full
immersion in the language of study as a way to mimic an authentic situation, not necessarily a
reality. In reality, language learning classrooms are communities which invite questioning in a
plurality of languages. Plurilingualism, as defined by Bono and Stratilaki (2009), allows learners
“to develop original and highly creative skills for language use in social contexts” (p. 208). This
is outlined in the FLL curriculum, in that learners are expected to “use French to communicate
and interact effectively in a variety of social settings” (OME, 2014, p. 6). This section speaks to
home languages’ role in FLL.

Cummins (2014) suggests many ways to incorporate one’s native tongue in the
classroom, from learning simple greetings (specific to the student body), to forming dual-
language dictionaries, to the display of student work in various forms in languages for the whole
school community to see. This would increase the value of the school’s diversity and various
identities within it (Pappamihiel & Allen, 2014). The benefits promoted by Stille and Cummins
(2013) include skill transfer amongst languages, not unique to any given combination of
languages. Their qualitative study involved ELL learners in mainstream classes who had just
begun taking French alongside their peers. Each learner’s home language assisted their pre-
writing strategy skills, uncovering “stories that were qualitatively much richer and more
representative of their ideas than text that they could have written” in their language of study at
the time (p. 633).
From the dictionaries, classes could discuss geographic locations via Google Earth where the language and its dialects are spoken, the differences in culture, and the similarities to life in Ontario (Cummins, 2014). Not only that, learners could write in journal entries and prepare plurilingual books for the school library and its future plurilingual learners (Cummins, 2014). These are alternatives presented for those who do not have friends that speak their same mother tongue. In these instances, the educator works with the community to build an understanding of the learner’s language and culture (Arnett, 2010; Auger, 2008; Cummins, 2001; Cummins, 2013; Cummins, 2014; Cummins, 2015; Pappamihiel & Allen, 2014).

The vital components that establish an inclusive pedagogy for plurilingual language learning are recognition of one’s linguistic and cultural identity; providing ways to facilitate this discovery relevant to student lives; establish and invigorate learners’ prior knowledge to the subject matter (Byrd Clark, 2012; Cummins, 2001; Cummins, 2009; Pinho & Andrade, 2009). These identities can foster a deeper cognitive and social engagement beyond the classroom (Byrd Clark, 2012; Cummins, 2013). The literature suggests that learners gain interest when they see themselves reflected in the content and can make connections to their languages. At the same time, teachers’ reflective practices may allow them to explore their own identities and guide learners in this process through facilitation.

Plurilingual participants in Bono and Stratilaki (2009)’s qualitative study focused their view of languages as advantageous, citing language association to certain domains, such as with one particular parent or social setting. Moving freely between languages in social settings provided avenues to speak to syntactic differences and similarities across languages of study. This language awareness provided a “more complete picture of language organisation and has access to various fields of knowledge” (p. 218). Participants cited a necessity for their home
language to make connections to the language of study and understand its unique elements. Using the home language in conjunction with learning the additional language provided avenues for the learners to make connections and further understand the material.

With respect to home language inclusion in the classroom, participants in Haukås’ (2016) Norwegian qualitative study felt comfortable referring to other languages they knew learners had studied, such as English and Norwegian. They believed that as educators, they needed to have high proficiency in any additional language they welcomed into the classroom. Haukås proposed a fear in educators that they would only be able to effectively contrast languages that they themselves could explain or draw connections to, rather than allow learners to make links themselves. Conversely, an ethnographic study in France suggested that individuals who work in partnership with newcomer families combat negative views of home languages and plurilingualism (Auger, 2008). School staff worked towards learning and co-creating with learners. They recognized that efforts from various stakeholders in the classroom contribute to the language learning environment. They allowed learners to think and discuss in home languages where necessary in order to show that they have understood more than they are able to communicate. They also advocate for home language development in the home.

Similarly, educators in De Angelis’ (2011) cross-country analysis demonstrated strong connections across the different contexts. Educators did not wish to invite languages that they did not know. They even believed that frequent use of home languages in general delayed acquisition of new languages. Participants shared their belief that majority languages were more important even when living in a host country with a minority language compared to the world. De Angelis proposed strong relationships between their practice and attitudes towards culture and languages. Educators across subject areas said they rarely made references to home
languages in the classroom and others did not allow it at all. They cited their perception of low cognitive benefits for the learner.

In Lower Saxony, two studies analysed language teachers’ perceptions of multilingualism and plurilingualism. Firstly, a quantitative study delivered a questionnaire to 297 language educators (Heyder & Schädlich, 2014). Participants saw language and culture to be interdependent, as seen in plurilingualism. While they found positive associations between multilingualism and plurilingual learners, the language educators felt that they had to be familiar with a language in order to include it in their practice. Furthermore, while they used spontaneous contrasting activities in the classroom, participants identified this area was omitted in teaching materials. Language educators in Germany seldom invited languages other than German and English, those studied in public schools, into the classroom. They saw positive benefits to language learning, however were unable to identify concrete and routine strategies that welcomed home languages. In a qualitative study with secondary school educators of the English language in Germany, Jakisch (2014) analysed data that proposed English as a language able to motivate further discovery of additional languages. Educators were, however, skeptical of contrasting languages in their classroom and did not see large benefits from such an exercise. Insofar as these beliefs shape language learning classrooms, this study attempts to tie together the monolingual view of FLL pedagogy in Ontario with the variety of individual linguistic needs of plurilingual learners.

2.2 Language Teaching Methods in the Ontario Context

This section reviews language learning methodologies used in Ontario, plurilingual pedagogies, emphasis on French as the language of study, and and supporting learners that communicate in minority languages. In the context of the present study, plurilingual pedagogies
aim to mitigate language barriers between educator and learner, as well as amongst learners. Strategies include gestures, facial expressions, the inclusion of home languages, and visual aids.

2.2.1 Communicative language teaching and plurilingual learners

The teaching strategy known as communicative language teaching (CLT) relates the way learners use their communicative resources in spontaneous conversation (Cenoz, 2013; Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011). It encompasses both the process through which learners learn the language and the goal of language learning. In Ontario, CLT is coupled with real-life scenarios to FLL pedagogy, or Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). It links learners’ experience with teaching so that they may use their own experiences as resources. The authentic use of vocabulary makes grammar points and discussion relevant to their daily lives. The exploration of francophone places can present a conflict to the authentic, action-oriented approach, as the curriculum includes multicultural understanding into each overall expectation (OME, 2014). It can be difficult to make these travel items accessible to secondary school learners in Ontario, though teachers can create spaces to draw comparisons between one’s culture, cultural identity, and linguistic dialect (Moore & Gajo, 2009).

The communicative approach has learners in mind. The Ontario FLL programmes hope to see learners using the French language in authentic scenarios (OME, 2014). However, there are implications for plurilingual learners who may experience the immersion strategy in a negative light. Cummins (2014) speaks to the limited amount of time Ontario learners spend exposed to the French language outside of the FLL classroom, as well as the lack of interactions with the French language in television series, reading for pleasure, and music. By not engaging in French material on their own time, there is little opportunity for learners to expand their knowledge and vocabulary, which would be included in their literacy skills at school (Cummins,
2014; Mady, 2007; Mady, 2010). Without additional dedication, even an immersion-like setting will not have the desired results.

An exploratory case study led by Arnett (2010) included practical examples directly from classroom observations and semi-structured interviews to answer learner and researcher questions regarding use of the French language. This study provided practical ways to maintain French instruction and encourage learners to articulate their thoughts in French. The educator, known by her pseudonym Julie, encouraged learners to use their vocabulary to share ideas in a grade 8 Core French classroom (Arnett, 2010). Julie presents many different ways of producing vocabulary and ideas to the learners through varying modalities: drawings, images, gestures, tone, written, and in oral form. Julie also used praise and positive feedback to help other learners stay on task.

Arnett’s (2010) study presents practical information for educators to see the value and research-based emphasis on the French language in the spoken, due to limited instructional time. This further promotes the educator as role model of the target language in the classroom, coupled with inaudible forms of language to demonstrate meaning. More specifically, the use of learners’ home language, English, was used after the simplified French instructions were too difficult and showcased an adaptation to the teaching, rather than a combined or bilingual-teaching strategy (Arnett, 2010). It is imperative that examples of effective practices are shared with classroom teachers as well.

As Pappamihiel and Allen Lynn (2014) presented, teachers do not always feel ready to welcome other languages into the classroom. The tension of adopting the communicative approach might propel more myths surrounding language acquisition: total immersion is the best
way to learn a language (Espinosa, 2008). Through the use of visual cues, word walls, and gestures, it is possible to use strategies that support all learners (Arnett, 2010).

2.2.2 Plurilingual Pedagogies

Each teacher’s personal and professional identity, professional project, and self-image as language teacher affects how the curriculum is interpreted and implemented (Pinho & Andrade, 2009). One study of Ontario teachers calls for open-mindedness on the part of teachers to teach plurilingual learners (Mady, 2012). The Overview of Second Language Acquisition Theory offers explanations for possible stages in language learning (Reed & Railsback, 2003). Of note is the importance of allowing learners to speak when they are ready to do so (Reed & Railsback, 2003). This further speaks to the four strands in the curriculum, moving from listening to speaking and reading to writing (OME, 2014). It is perfectly normal for learners to stay in the simple phrase stage in conversation (Reed & Railsback, 2003). The use of praise in the classroom can promote learner confidence to begin taking risks and build a positive learning environment for the learners to feel at ease (Kalis, Vannest & Parker, 2007). Further, Reed and Railsback (2003) advocate for deciphering the competency level of the learner in order to best support them.

Myles (2010) presents the different theories over the decades in language acquisition. Interestingly, they reference a common strategy, correcting a learner in their responses, yet this seldom leads to self-correction by the learners themselves as with monolingual children (Abdelilah-Bauer, 2006; Myles, 2010). Language learning is deeply engrained in the use of public speaking and risk-taking (Dobbs, 2011; Reed & Railsback, 2003). As a result, the same scholars caution against overlooking learners’ individual emotions. In order to include individuals in their language learning process, educators would do well to include identity-
affirming tasks. Furthermore, “classrooms that are fully engaging, non-threatening, and affirming of a child’s native language and cultural heritage can have a direct effect on the learner’s ability to learn by increasing motivation and encouraging risk taking” (Dobbs, 2011; Reed & Railsback, 2003, p. 2).

Capturing the physical environment in the target language is shown to provide learners with added visual aids that form part of the classroom (Arnett, 2010). From labels to word walls, a traditional French Immersion kindergarten classroom can be replicated in the Core French classroom. Strategies to build meaning include nonverbal cues, gestures, and images to enhance the meaning behind a word in the target language. At the same time, the teacher in this exploratory study was persistent with their learners. Rather than give a translation of new words for them, the teacher prompted them with clues. In this way, the learners were the ones working towards creating meaning to new words in their vocabulary (Arnett, 2010). This is also known as scaffolding in the educational literature.

This is not to overlook the importance of context, deeply connected to individual learners (Rodríguez, Manner & Darcy, 2010). Writing and speaking tasks, graphic organizers, explicit instruction of vocabulary, having learners work in pairs or small groups, simplified instruction, and learning vocabulary by listening and speaking all cultivate linguistic development (Rodríguez et al., 2010). Interdisciplinary teaching can result in a wide range of skillsets (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Moore & Gajo, 2009). This vision supports the development of global citizenship (Moore & Gajo, 2009).

In Rodriguez et al.’s (2010) study, which involved both surveys and observations during a course on English Language Learner instruction, eleven teachers in North Carolina spoke to their personal experiences. Many shared their interest in taking a course for ELL: to learn ways
to integrate language objectives with their existing teaching practice. The teachers also stated that the districts needed to spend more time reaching out into the community and the learners’ parents as a way to reflect the most beneficial and wholesome learning for their children. The teachers viewed these as essential partnerships. More specifically, the study found that learner context played a large role, owing to the differences between rural and urban settings and the possibility of blended courses, attending to the distance through technology.

As expressed above, effective language teaching for speakers of other languages includes open-mindedness, praise, identity-affirming tasks, visual aids, non-verbal cues and gestures, and activating prior knowledge, including their dominant language, on the part of the teacher. Notably, Rodriguez et al’s (2010) mixed method study called attention to the role that parents play in the whole school community.

2.2.3 Supporting language minority learners

The term language minority learners can apply to plurilingual learners for the purposes of this study, whose native language may not be French or English (Cummins, 2007; Cummins, 2008; Cummins, 2015). The benefits of actively including a learner’s native tongue in the classroom include language acquisition as the brain fosters connections between words, prevention of language loss, interdisciplinary understanding, and cultural competency (Cummins, 2013; Pappamihiel & Allen Lynn, 2014). Pappamihiel and Allen Lynn (2014) suggest journaling in the learner’s native tongue to promote a flow of their ideas, central to communication in language learning even where the teacher does not speak the language of the learner.

Wherever possible, Cummins (2013) and Pappamihiel and Allen Lynn (2014) recommend implementing study partners for learners that hold the same native tongue for further
help in the language of instruction. This may not always be available, due to the school size or individual schedules. Additionally, there are merits to having the child’s immediate community, such as friends and family, help create dual-language texts, whether translated texts or original works (Cummins, 2013). When creating said texts, there is added meaning to discovering ideal images to accompany messages and guidance from the educator.

Dictionaries and thesauruses in the learner’s home language is also highly regarded to further instill the new vocabulary (Pappamihiel & Allen Lynn, 2014). Cognates and word walls are also highly regarded, provided the words are listed in numerous languages (Arnett, 2010; Pappamihiel & Allen Lynn, 2014). Following the threshold hypothesis (Cummins, 1979), a learner’s understanding of a word in their home language can aid their acquisition of new vocabulary and expressions, provided the home language remains activated. After that point, learners will be able to add meaning to words, then sentences, and finally longer texts. Despite these benefits, the literature did not speak to school district focus on providing these classroom and programme resources as well as professional development for teachers and educators.

2.3 Language Access for Plurilingual Language Learners in the Canadian Context

Exclusionary practices have prevented many minority language learners from studying French at the elementary and secondary level (Lapkin, Mady & Arnett, 2009). It was common practice for schools to withdraw minority language learners from FLL to receive ELL support (Lapkin, Mady & Arnett, 2009). At the secondary level, where a pupil may hold high English literacy skills, they may be unable to join their peers in Core French courses, as they lack the minimum hours of French language instruction. Byrd Clark (2012) calls for a shift in attitude, by renaming curriculum documents French as a Second Language, to FLL.
The barriers presented include the exclusion of learners from FLL courses and the challenges classroom teachers face. In the event that learners revert to their home language for clarification purposes, the teacher is encouraged by the Ministry to keep instruction and learning focused on communication in French. Tension arises as the teacher seeks to promote student learning and maintain a French-only standard.

2.4 Conclusion

Analysis of the literature above provided insight into the field of language learning. The literature review included quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods study to shed light on the present qualitative study. The review addressed terminology in the field of language learning and highlighted educator perspectives of plurilingualism. Studies included in the literature review included educator perceptions of plurilingualism or plurilingual learners. Findings indicated that while beliefs matched policy and research, plurilingual pedagogies were not realized in classroom practice. The following chapter discusses the research methodology and introduces the participants.
Chapter Three: Research Methodology

3.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the research methodology and its rationale. The literature supports each section. It begins by reviewing the general approach, procedures, and data collection instruments, before elaborating on participant sampling and recruitment. It explains the data analysis procedures and reviews ethical considerations pertinent to the study. The chapter identifies a range of methodological limitations and also speaks to the strengths of the methodology. The chapter concludes with a brief summary of key methodological decisions and the rationale for the decisions given the research purpose and questions.

3.1 Research Approach and Procedures

Qualitative research provides the researcher with a deeper understanding of the phenomena by discerning understandings from another perspective (Flick, 2014; Morse & Richards, 2002, as cited in Smith, Bekker, & Cheater, 2011). This study of educator experiences seeks to understand Core French classrooms supporting plurilingual learners, however, does not intend to make meaning across all Core French language learning classrooms. This is owing to the fact that the study relies on the participant’s view of their experiences (Creswell, 2013; Mertens, 2015). The information shared in this study will be specific to the research and interview questions posed at this moment in time (Flick, 2014).

French language teachers in Ontario may speak to their experiences in order to illustrate their teaching strategies and planning design that support plurilingual learners. A quantitative approach may not address details needed to explore the benefit to certain strategies in and out of the classroom. Furthermore, the study was not administered in order to establish a generalization from the sample to the total population of all FLL teachers and plurilingual learners in Ontario.
(Creswell, 2013; Flick, 2014). Rather, it aims to integrate the strengths of qualitative research and that of quantitative research by including open-ended and closed-ended questions and the ability to gather detail on educator experiences (Creswell, 2013).

Wengraf (2001) discusses the added knowledge brought about by qualitative, semi-structured interviews. They include shared meaning with the research by participants who are knowledgeable about their experience; additional access to scenarios captured in a single concept, can convey their knowledge to the researcher and are motivated to be honest. These may not always be recounted through quantitative methods like surveys.

This study used a qualitative research approach involving the review of relevant literature and semi-structured interviews with Ontario secondary French language learning educators. The literature consulted was pertinent to the research questions and purpose of the study. The study involved semi-structured interviews to capture a narrative sample of the participants’ experiences. Qualitative research is appropriate when the researcher wishes to gain insights into individual experiences and apply meaning to participants’ practical knowledge (Patton, 2002, as cited in Smith, Bekker, & Cheater, 2011).

The following qualitative methods allowed the researcher to include the interview transcriptions and observations from the interview as data. The data collected enhanced the researcher’s ability to observe speech, tone, omissions, and body language to provide a deeper understanding of the topic (Creswell, 2013; Palinkas et al., 2015). This decision upheld the focus on participant’s shared meaning about the issue (Creswell, 2013).

While Trier-Bieniek (2012) posits that telephone or Skype interviews allow for time efficiency and larger sample sizes, the researcher provided this option for participant comfort. Trier-Bieniek (2012) further states the telephone interview option may show the participant that
alternate arrangements meet their needs. This accommodation has the power to empower the participant.

In accordance with qualitative research design, the following section provides an outline of the interview protocol used in interviews.

3.2 Instruments of Data Collection

In order to gather and process the information from participants, the study used semi-structured interviews that followed an interview protocol (Appendix B). Semi-structured interviews allow closed- and open-ended questions to shape the study, later analysed through themes and patterns that emerge from the text (Creswell, 2013; Wengraf, 2001). Abrams (2010) supports qualitative interviews as a way to further understanding on the topic at hand, relevant to the study. It is important to note that the researcher need not share the research objects or research questions with participants before publication to avoid influencing the participants (Wengraf, 2001).

The interview protocol includes questions surrounding educators’ background, education, experiences as students and as teachers, and considerations when planning courses to include plurilingual learners as well as all language learners. The questions chosen framed the participants’ knowledge and perceptions of plurilingual learners and how to best support them in French language learning in the Core French programme, thereby addressing the needs of the community (Mertens, 2012).

Interviews, lasting between sixty and ninety minutes, were face-to-face and audio recorded. The option was also given to conduct the interviews over Skype, at the participant’s discretion.
The protocol includes four sections, highlighting the participant's linguistic profile, plurilingualism in the school, participant pedagogy, utilization of learners’ linguistic diversity in the classroom, and next steps. There are both open- and closed-ended questions, which characterize semi-structured interviews and allow the participant to add meaning to their experiences (Wengraf, 2001). Another component to the interview guide is refraining from leading questions. Rather, the researcher allowed the participant to describe their own experiences and assign meaning to their answers.

Within the interview guide, the researcher prepared an active follow-up strategy with questions, prompts, probes, statements and other interventions during the interview. In this way, the participants answered at their own level of specificity (Wengraf, 2001). This preparation following the initial questions allowed the researcher to respond to each participant’s varying answers. Following data collection, the researcher began an intensive data analysis to provide research findings (Flick, 2014).

Semi-structured interviews provide an opportunity to hear about lived experience (Flick, 2014; Wengraf, 2001). Additionally, interviews can be used as “a point of establishing dialogue between the researchers and the community members” (Mertens, 2012, p. 808). The researcher designed the protocol to respond to questions and redirect attention to areas unforeseen during the interview (Creswell, 2013). The protocol allowed participants to elaborate on pertinent examples of their pedagogical strategies as well as anecdotal, anonymous descriptions regarding their experiences with plurilingual learners. The questions were intended to illuminate teachers’ knowledge and perceptions of learners' plurilingualism as well as activities and strategies that acknowledge their learners’ plurilingual repertoires.

Examples of questions include:
● What does multilingualism/plurilingualism mean to you?
● What effect might home languages have in the French classroom?
● How can teachers support French learning through different cultures and languages?

This section described qualitative interviewing and its place in this research study. It identified the development of the interview questions (Appendix B), its rationale, and provided sample questions. The researcher followed the same interview guide for all interviews. The following section details the participants that the interview protocol targeted.

3.3 Participants

The participant recruitment methodology involved a reflection of sampling criteria in order to begin participant recruitment. This section discusses the decisions and avenues for educator recruitment, relying on the literature. It ends with a section that introduces each participant under their pseudonym.

3.3.1 Sampling criteria

The interviews were semi-structured with a purposive sampling of four French language educators past and present at the intermediate and senior levels. Purposive sampling permitted the researcher to identify and select participants that may enrich the data collected (Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan, & Hoagwood, 2015).

The researcher identified specific criteria for participants that were consistent with the aims of the study.

● Participants will have taught Core French in a secondary school
● Participants will have significant experience with plurilingual learners in order to speak to specific teaching strategies
Participants must have had personal experience studying and acquiring an additional language.

Through purposive sampling, the researcher sought similar participants (Abrams, 2010). For the purpose of this study, the researcher was interested in interviewing Core French teachers to identify common patterns before and after the release of the new curriculum, as well as commonly shared insights. As well, Core French educators may have further understanding behind student choice to continue or leave the Core French programme.

Other criteria included teaching plurilingual learners in Ontario to provide context for the study and include perceptions outside of the immersion programme. The researcher recognized that French language Ontario secondary school teachers are best situated to provide key understandings of the Ontario curriculum (Abrams, 2010). Ontario teachers follow a curriculum that supports all learners, thus teachers may use strategies that support plurilingual learners and benefit other learners. Plurilingual learners in the schools need not have both parents that speak an additional language to include various teacher experiences. The study aims to gain insight and detail regarding strategies used in language learning that may value diverse linguistic backgrounds in their students.

The researcher also looked to educators that had experience learning an additional language. This life experience may enhance French language teachers’ understanding of what best helped them learn this language and how they maintained this knowledge and practice. It was not necessary that they apply nor share these strategies with their learners, only that the educators were aware of them when learning an additional language.

The linguistic background of participants was of interest to the study. As Core French teachers, they may have learned the language in different ways that help shape their pedagogical
practices. This knowledge can extend to new teachers and plurilingual learners learning the language.

This subsection spoke to the researcher’s reflective criteria when sampling participants that strengthen interview responses (Palinkas et al., 2015). By focusing on sampling criteria that suits the study, the researcher met the research objectives (Palinkas et al., 2015). The sampling criteria suited the research design in that French language teachers with experience teaching plurilingual learners may reveal valuable pedagogical strategies. The following section describes the recruitment process methodology.

3.3.2 Participant recruitment

Strategies to recruit participants included purposive sampling for subject area specialization, whereby the researcher contacted school administration via email to share the research purpose and criteria. This allowed the researcher to stay within ethical parameters, rather than ask school administrators for information. Purposive sampling permitted the researcher to collect the most pertinent data possible. This method also permits “the most effective use of limited resources” (Patton 2002, as cited in Palinkas et al., 2015, p. 534).

Although random sampling can minimize the potential for bias, purposive sampling in this study controlled the influence of immaterial data (Palinkas et al., 2015).

The sampling procedure was also one of convenience, whereby educators may have met the researcher at conferences, with the intention of inviting them to participate in the study (Abrams, 2010). Owing to the study’s small scale, the researcher also used chain referral to conduct interviews with educators known in the community. The sampling method broadened the basis of potential participants that may already be interested in volunteering their time. Noy (2008) argues that the method employs organic social networks, referring to a data accessing
method whereby participants recommend the study to their colleagues. It is used to meet participants and access ‘hidden populations,’ (Noy, 2008, p. 330) such as effective plurilingual instructors. Additionally, social knowledge emerges through the referral process, “viewed as primarily dynamic, processual and emergent” (Noy, 2008, p. 329). For example, teachers may share the researcher’s contact information with their existing network.

Moreover, purposive sampling and chain reaction recruitment kept the study on a volunteer basis without obligation or pressure to participate. While the above subsections spoke to the study’s specific sampling criteria and recruitment process, the following subsection introduces the participants.

### 3.3.3 Participant biographies

Each participant received a pseudonym and shared the following information: years of service, experiences that led to the area of French language teaching, description of the school, and background experiences. The researcher chose to protect their identifiable information with pseudonyms in order to be consistent with confidentiality agreements and respect participant privacy (Abrams, 2010). While they are not the most important questions to the overall study, this information was also built into the interview protocol to establish rapport with the participants (Mertens, 2015; Wengraf, 2001).

Rafael was in their final year of teaching after 30 years. They have Additional Qualifications in Special Education, Physical Education (Honours Specialist), French as a Second Language, and Guidance (Honours Specialist). They worked in two large Ontario school boards in elementary and secondary panels. These schools included Core, Extended, and French Immersion programming. They were also a long-time coach of several sports, specifically volleyball. They came to teaching through gymnastics coaching, believing that they could enact
the most difference with those needing support to improve. They identified high proficiency levels in French and English, followed by a working knowledge of Spanish and Italian.

Mariela was born and raised in a neighbouring province, though did they teach education in Ontario. They are the Department Head of Languages at their school, having held this position for nearly ten years. Their teachable subjects are English and French, though being in an Immersion school, they have taught several social science subjects in the French language. They are an Honours Specialist in both the English and French language. They have been teaching in the French language for 25 years in two school boards, both in Ontario. They are an active member of numerous associations at the school, a long-time coach, dance chaperone, staff association secretary, social committee, and fully organised two exchanges to France without an outside organisation. They came to teaching being a ski instructor, enjoying their time focusing on transfer of skills and promotion of physical education in a social setting. They identified high proficiency levels in French, English, and able to communicate in Hispanic regions.

Julieta came to Canada from an African country and following work and study in France. They teach in Extended and Core French language settings, though has English as a second teachable. They have taught at the secondary school level for 25 years. They were heavily involved in extra curricular activities, such as swimming, field hockey, film club, reading club, le club français, cross country, health club, equitable student support groups, recycling committee, and a botany club. They came to teaching by their experience as a teaching assistant at various grade levels in Europe, including the university setting.

Rafaël Mauricio has taught for thirteen years at the intermediate and secondary school level. They hold an Honours Specialist qualification in French language education. They are the sole instructor in the German language at their school and often share their timetable between
French and German. In terms of extra curricular activities, they supervise the school paper, various conferences as a leader and organizer, as well as other clubs related to culture. They self-identified as a plurilingual speaker and learner of languages, with high proficiency levels in English, French, and German.

**Penélope** has been teaching for four years at the intermediate and senior level. Their teaching subjects are French and Spanish, though recently they have been teaching exclusively French as an additional language. They recently completed the qualification for Honours Specialist in French language education. They self-identified high proficiency levels in French and English, and intermediate level in Arabic and Spanish. They also identified that they are heavily involved in extra curricular activities, perhaps too many. These include: staff band, a committee for FNMI awareness and activism, French oratory contests, and Robotics Club. The came to teaching for the love of kids.

**Cecilia** has been an educator for 36 years. They finished their time in public education as a principal, between three different schools. They primarily taught social sciences, French as an additional language, and math. Their extra curricular involvement included school musicals, sports, and arts programmes. They self-identified their French and English proficiency as high and continuing to learn Italian and Spanish. They built their career in schools for their love of education.

The inclusion of participant biographies established deeper understanding of the data analysis for the reader’s benefit. Their biographies also provide evidence that the researcher followed the sampling criteria when conducting interviews with participants tailored to the study (Wengraf, 2001).

**3.4 Data Analysis**
Following the interviews, the researcher transcribed the interviews and then coded individual transcripts using the research questions as interpretive tools. After each interview transcription, the researcher was able to locate categories of data, such as external instructional resources and those within the school. From there, themes that emerged within the categories from the transcripts became tools to reach the next classification (Wengraf, 2001). The researcher synthesized themes when appropriate (Flick, 2014). The initial interviews and the researcher’s understanding of participant responses led to categories and subcategories during data analysis (Maxwell & Chmiel, 2014).

The researcher drew meaning and observations from the initial interviews, ensuring analysis of the original material (Flick, 2014). The researcher was equally cognizant of null data, what participants did not speak to and its importance (Abrams, 2010; Creswell, 2013). Similarly, absent themes appeared in the analysis (Creswell, 2013).

This section detailed the study’s data analysis procedures and the importance of distributing transcriptions to participants to demonstrate respect and an opportunity to review the material. Moreover, the section described standard qualitative analysis using code and theme development. The subsequent section explains the study’s ethical procedures.

3.5 Ethical Review Procedures

This section demonstrates how the study followed the ethical review procedures established by the OISE Master of Teaching program and accepted by the ethical review board specific to the requirements of the Master of Teaching Research Project. The researcher shared potential risks with the participants ahead of time, as well as ways to mitigate risks. Upon request, participants were able to look over the transcript before publication of the study. This enhanced credibility between the researcher and participants and engaged participants in all
phases of the research, as well as ensured accuracy of data collected (Goldblatt, Karnieli-Miller, & Neumann, 2011).

Ethical risks associated with qualitative interview research include perceived misrepresentation, vulnerability, strong emotional reactions in participants (Creswell, 2013). In order to mitigate these risks, the participants had the option to refrain from answering a question, ask questions before the interview started, and withdraw at any time. Furthermore, participants had the opportunity to read over the transcript of their interview and had the opportunity to clarify misunderstandings or support the researcher’s understandings (Goldblatt et al., 2011). As Goldblatt et al. (2011) stipulate, upon the study’s publication, the participant would have had time to process the “possible problematic nature of the re-encounter” (p. 392). There was also the possibility for a break during the interview or to reschedule.

Other ways to mitigate risks included confidentiality, including any information that could identify the participant or their workplace. The researcher maintained the utmost confidentiality to secure information, dialogue, and notes with any identifiable participant information.

By providing the participants with transcripts of the interview, the researcher demonstrated “respect for participants as active partners through their mutual reflection” (Goldblatt et al., 2011, p. 390). This section also described ways to mitigate potential risks, the right to withdraw, and participant review of interview transcripts. The researcher communicated these methods with participants. The following subsections speaks to informed consent signed by participants, its rationale, and measures taken to ensure confidentiality.

3.5.1 Informed consent
This subsection describes the ethical considerations of informed consent and privacy matters necessary for voluntary participation.

Each participant received ample time to review potential risks associated with the study. Participants received consent forms prior to the interviews. Participants had to sign the consent form before the interview, as described in Appendix A. For interviews conducted over Skype, participants provided a signed and scanned copy of the consent form before the interview. It was clear to all parties involved that data collected for this study would be used for this study alone, that pseudonyms and password protected information ensured their anonymity, and the goals and scope of the study pertained to the field of French language education in Ontario. Goldblatt et al. (2011) stress the importance of communicating this confidentiality with participants. The researcher also informed participants of their ability to withdraw from the study and cease involvement at any time, no matter the reason.

The use of pseudonyms and the right to withdraw mitigated potential risks associated with their participation. The right to refrain from answering any question, the right to withdraw, and the transcript mitigated the possibility of feeling vulnerable during or after the interview.

A password protected iPod recorded audio interviews, with a password protected backup as well. A personal and password protected laptop saved and secured all data gathered from interviews. Participants knew and consented to the data destruction after five years.

This section presented ethical considerations before and following semi-structured interviews associated with the study. The next section speaks to the challenges and merits of the qualitative interview research as it pertains to this study.

3.6 Methodological Limitations and Strengths
Strengths associated with qualitative approaches include added value to participant experiences (Creswell, 2013). In the case of French language teachers, educators may reflect and share personal experiences in their practice that allow pre- and in-service teachers to support plurilingual learners in a way that requires detailed explanations. Through interviews, the researcher is able to build rapport with participants. Questions regarding pedagogical decision-making allowed participants to explain their choices and elaborate on strategies that work and those that are less successful.

The significance of conducting interviews with educators allowed the researcher to access information at great length with details and in the words of teachers. Detail that is lost in quantitative research is added through the interviews (Creswell, 2013). Conducting interviews with educators also provides insight into what matters most to Ontario French language teachers. This can validate their voice and experiences (Mertens, 2015). Throughout the interview process, educators may make meaning from their own lived experiences.

Given the ethical parameters and approval of the study, no classroom observations took place for this research. The research findings may only be applied to teacher perspectives that participated in the study, not that of the researcher’s perceived learner success, analyzed through field notes. Thus, the study maintains its teacher-focused parameters. That being said, added insight of student participation or interviews with parents and guardians could add depth to the topic of supporting plurilingual learners or reveal their choices in the programme.

While the findings can inform the topic through semi-structured interviews, the study cannot generalise the experience of French language educators more broadly. Not only that, challenges arise on the part of the researcher. Mertens (2012) questions whether the role of the researcher should be to eliminate bias through distance or proximity. Qualitative interviews
provide participants with rephrasing questions to aid their understanding, however their voice and tone can influence the participants’ answers (Wengraf, 2001).

3.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter included a summary of key methodological decisions and rationale given the research purpose. The chapter introduced strengths and limitations to the qualitative framework chosen for this study. The following section addressed the motivation for a semi-structured interview protocol, its alignment with the central research question and advantages of this approach, such as detail captured through open- and closed-ended questions, the primary data source. Next, the chapter discussed ethical considerations for participant recruitment and criteria associated with purposive and chain referral sampling in Ontario. This section also included participant biographies and backgrounds. Further, the chapter described ethical considerations, including data protection, analysis, mitigated risks, informed consent, and the right to withdraw. The chapter concluded with a discussion of methodological strengths and limitations specific to the study of Core French teachers’ experiences supporting plurilingual learners. The semi-structured interviews allowed teachers to reflect on their practice, address the theory, and make meaning from their lived experiences. On the other hand, limitations included sample size and a focus on the teacher rather than the learners. The following chapter reports the research findings and its significance to Ontario Core French language teachers.
Chapter Four: Research Findings

4.0 Introduction

The beginning chapters outlined the study’s context, literature review, and methodology. Chapter One articulated the research problem, purpose of the study, and the research questions. Chapter Two discussed literature in the fields of plurilingualism, language teaching methodologies in the Ontario context, and language access for plurilingual learners. Chapter Three explored qualitative research methodology and introduced six secondary school Core French language educators, the participants in the study. The central research question, as outlined in Chapter One, is as follows: how are FLL educators reportedly supporting plurilingual learners’ education with the French language through plurilingual pedagogies? The following research findings discuss three emergent themes from data analysis.

The analysis is based upon six Ontario secondary school FLL educators’ responses in semi-structured qualitative interviews concerning their language pedagogy. Where appropriate, the discussion draws upon literature reviewed in Chapter Two. The conceptual framework used to guide the study looked to plurilingual pedagogies as a means to make language learning accessible to all. The subsequent themes include FLL educators' perceptions of plurilingual pedagogies in Ontario classrooms. The current study contributes to the broader understanding of Ontario language educators’ perceptions of plurilingual learners’ strengths and linguistic backgrounds. Participants’ beliefs of affirming plurilingual learners’ linguistic and cultural identities points towards a constructivist approach to education in the Ontario context. The research study contributes to a broader understanding of learner identities in optional Core French classrooms. The study makes reference to language learning literature in Ontario at this time.
Although participants spoke to areas that align with communicative language teaching and *l’approche actionnelle*, their responses revealed their perceived importance of personal narratives. Their accounts presented a holistic understanding for classroom practice and language teaching pedagogy. The principal themes deduced from the data are as follows:

- Language educators foster understandings of plurilingual learners' linguistic and cultural heritage
- Plurilingual pedagogies allow language educators to maintain instruction in the language of study
- Language educators intentionally exchange values with learners to develop pluricultural understandings

Sub-themes offer insight into findings within their respective principal themes. The following sections introduce each theme, use the data as evidence, and discuss its significance within the broader literature of language learning. The chapter concludes with a summary and a transition to the research study’s final chapter. Chapter Five offers recommendations based on research findings.

### 4.1 Language Educators Foster Understandings of Plurilingual Learners’ Linguistic and Cultural Heritage

Participants argued that there are three essential components to applying plurilingual pedagogies. This section explores the benefits they perceived from requesting information from learners, what experiences educators chose to reveal to their classes, and interactions outside of the classroom. Participants shared their intentional strategies to come to know learners’ heritage (cultural and linguistic backgrounds) and create a safe place for that exchange. These findings in language learning find a place to value the relationship between the educator and learners. The
literature considers the inclusion of home languages (Cummins, 2001; Cummins, 2007; Piccardo, 2013), however the literature does not speak to educators making their own experiences known in the classroom. The findings allow educators to support individual needs. The section ends with connections to language comprehension strategies in FLL classrooms.

4.1.1. FLL educators foster understandings of learners’ linguistic and cultural heritage

Educators expressed a desire to include learner interests into class content as a way to address individual needs. Participants intentionally sought learners’ linguistic and cultural backgrounds to better understand each learner. After gathering information, educators reported being able to dialogue with learners. Participants discussed how their genuine interest in learners’ previous experiences may create a safe atmosphere for learners. The section explores how educators integrate prior experiences, use of home language, and the ability to encourage learners to keep sharing.

According to Cecilia, when educators welcome individual stories, they communicate to the learner that they value them and their ideas. Cecilia went on to share that all learners have the opportunity to contribute in discussions, as they draw on personal experiences. Educators that implement plurilingual pedagogies include subject matter from learners’ lives into tasks and content. Cecilia invites learners to write or present real-life scenarios. For instance, rather than have learners describe items typical in la francophonie, Cecilia provides the option to describe items in the home that the learner is familiar with. Each participant held unique ways to welcome personal experiences into the classroom. Rafael and Cecilia fused individual experiences with higher order thinking questions. Rafael felt drawn to emotional responses. Cecilia and Rafael hold that pedagogical strategies that include learner experiences can promote a learning
environment built on trust. Similarly, educators can include learners’ linguistic backgrounds in the classroom.

Participants offered examples which demonstrated their value of learners’ home languages. Penélope expressed the inability to “study French in isolation,” thus drawing on learners’ home language into class discussion. Accordingly, Rafaël Mauricio invites conversations into the language classroom, asking: “Is this similar to how you might say it in your language?...That’s so cool! Even finding relationships between languages you might think are very dissimilar.” When uncovering formalities in the French language, Rafaël Mauricio is able to draw on their knowledge of Tagalog, for example. Julieta used an overarching theme to find a proverb in French within that theme. Julieta then invites learners to have conversations at home to add to their understanding of a phenomenon. Not only is this plurilingual, using various languages, it is also pluricultural, highlighting similarities and differences among spaces in the world. Julieta, Cecilia, and Rafaël Mauricio maintained that including the home language in conversations demonstrated care for their learners. Mariela encourages learners to share comparisons between their home language and the language of study. Rafaël Mauricio mentioned calling attention to root words when drawing comparisons, specifically to languages in the same family. Participant responses connected to the inclusion of home languages (Auger, 2008; Cummins, 2007; Pappamihiel & Allen Lynn, 2014). Penélope uses the same example each year, early on in the class: the Chinese character for listen. It includes body parts and their functions, such as the ears, the eyes, the mind, the heart, and undivided attention in the centre. These offer subtle ways to involve learners in the learning process. In sum, these language educators believe that connections to learners’ past experiences both enhance the educator’s
understanding and provide areas for learners to explore the language of study and their own languages.

Cecilia and Rafaël Mauricio believe that learning about learners’ home languages and welcoming them into the classroom encourages learners to continue participating in the language classroom. Penélope, Cecilia, and Rafael shared a view that dialogue and questions surrounding prior experiences can provide learners with a sense of belonging in the classroom (Auger, 2008; Pappamihiel & Allen Lynn, 2014). Mariela echoed these thoughts, adding that language educators’ previous language learning experience plays a role in pedagogical strategies.

Educators seek to understand distinct learners. By including questions regarding their heritage, home language, previous educational experiences, and interests, the educator is better able to cater material for the classes and individual appeal. Including learners’ previous language learning experiences can promote dialogue in class. In addition to asking learners to share their previous experiences, in the language of study or other languages, educators disclose their own language learning experiences to their learners.

A recent study in Poland highlighted Polish in-service teachers of the English language and their plurilingual awareness. Otwinoska (2014) reported that after administering a questionnaire to 233 participants in central Poland, language teachers of English valued learners’ linguistic diversity in its promotion of interlingual tolerance. Of these, five secondary school educators took part in a qualitative interview process. Not only did the participants of this study underline a similar notion, they encourage their learners to apply their knowledge in an additional language learning context. Haukås (2016), on the other hand, held qualitative focus group discussions with 12 language teachers of French, Spanish, and German in Norway. The focus of Haukås’ discussion was on multilingualism, yet language educators did not examine
languages outside of the learners’ curriculum: Norwegian, and English in their context. Participants in Haukås’ study made references to a textbook, which they felt did not allow them to provide activities for learners to reflect on prior languages in their repertoire. In the Ontario Core French context, participants allowed organic and systematic opportunities for learners to explore their personal linguistic heritage. These findings are in line with Piccardo (2014), whose 12 participants in qualitative group discussions found positive links between metacognition and motivation, citing learner agency in the language learning process.

4.1.2 FLL educators share their language learning experiences to build connections

In the same way that language educators may seek to understand their learners’ linguistic background, they may also choose to share their own linguistic narratives. Mariela and Rafael expressed that the exchanges between learner and educator as pivotal moments in language learning. In order to continue fostering trust with learners, educators share their prior experiences with learners, in addition to gathering information from learners. FLL educators spoke to their ability to relate to learners, having studied at least one other language. Such exchanges contribute to the class climate and value of a safe language learning environment. Educators share their language learning experiences to provide a sense of attainability to their learners and to provide context for pedagogical choices.

Participants illustrated their value of sharing previous language learning experiences with learners. In Rafaël Mauricio’s view, this is done for the language to “come alive.” Rafaël Mauricio, a language educator in the French and German languages, can relate to formal language learning:

I hope it's interesting that I am a learner of both languages, neither of them is my first
language, therefore I went through a similar situation to what they’re going through, that I learned it in the classroom the way they are, and I can understand pretty much everything, so I hope that's an example to them.

Rafaël Mauricio displayed a desire to relate with learners in their class. Five of the six participants were learners of their language of instruction. In their cases, they may relate to the learner experience naturally. Penélope also mentions to the class that their Master’s degree was fully in the third language they had learned. Penélope and Rafaël Mauricio perceived their language study in post-secondary as a way to showcase potential opportunities. They welcome learners to add to the conversation and felt that class discussion established open communication and trust.

Participants established three distinct ways in which they shared language learning experiences with learners. The first was early on in the class to set up their learning environment. Next, participants provided examples of organic discussion, welcoming learners’ observations and connections between languages. Lastly, participants embedded sharing in their programme. This may include sharing stories or music that reflected their language learning. In the same way that they continue to learn from their learners, they continue to find instances in which they share with their learners. These conversations build partnerships, trust, and mutual understanding. As language educators are able to draw connections between the learner experience, so too can they use their experience in the classroom. Language educators reported that plurilingual pedagogies permit them to tie in relevant learner experience as well as their own. Their decision promotes mutual exchange between educator and learners. The following sub-theme explores the role that co-curricular activities play in building relationships.
Though not a direct focus of the present study, Otwinoska (2014) set out to find co-
relations between plurilingual awareness in language educators and their multilingualism.
Through questionnaires to 233 participants in central Poland and qualitative interviews with five
secondary school English language instructors, Otwinoska found that higher levels of language
proficiency in several languages corresponded positively with language awareness. Participants
in Ontario all had high levels of proficiency in at least two languages. According to Otwinoska’s
findings, there was a perception not to co-create with learners. More specifically, educators held
this belief when the educator did not speak an additional language that matched learners’
repertoire. Similarly, Heyder and Schädlich (2014), conducting quantitative research in Lower
Saxony with 297 participants, found language educators less likely to include languages they did
not know into the discussion. In the Ontario context, participants were able to name several
instances where they shared with learners and encouraged them to draw comparisons to
languages that the educator did not speak fluently. Ontario participants placed high value on
learners making connections by drawing on prior knowledge beyond the educator’s repertoire.
Participants such as Penélope did also express the desire to implement these moments with
higher frequency.

4.1.3 Co-curricular activities foster spaces for learner and educator to share

Co-curricular activities reportedly contribute to participants’ holistic understanding of the
plurilingual learner, providing insight into linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Plurilingual
pedagogies allow the educator to draw from a myriad of learner experiences and continue
building relationships with learners. The section explores participants’ involvement in
environments outside of the classroom, yet connected to the school, as an extension of coming to
know learners and building trust.
Language learning, in line with language teaching, cannot be isolated from the learners themselves. Participants specifically mentioned co-curricular activities, *les activités parascolaires*, as a way to familiarize themselves with their learners and the overall school climate. Cecilia proposed that co-curricular activities provide ways to interact with the learner outside of an academic setting. Rafael shared the belief that co-curricular activities augment an educator-learner relationship. Both participants stated that educator involvement in co-curricular activities allows for a holistic understanding of the learner. In their experience, *les activités parascolaires* were often based on skills and interests that may not be showcased in the classroom.

Rafael and Cecilia spoke at length regarding the relevance of co-curricular activities for learners. Their understanding of co-curricular activities included opportunities for open-ended discussions and a closer look at learner interests. Educators are then able to bring this information into the classroom where appropriate. Not only that, Rafael and Cecilia shared co-curricular activities as a space in which learners may feel more comfortable to share in, as they are surrounded by like-minded individuals who share some of the same passions. Rafael illustrated connections built outside of the classroom that may facilitate trust between learner and educator:

I think it’s an advantage to be a coach and the student sees you in a different role, a different light, it’s a little more relaxed, they probably get to know more what your personality is like, whereas, you can show that in the classroom, but maybe not as much. So then they feel more comfortable with you in the classroom, they feel more apt to come to you if there’s issues, they come to you pretty willingly.
For the educator, there is less constraint in co-curricular activities to following learning objectives. During the activity, more natural conversations can take place, and the learner may be more willing to share information. Cecilia also shared the opinion of learner comfort. Cecilia stated that the relationship develops into an exchange: sharing during activities, bringing learner interest to the classroom to spark discussion, and follow-up at the activity. Mariela extended this thought to bridge learner interests to class or school-wide excursions, viewing field trips as an extension of the classroom. Additionally, Rafael noted the opportunity to interact with learners in different social settings, as well as their parents in some instances.

Cecilia and Julieta noted that connectivity breeds trust, vital in language classrooms. Mariela, Cecilia, and Rafael emphasised trust as a key component of academic success, notably in the language classroom, where risk-taking is more prevalent when speaking aloud. Participants identified plurilingual pedagogies as a way to build connections in the classroom. Penélope observed that learning from previous experiences and sharing with learners’ experiences, paired with reflection, places learner needs at the forefront. Cecilia established the role of plurilingual pedagogies in equity, making language accessible to all learners. Rafael spoke of including relevant learner interests in the language classroom to provide context for learners. Participants suggested that plurilingual pedagogies take learner comprehension needs into account through conversations. The literature made parallels between connections to home life and the community (Cummins, 2001), not other elements outside of the classroom. The following theme demonstrates how participants addressed a potential language barrier between educator and learner.

Thus far, studies in the European context demonstrated high focus on the language educator to meet proficiency standards in the CECR, *Cadre Européen Commun de Référence*
pour les langues (Haukås, 2016; Otwinoska, 2014; Piccardo, 2014). Participants responded to questions largely surrounding attitudes and beliefs in the classroom. Participants in the present study, focusing on Ontario, provided positive outcomes of building connections with learners outside of instructional time. They discussed this importance at length, seeing many kinds of interaction as positive for language teaching and learning.

4.2 Plurilingual Pedagogies Allow Language Educators to Maintain Instruction in the Language of Study

This theme relates to a potential barrier in language teaching: being unable to communicate in the learner’s home language (Pappamihiel & Allen Lynn, 2014). Educators’ perceived focus on language comprehension, here French, includes a multitude of classroom strategies in line with plurilingual pedagogies. Participants reportedly used plurilingual pedagogies to avoid reverting to translations. Educators used some strategies when they found language resources to be inaccessible. Educators first ensure that their class comprehends information in the language of study. Afterwards, educators focus on aspects of language such as culture and society in the language of study, or learning through the language (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011). The section below focuses primarily on plurilingual pedagogies in the language of study, such as French, while the final theme’s focal point is pluricultural understandings.

4.2.1 Plurilingual pedagogies help overcome perceived language barriers

Plurilingual pedagogies reportedly allow learners to access their home language through gestures, images, and creation. Participants discussed plurilingual pedagogies as inclusive strategies that give legitimacy to images, facial expressions, and gestures. Their thoughts are well-represented in the literature, as welcoming learners’ linguistic and cultural experiences
promotes self-affirming identity (Cummins, 2007). The following section addresses plurilingual pedagogies as strategies to make language accessible to all while still maintaining instruction in the language of study.

Focus on imagery and gestures reportedly allows educators to make meaning using the language of study. Mariela and Penélope noted a perceived barrier in Ontario’s imperative to maintain instruction in the language of study (OME, 2014, p. 9). For Rafael, Rafaël Mauricio, Mariela, and Julieta, making meaning without reverting to another language involves gestures, images, and asking peers for clarification. Julieta asserted that “dramatizing it helps them out,” when searching to explain a particular word or concept. Rarely, if ever, is the recourse a direct translation. Maintaining the language of study ensures that all learners have access to the same information; one group will not be at an advantage due to the translation being made available in one common language (see Chapter One). Participants shared emphasis on particular language comprehension strategies, some that were absent from the literature review. To date, learning languages through sign has not become part of the larger Ontario language narrative. While there have been methods such as Suggestopedia and Total Physical Response (Kumaravadivelu, 2006), Communicative Language Teaching, CLT, used in the Ontario curriculum does not embody these strategies, nor does it call attention to facial expressions or gestures as a means of communication. Participants argued that the specific language comprehension strategies below made the language of study accessible to all.

To enhance language comprehension, participants spoke of the importance of body language. Participants highlighted its effectiveness as a language comprehension strategy. Cecilia argued that “all those things help them, acting it out and being ready to live with uncertainty,” commenting on inferencing on the part of the learner. Gestures and use of body
language can be applied to instruction for all learners, a preliminary example of plurilingual pedagogies as universal design for learning. Using the body is also a way to incorporate kinesthetic movement in class, which is yet another aspect of differentiation mentioned by Cecilia and Rafael. On the contrary, building learner autonomy in a plurilingual classroom, as Piccardo (2013) discussed, would allow others to create their own gestures. Rafael, Mariela, and Cecilia noted learner inclusion by having learners come up with ways to describe a phenomena or particular word. They theorize that the use of gestures caters to learner needs in comprehension, as learners are able to make links to their own home languages on their own. Moreover, facial expressions, part of gestures and plurilingual pedagogies, add to meaning for learners when used in conjunction with gestures.

In speaking to gestures, Julieta, Cecilia, and Rafael emphasized the use of facial expressions and dramatization. The intentional inclusion of facial expressions in instructional periods provides learners with cues for their output. Rafael addressed the significance of body language: “Act it out, ask somebody to act it out, use a lot of body language, pictures, deliver messages in a visual way.” Mariela observed learners drawing on multiple aspects to make connections in language. In addition to similarities across languages, Mariela noted that learners rely on facial expressions during vocabulary games. The educator is able to refer to facial expressions and gestures used in class in the future to reinforce their understanding. According to participants, facial expressions and overall body language play a large role in communication. Participants equally found that these strategies can be paired with images as expression.

All participants argued that images paired with oral or written supports may reinforce new vocabulary and ideas. Cecilia shared: “I used to draw everything and I'd make a big joke of it, because I was a terrible artist, so humour was a huge part of how I taught French without
using English.” Mariela outlined the use of images on slides as well as handed to learners to refer to on their own time. Such strategies allow learners to review material and make connections in their home language (Riehl, 2005). While Pappamihiel and Allen Lynn (2014) discuss word walls as physical reminders, their inclusion suggests text translations into home languages as opposed to visual aids. Cecilia spoke of expanding word walls to include images, a way in which learners may immediately recognize a term or object. In this way, Cecilia found a way to include the home language in another form. Rafaël Mauricio and Penélope found it beneficial to reinforce the aural piece of a word with its written form. Using an online platform, they encourage learners to access both forms of new vocabulary: written and spoken. At the same time, often learners need to communicate with others in their home language and in the language of study, which includes negotiated meaning. When learners required further clarification, educators mentioned peers.

Otwinoska (2014) interviewed five secondary school English language educators in Poland, as well as analysed questionnaire answers of 233 Polish educators. Their findings included a preference in English language educators to keep languages separate from one another, though educator attitudes seemed to suggest a value of other languages. In a language learning context, educators were reluctant to refer to languages other than English to engage in language acquisition. Participants in the present study welcomed and encouraged learners to demonstrate similarities or differences to additional languages in the Core French classroom. They did not feel, as participants did in Central Poland, that this would detract from the overall goal to communicate in the French language.

In a similar fashion, Garbati (2013) held a mixed-method study, conducting interviews with nine Core French educators in Ontario and administering 76 surveys. Ontario educators
strongly supported plurilingual learners in their classes, though felt that doing so would augment individual attention in order to achieve success. Garbati’s findings do not coincide with the participants of the present study. Participants citing the implementation of plurilingual pedagogies did not perceive plurilingual learners as an added workload. Nor did they cite lack of appropriate resources, citing images, as well as access to peers and online dictionaries to help one another. Participants in the present study discussed aspects of language beyond its structure, notably facial expressions, visual aids, gestures, and music.

4.2.2 Peer and home language support in plurilingual learning environments

As participants indicated, there is a possibility that educators feel it is necessary for them to be able to communicate in various home languages. Pappamihiel and Allen Lynn (2014) spoke of inclusive strategies to incorporate home languages. Cummins (2007) points to fellow learners rather than focus on the educator. Julieta captured all elements above: “Sometimes there’s someone else who speaks their language, and they will translate, they will help out.” Collaboration amongst peers further promotes learning from one another, not considering the educator as the sole competent speaker (Piccardo, 2013). Educators in language classrooms focus on comprehension strategies, propelled by plurilingual pedagogies.

Another way that the literature recommends incorporating learners’ home language in the classroom is offering dual-language resources (Cummins, 2007). For Julieta’s past learners, these were invaluable, as they cleared up comprehension anxiety and required less negotiated interaction (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). While not all educators can purchase such resources, Mariela and Cecilia recommend speaking with the library to order copies according to the student body. Other strategies participants used included having learners create dual-language
work or visual dictionaries for others. Creative group and class projects allow educators to address funding barriers.

Access to resources that may benefit learners, for example use of the home language in text and media, are difficult to implement and keep up to date. For Julieta, dual-language resources with a learners’ dominant language bolstered learner confidence (Iqbal, 2005). These identifications align with Cummins’ (2007) notion of providing spaces for learners’ home languages. Julieta found that ensuring learner comprehension led to deeper discussion, using less time for explanation. Julieta’s observation aligns with the desire to reinforce learners’ sense of identity in class materials. Penélope noted that some twelve years ago, resources in English and French were most common in Canada, followed by Spanish, perhaps owing to similarities in script for printing purposes. With the increasing Mandarin- and Cantonese-speaking population at the school, educators such as Penélope, Mariela, and Julieta are unable to provide access to these linguistic aids, nor add to the repertoire alongside population shifts in good time.

Home language inclusion is an essential component to identify affirmation. Learners with minority home languages bring an additional set of cultural traditions. In Haukås' (2016) study, educators disconnected their knowledge and learner knowledge. Educators believed that including an additional language meant they needed high proficiency. In France, Auger (2008) interviewed language educators that were aware of home language development. Their focus was additive bilingualism. They actively prevented the dominant language taking away from the home language. Participant beliefs in the present study aligned closely with Auger's definition of plurilingualism. Plurilingual pedagogies not only encompasses home languages. They include collaboration in learning. Each member of the community can contribute their knowledge. Auger
also identified partnership with parents and the community. In doing so, they encouraged further use and development of the home language.

Ontario FLL educators corroborate De Angelis' (2011) notion. De Angelis suggested that language educators have an openness for additional languages in the classroom. Educators in various subject areas believed that home languages delayed new acquisition. Their attitudes inform classroom practice. Similarly, German participants were skeptical about contrasting languages they did not know (Jakisch, 2014). They did not see benefit in such exercises. Ontario FLL educators sought ways to include home languages. They perceived cognitive benefits. They did not see languages as separate entities. Rather, Ontario FLL educators included languages they themselves did not know. This allowed language educators to get to know their learners. They believed that the home language validated past experiences and understandings.

Participants in Ontario related to those in Lower Saxony. Heyder und Schädlich (2014) collected data through questionnaires to 297 language educators. Their participants recognized language and culture as interdependent. Unlike Ontario participants, however, German language educators specified language comparison among common languages. They were less likely to invite home languages that they did not know. Language educators in Germany found language comparison to be spontaneous. When they uncovered similarities, they shared them with their learners. Otherwise, they felt that their teaching materials did not include additional languages. Participants in the present study drew on learners' linguistic repertoire to make connections.

The section above demonstrates plurilingual pedagogies as universal design for learning, incorporating gestures, images, collaboration, and dual-language resources in the classroom. Plurilingual pedagogies not only allow educators to support learners, they also welcome learner
contributions using a variety of forms. The next section further examines teaching cultural aspects of language, using French as a vehicle.

4.3 Language Educators Intentionally Exchange Values with Learners to Develop Pluricultural Understandings

FLL educators perceived learning together and from one another to be part of plurilingual pedagogies. They viewed language and culture to be intertwined. The six participants in the study presented competencies that they incorporate into their practice. They included collaboration, respect, and equity. They shared that their language pedagogy includes conscious attention to skills within and outside of the classroom. Rather than teach proficiency, educators wish to provide learners with the tools they need to decipher messages they read and hear through a critical lens. The section begins with the values of open-mindedness and respect, then moves to social justice in the classroom to promote higher order thinking. Participants shared that they valued these components of language with the intention to further global citizenship and heighten learner engagement with class materials.

4.3.1 Language educators aim to create a classroom environment built on open-mindedness and respect for others

Participants in the study pointed to the areas they valued the most. This section explores open-mindedness and respect in the classroom, seen as fundamental to educators. Participants held this expectation to create safe spaces for learners in the classroom. Mariela and Penélope highlighted this value, speaking to a skill learners could take with them outside the classroom. As an expectation for learners to demonstrate respect towards others, this began with respect for peers’ contributions and backgrounds in the class. Participants had their own ways of communicating their values with learners. In the same way that language forms act as a
foundation for discussion in the language of study, values such as respect and open-mindedness provide the basis for learning cultural traditions.

Educators spoke to open-mindedness and respect, values that they all shared. In their classes, they draw on examples from various francophone regions to compare and contrast. In some cases, learners may see wholesome language use or cultural tradition, as Mariela discussed. Mariela shared that learners occasionally question the need to speak of multiple regions or countries. In Rafaël Mauricio’s experience, learners question differences between their home language and the language of study rather than within a language. In these instances, Mariela addresses their feelings: “there is shame in closing your mind down to other languages, so I do talk about that. You appeal to the kids who know other languages, and you say, it must be done a third way.” Mariela commented on explicitly bringing attention to understandings in grammar, translating to pluricultural understandings. Educators that receive these comments are tasked with clarifying the importance of valuing multiple experiences, while validating learners’ feelings at the same time (Cenoz & Gorter, 2013). In particular, Rafaël Mauricio invites “reflection to make connections on a regular basis...from grammatical structures, talk of gender in a language, [to expand to] tolerance.” Furthermore, Rafaël Mauricio was conscious of the fact that calling attention to distinct cultural practices among francophone regions may cause stereotypes to persist. The educator pointed to explicit conversation necessary in such cases.

Language educators reported direct conversation with their classes as well as introduced material from francophone places. In order to address pluricultural understandings and include metacognition, educators encouraged open and respectful conversation. Rafaël Mauricio, Julieta, Penélope, and Rafael ask learners to draw connections to their own experiences to identify not only diversity in Canada, but in the world as a whole (Cenoz, 2013). Welcoming learners’
cultural experience showcases further ways of living and beliefs. Before establishing such
spaces, participants did point out speaking of mutual respect in the classroom as part of building
a safe learning environment.

Julieta, Rafaël Mauricio, and Rafael maintained that respect and open-mindedness led to
cooperation in class work and discussions. Echoing their statements, Cecilia found that values
surrounding consideration for others, combined with increased confidence, led to increased
participation. These outcomes relate to participants’ intent: for learners to be competent in the
language and be equipped with tools for negotiated interaction. This section highlighted the
educator’s role in addressing diversity through open-mindedness and respect. The following
section speaks to values educators hold resulting in social justice.

In a recent Polish study, Otwinoska (2014) conducted interviews with five English
language educators and administered a questionnaire to 233 language educators in Central
Poland. Their findings underlined plurilingualism as interacting with pluriculturalism, similar to
participant beliefs in the present study. By welcoming learners to bring their own knowledge and
traditions to the Core French classroom, Ontario educators invite learners to share with the
educator and with one another. In Poland, participants spoke to their beliefs of inclusion,
whereas Ontario educators provided concrete examples of this exchange in their classroom.

Auger (2008) also conducts research in the European context. Based in France, they
undertook a seven-year ethnographic analysis near Montpellier and Nîmes in southern France.
They collected data from interviews as well as classroom observations. Auger uncovered that
French language educators share universal components to language, such as courtesy, which can
be transferred to additional language context. Participants in Ontario equally sought explicit
means to share cultural aspects of language across several regions in the world. They invite
learners to use their wealth of knowledge to contribute to their peers’ awareness and familiarity with cultures across the globe.

4.3.2 Educators encourage learners to make meaning through social justice issues

Though the overall goal of language teaching is to communicate in the language of study, all participants spoke to their values in the classroom. Participants chose to highlight social justice issues in order for learners to enhance their cultural competence. For Rafaël Mauricio, the difficulty in language teaching lies in stereotyping. When learners come across information on cultural traditions, language educators wish their learners use critical thinking before applying generalizations. In order to mitigate this, Rafaël Mauricio shares perspectives from varying individuals and encourages learners to look for the same. Additionally, Cecilia, Rafael, and Penélope use social justice issues to understand various sociocultural aspects of language. On the one hand, social justice issues introduce learners to diverse traditions. On the other, social justice issues include critical thinking in the language of study. This sub-theme explores the role of social justice issues in fostering pluricultural understandings, through the exploration of traditions, the provision of meaning in the language of study, the connections learners make to prior experiences, and access to critical thinking skills.

Rafael and Cecilia shared a desire to allow learners to access language skills in tandem: reading and writing, listening and speaking (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). When educators present social justice issues through plurilingual pedagogies, learners access pluricultural understandings (Cenoz, 2013). In Rafaël Mauricio’s classroom, examples include social justice issues and conversation cafés. Rafael has Core French pupils integrate themes and vocabulary from their reading to create an audiobook on Google Slides. Cecilia brought cinema into the classroom, providing an outlet for all learners: music, props, script, acting, manipulatives, etc. This project
created differentiation for learners while they accessed various language skills and responded to diverse materials. While displaying original work, participants report their use of *l’approche actionnelle*, using daily life scenarios: individuals going to the theatre, discussing pressing matters in society, and prompting original work.

Penélope uses social justice issues as themes in each unit. Where possible, each social justice issue is one that learners can relate to by drawing comparisons to their own experiences. That may drive questioning or the items that learners bring up in discussion. By introducing social justice issues in the language of study, educators engage learners in critical thinking. Learner knowledge of a given issue allows them to access information in the French language. Not only that, their attention to perspectives outside their own broadens their knowledge of global matters. Cecilia sought ways to bridge connections between learners’ previous experiences, known to them, and to draw upon them to make commentary on additional experiences. Their intention is to prepare learners for everyday conversation, in conjunction with language functions such as expressing one’s opinion (Larsen-Freeman, 2011). Cecilia shared the belief that “[t]hey want to talk about these things, social justice issues are the hook for many of them.” Cecilia’s comment speaks to learning through language, a prime component in CLT, Communicative Language Teaching, wherein the learner acquires the additional language through use of the language (Larsen-Freeman, 2011). Critical thinking skills were prominent for participants, who see language learning as providing opportunities to uncover geography and global relationships to better understand cultural diversity within a francophone region.

Participants expressed the need to bring in higher order thinking through social justice in the classroom. In Julieta’s eyes, language learning promotes tolerance. Learners do so through “finding humanity” in exploring other historical, social, political, and cultural endeavours. Rafaël
Mauricio highlights patience and cooperation: “exposing new ways of living and beliefs to enact change.” By using plurilingual pedagogies to communicate meaning in the language of study, educators are able to weave in content that speaks to transferable life skills. Cecilia and Rafael focused on social justice themes to prepare socially responsible citizens, such as welcoming individual stories into the classroom and providing learners with the tools to seek information from reliable sources. Participants shared that focus on research skills can help address misconceptions including but not limited to, stereotypes. Educators use a diverse set of resources, including delivery of content and the representation of various experiences.

In addition, using social justice issues involves subject matter discussed in other settings. Learners would have been exposed to portions of the issue, if not in detail, through the news, social media, or word of mouth. Similarly, Mariela and Julieta found that reading newspaper articles or showing a video on a topic learners are familiar with can help build specific vocabulary, given the context. So long as learners grasp larger meaning, Rafael found that they are more willing to join discussions and learn through the language (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011). Newscast videos that use images and include transcripts display a commitment to plurilingual pedagogies. In this way, the language of study is the medium through which learners engage in thoughtful conversation.

Participants hoped that in the future, learners be able to take part in dialogue related to current events around the world. Mariela, Julieta, and Rafael review reading strategies and listening strategies with learners in order to prepare them for situations in which they may need to ask for clarification or may not have anyone nearby to do so. Mariela and Cecilia argued that language proficiency went beyond “making oneself understood.” They maintained that language learning extended to an understanding of social contexts, present in CLT (Cenoz, 2013). While
literature may be used for the reading strand, educators implementing plurilingual pedagogies include information that learners are familiar with, as well as challenge new ways of thinking.

Participants shared that the value of language learning lies in the language of instruction, allowing learners to discover social justice issues to foster critical thinking skills, and authentic materials. Exposing learners to multiple contexts in which they may come across the language prepares them for authentic language use outside the classroom. Through social justice issues, learners create meaning in the language of study. Educators using plurilingual pedagogies are able to establish a learning environment that includes learner experiences, critical thinking, pluricultural understandings, open-mindedness, respect, and access to authentic language.

Looking to the European context, another place with linguistic and cultural diversity, research uncovered positive attitudes towards additional languages at home, yet a strong belief in keeping language instruction separate (Garbati, 2013; Haukås, 2016; Heyder & Schädlich, 2014; Otwinoska, 2014; Piccardo, 2014). As many of the European studies focused on multilingualism, their inclusion of plurilingual pedagogies often did not go beyond comparison of languages in the classroom. In the Ontario context, using the communicative approach and the action-oriented approach, educators would likely have these moments in a direct-instruction situation. Participants in the present study discussed further notions and aspects of language, notably facial expressions, visual aids, gestures, and music. As the European focus brought attention to language syntax, findings in the present study add to language aspects beyond language structure. Social justice issues were not prevalent in the European studies cited above.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter presented the research findings from six semi-structured interviews that focused on using plurilingual pedagogies to support language learners in Ontario FLL classroom.
Each section presented arguments of key ideas from educator responses in relation to the literature, and connected to the supporting research questions. The examination of literature throughout the analysis developed notions of plurilingual pedagogies. The principal themes that emerged from the data included using plurilingual pedagogies to understand learners’ literate legacies; to form language comprehension strategies in the language of study; and to exchange values with learners to develop pluricultural understandings. The final chapter examines implications of the research findings.

Participants outlined several ways in which they support their language learners. They drew examples from the classroom and outside of our typical learning environment. Firstly, language educators that participated in the study presented their beliefs, examples of plurilingual pedagogies, and social justice. The research study, while concentrating on a specific provincial context, adds language educator voices to the broader understanding of language learning and plurilingualism. The next chapter presents implications and recommendations to further support plurilingual learners in Ontario classrooms.
Chapter Five: Conclusion

5.0 Chapter Introduction

To conclude the study, this final chapter returns to the guiding research question and discusses the role of plurilingual pedagogies in language classrooms. First, the chapter outlines findings and their contributions to language learning. Next, the chapter briefly introduces implications for various stakeholders. In further detail, implications speak to the educational community and personal identity of the researcher. The chapter then provides recommendations to other educators and professional entities. The chapter proposes further areas of research for accessible language learning environments. Concluding comments propose reflection for language learning in the global context.

5.1 Overview of Key Findings and their Significance

The present research study sought approaches that make language learning accessible to all learners. Language educators discussed plurilingual pedagogies as the vehicle to validate individual experiences. The following research question guided the study: How are FLL educators reportedly supporting plurilingual learners’ education with the French language through plurilingual pedagogies? Through semi-structured interviews, participants reported strong focus on learner identity and interconnectedness. Personal knowledge of linguistic and cultural heritage stimulated relationships with their learners. The principal themes were as follows:

- Language educators foster understandings of plurilingual learners' linguistic and cultural heritage
- Plurilingual pedagogies allow language educators to maintain instruction in the language of study
Language educators intentionally exchange values with learners to develop pluricultural understandings. Participants’ accounts presented an understanding for classroom practice and language teaching pedagogy. Their contributions speak to this time and space in Ontario. Educators’ experiences differ and resemble one another, yet also echo and contrast with the literature.

The first theme identified explicit strategies to establish relationships with language learners. Participants shared extracurricular activities as an agency for belonging in the school milieu. While educators mentioned the impact of family on learners, they did not present impacts that plurilingualism may have on the school’s nearby communities.

Similarly, the second theme explored mechanisms that provide educators the means to focus on the language of study, French, and allow learners’ linguistic heritage to hold a space in the classroom. Educators encourage making meaning using nonverbal communication, images, symbols, and gestures. According to participants, explicit home language inclusion provided avenues for learners to share knowledge. The language of study and home language invited linguistic and cultural connections. Participants observed higher contribution among learners when invited to provide insights from their home language. For language educators, this outcome stemmed from drawing on prior knowledge, thus legitimizing learners’ knowledge of the home language. They did not express difficulty in maintaining instruction in the language of study. Rather, participants indicated that plurilingual pedagogies permitted learners to activate prior languages. The findings in this theme deepen understandings of language learning pedagogy through various aspects of language communication. They include gestures, music, and facial expressions.
Accordingly, the third theme addressed an exchange of values between language learners and educators. Participants identified strong connections between language and culture. They gave examples of learners using language as a means to bring their culture into the classroom. Their perception of learning in tandem with learners recognizes the value that learners’ languages bring to the class community. Learner interests may then precipitate social justice issues and questions of equity. Participants believed that learner curiosity, coupled with challenging societal beliefs, create authentic learning opportunities. Social justice themes used in class pertain to the action-oriented approach and CLT, Communicative Language Teaching, learning a language through authentic language use. Not only did participants allow learners to activate prior knowledge in the French classroom, they also included topics that interested their learners.

Data from the interviews provided three themes, noted above. Participants addressed inclusive relationships, accessible communication, acceptance of individual experiences, and reciprocity. FLL educators in Ontario found plurilingual pedagogies to encompass metacognition and metalinguistic awareness. In language learning settings, this starting point may result in empathy and community-building. The next section provides implications for the research findings.

5.2 Implications

This section presents broad and narrow implications based on the research study. To begin, the first section addresses implications for the broader educational community. The next section includes implications that in line with personal pedagogy and beliefs as a researcher and future educator. The subsequent section draws connections between implications and recommendations for the educational community.
5.2.1 The educational community

Ontario secondary school language educators may draw upon plurilingual pedagogies. However, they may not plan moments in which they check learner understanding. This may occur during or following a lesson. Beginner language learners may be less likely to voice misunderstanding in front of peers. With this knowledge, language educators may clarify information for learners and establish new connections between additional material and knowledge learners brought to the classroom. Consequently, learners that seek clarification may continue in optional Ontario FLL programmes. Beginner language learners may be more likely to enjoy their learning environment when they are able to share their ideas and feel encouraged to take risks.

Guardians may value the dominant community language. Their children, then, may receive conflicting messages between home and school regarding language learning. Family members that understand other languages may continue to value language learning, specifically both official languages in the Canadian context. Conversely, others may desire their children to advance proficiency in the home language, depending on their age. Guardians may not know how to advocate for their children, following school procedures.

The community at large may be more open to the benefits of learning languages. Such regard may not represent all Ontario school realities. Advocates from the local community may be able to enact change in policy. Curriculum documents have an introductory section on supporting English language learners, yet its place in the Ontario FLL curriculum continues to demonstrate expectations of competence in English before entering the French language classroom. Policymakers may see this section as welcoming, unaware of its implications in perpetuating exclusionary practices.
Secondary school language educators may believe they require working knowledge of all languages represented in their classroom in order to draw connections between minority languages and the language of study. They may not realize that plurilingual pedagogies work to create inclusive learning environments. Language educators may also feel strains of being language advocates in the school. Their lack of support may draw them to colleagues in the district. Language educators may not wish to expend extra energy in an environment that does not welcome languages. They may face demands, as administrators do, regarding optional French course enrolment.

Secondary school administrators may be facing board and community pressure regarding course offerings. Conversations with language educators, guardians, and guidance counsellors may seem overwhelming, given financial constraints and their views of school community needs. As a result, they may impede plurilingual learners from accessing FLL programmes. On the other hand, administrators may embrace language learning and seek resources alongside staff. Their support of language courses may increase open-level French courses in the school.

Guidance counsellors may also play a role in optional French enrolment. They may not see competing interests as creating inequitable learning environments. Guidance counsellors may counsel plurilingual learners out of French programming based on their assumptions. Rather than promote the French language certificate, they may suggest alternate pathways. Lack of communication between these stakeholders may affect enrolment in language courses.

5.2.2 Professional identity and practice

As the study comes to a close, my research does not. There are opportunities for educators to conduct their own research in language classrooms, such as exploratory practice and language portfolios. These possibilities encourage language learners and educators to reflect on
their learning environment. This process, which includes metacognition, may provide a holistic view of the classroom.

In my future practice, I aspire to follow in the footsteps of one of my participants, who leads professional development workshops for fellow language educators. Sharing resources and being well-informed plays a large role in my identity as a collaborative educator. In promoting plurilingual pedagogies and universal design for learning, I will seek opportunities to make my school and my school community more accessible.

In my everyday work, I challenge myself to go beyond implementing plurilingual pedagogies, finding other avenues to share these inclusive findings with others and value my work. In providing a name for their existing practice, I aim to validate their their work. Not only that, in the same way I found that language educators learn and grow with their learners, I hope to create an open dialogue with my colleagues.

For my pupils, plurilingual or not, I will seek ways to make explicit connections to languages that they know and the language of study. Using plurilingual pedagogies encompasses gestures, kinesthetic learning, as well as an invitation for learners to express themselves through these formats. My desire is to work with language learners to find ways that empower their home language. I will make the time to continue researching these topics for my learners, finding ways to bolster their confidence through identity texts, advocating for their cultural and linguistic backgrounds, cross-curricular activities, celebration of languages and cultures, allowing earlier grades to work with senior students, and other means.

I wish to extend conversations to include the community, including guardians. I see plurilingual pedagogies as a way to validate home languages. In order to broaden the discussion, I choose to embark on further language learning and find ways to work with the community to
raise awareness of the myriad of languages represented in the community, whether through co-creating resources or hosting events. Plurilingual pedagogies seek ways to address inclusion and equity, which we cannot separate from the broad community.

5.3 Recommendations

Implications above indicated potential circumstances for language learning in Ontario French programmes. They provide context for the researcher to reflect on theory and practice. The aim of the following recommendations is to present concrete action items for stakeholders of the Ontario educational community. These include teacher education, guidance counsellors, policy writers, FLL educators, and language learners’ family members. Recommendations are as follows:

In light of the above findings and implications, teacher education programmes should address language learning methodologies and inclusive practices. Moving forward, course instructors should consider plurilingual pedagogies, validating learner identities. They should also note the compliance of plurilingual pedagogies with the Ontario Ministry of Education’s emphasis on French in the classroom. Language learners can use gestures to make themselves understood when searching for words or phrases. The action-oriented approach used in Ontario could incorporate theatre as a mode of expression to include gestures and facial expressions. They should open dialogue over time with in-service language educators that advocate for learners’ identities.

Ontario secondary school language educators reported using practical strategies that plurilingual pedagogies offer learners. They should implement additional aspects which might include community voices. Guardians of plurilingual learners in particular would add perspective to language learners’ experiences. Language educators, the administration, and guidance
counsellors should explore avenues such as community cafés for families throughout the school year. The outcome should be to promote familial expectations in Ontario classrooms. This may extend from info sessions to interviews where they families advocate for the child. Educators should also encourage learners to speak with their families or community members and bring this information to the classroom.

What follows at the school level is the role of administration and guidance counsellors in individual course selection. In order to promote a value of languages represented in the school, the administration should organize professional development sessions around plurilingualism in Ontario. These sessions should make up a series over time, for example the duration of the school year. This would allow time for reflection and revisiting questions related to the professional development. Language value at the staff level might communicate this value to the school community. This component should include school promotion in learners’ home languages. A team could work with community and family members to realize this.

The Ontario Ministry of Education should ensure all learners have equitable access to language courses. An inquiry into exclusionary practices preventing learners from having access to FLL programming should shed light on course offerings, such as Open-level FLL classes. The information should draw from various periods of time. The inquiry should include the past and the future. Not only that, the provincial study should make notes within school boards and across the province. No matter the post-secondary pathway, the Ministry should review inequity of language access. The study should include secondary plurilingual learners with access to FLL courses at all levels (Applied, Academic, and Open) and those with exemptions. The Ministry should critically reflect on the positioning of power that languages hold in Ontario society in order to support minority languages in Ontario.
5.4 Areas for Further Research

While language educators may think of four language learning strands (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), such pedagogy may centre on a particular type of learner. In thinking of building accessible learning environments for all, additional research in the field of language education should include individuals who may be low vision, hard of hearing, or that come from backgrounds that follow high oral traditions. In this way, language learners that may have a similar profile would feel supported by their community. Another area of focus would be the inclusion of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) languages in the Canadian or Ontario context. There is space in the field to further review making meaning using gestures, facial expressions, and their role in theatre and literature. Furthermore, in keeping with plurilingual pedagogies, research should investigate an amalgamation of voices. Researchers could create spaces for community voices such as parents, language learners, administration, guidance counsellors, and language educators in greater numbers over time.

5.5 Concluding Comments

Canada offers a multitude of opportunities to interact with individuals of diverse backgrounds. Just as individuals do, language encompasses identity, culture, and history. There is value in cultural competence for all educators and learners. Ontario is home to plurilingual learners and educators. Therefore, their identity, deeply ingrained in past experiences, should be situated in classrooms alongside their voice. One approach to do so is plurilingual pedagogies, taking learners’ plurilingual repertoire to make connections across languages. Viewing language learning as a lifelong process, language acquisition and teaching is a journey in and of itself.

Each step along this journey served a purpose. Though not having personal experience with language exclusion in Ontario, the initial purpose for the research study was to provide
opportunities for learners of all linguistic and cultural backgrounds to access both of Canada’s official languages. As the study progressed, educators’ experiences in promoting inclusive classroom environments led to resources, pedagogical practices, and reported strategies. The research study attempted to analyse seemingly opposing models: an immersive setting in language classrooms and the inclusion of home languages that validates learner identity.

Plurilingual pedagogies are an instrument to language access and equitable schools in Ontario. The study is of consequence for language educators seeking inclusive practices. There is room for discussion of languages as mutually advantageous and transferrable in the global job market. Through this shift, respect for all modes of communication may become reality.
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Appendix A: Letter of Signed Consent

Date: ___________________

Dear ___________________,

My name is Amanda Rodriguez. I am a graduate student in the Master of Teaching program at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto (OISE/UT). A component of this degree program involves conducting a qualitative research study. My research will focus on teacher perceptions and strategies for teaching and learning the French language with plurilingual students. The purpose of the study is to interview educators who work or have worked with students that may not speak French or English in the home. I think that your knowledge and experience will provide insights into this topic.

My data collection consists of a 60 minute interview that will be tape-recorded and transcribed. There are no known risks to participation. I would be grateful if you would allow me to interview you at a place and time convenient to you, as well as in the language you are most comfortable speaking, be it French, Spanish, or English. Alternatively, I may conduct the interview over the phone for your comfort.

The contents of this interview will be used for my research project, which will include a final paper, as well as informal presentations to my classmates. I may also present my research findings via conference presentations and/or through publication. I will not use your name or anything else that might identify you in my written work, oral presentations, or publications. Rather, I will assign pseudonyms that in no way identify you to maintain your anonymity and I will not use your name or any other content that might identify you in my work.
This information will remain confidential. Any information that identifies your school or students will also be excluded. The interview data will be stored on my password-protected computer and the only person who will have access to the research data will be myself and my course instructor. You are free to change your mind about your participation at any time, and to withdraw even after you have consented to participate. You may also choose to decline to answer any specific question during the interview. I will destroy the audio recording after the paper has been presented and/or published, which may take up to a maximum of five years after the data has been collected.

If you have any questions about the proposed study, please contact me at ______________ or the Research Coordinator for the MT Program at ______________.

If you have further questions about the rights of the participants in this study, please contact the Office of the Research Ethics at ethics.review@utoronto.ca or 416-946-3273.

If you agree to be interviewed, please sign the attached form. The second copy is for your records.

Thank you very much for your help.

Yours sincerely,

Amanda Rodriguez, MT Candidate, Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto

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Consent Form

I acknowledge that I have been asked to take part in a research project about teacher perceptions and strategies for teaching and learning the French language with plurilingual students and that any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I can
withdraw at any time without penalty.

I have read the letter provided to me by Amanda Rodríguez and agree to participate in an interview for the purposes described.

Signature: ______________________________________

Name (printed): ___________________________________

Date: ______________________
Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Thank you for participating in my research study. The aim of this research is to explore a sample of French language teachers’ experiences teaching and supporting plurilingual students, for the purpose of sharing my research findings with pre-service and in-service teachers. This interview should take approximately 60 minutes. The interview includes questions regarding background information, followed by questions focused on the school community and considerations of students’ home languages. The interview concludes with questions regarding supports, challenges, and next steps for teachers.

I would like to take this time to remind you that you may refrain from answering any question and that you may withdraw your participation from the study at any time.

As I explained in the consent letter, this interview will be audio-recorded. Do you have any questions before we begin?

To begin could you state your name for the recording?

Section A - Background Information & Participant’s Linguistic Profile

1. Could you tell me a little about yourself?
   a. How long have you been teaching in Canada?
   b. What brought you to teaching?
   c. How and where did you first become a French teacher?

2. In addition to your role as a teacher, do you fulfill any other roles in the school (e.g. coach, club supervisor, advisor, resource teacher, traditional field trip etc.)?

3. How many years have you been working as a teacher in Ontario?
   a. What grades and subjects do you currently teach?
   b. What other subjects/programs have you taught and for how long?
   c. Were there any differences that you could speak to between schools?/subject disciplines?

4. What does being a French language teacher mean to you?
   a. Is this a way you identify yourself? Why/Why not?

5. What languages do you speak and understand?
   a. Do you have a preferred language?
   b. Which languages have you studied?
   c. How did you learn those languages? (e.g., home language, traveling, school, etc.)
      i. Do you consider yourself fluent in X?
      ii. How might you describe fluency?
      iii. Have you ever shared your language learning experiences with students?
         1. (If so) how/in what context?
         2. How did they respond?
   d. How do you think the language learning experiences of your students compare or contrast with those of your own as a student?
Does it affect the way you teach them? How?

6. Do you consider yourself to be bilingual/multilingual/plurilingual?
   a. (if yes) What does being bilingual/multilingual/plurilingual mean to you?

Section B - Plurilingualism in the school

7. Can you describe the community in which your school is situated (i.e., linguistic diversity, socioeconomic status, rural versus urban)?
   a. How long have you taught in this particular school?
8. Can you describe the student body?
   a. That you know of, what languages do the students speak at home?
   b. Do non English-speaking students have supports within the school community in their own language?

9. What kind of value is placed on language learning at your school?
   a. What students typically enrol in elective language courses?
      i. Which specific courses are available in your school? (e.g., open level)
10. Does the linguistic landscape of your class differ from the rest of the school’s? If so, how?
   a. In your classroom or at the school, are there any materials such as dictionaries, books, magazines, computer programs, posters, etc. in other languages other than English and French?

11. How would you say the linguistic landscape of your school affects your teaching practice?
   a. Are there opportunities in your school for students to bring their home language into the school community or classroom? If so, please describe them.

Section C – Participant’s Pedagogy

12. What are you working on with your students at the moment in French?
   a. Is this kind of activity/topic/assignment etc. typical in your classroom?

13. What values underlie your French language classroom?
   a. How do you ensure the students grasp/understand those values?
   b. What strategies do you tend to implement in order to demonstrate ___list values___?
      i. How have your students reacted to these strategies in the past?

Section D - Questions regarding Utilizing Students’ Linguistic Diversity in the Classroom

14. What kind of presence do your students’ home languages have in your French classroom?
   a. Do you find that parents seek dual-language resources? Do the students?
   b. Do you explicitly include or invite students to use their home languages in learning French?
   c. (IF YES) Could you describe an example of a time that you included or welcomed students’ home languages into your lesson plans?
      i. How did the students respond to this?
      ii. Is this something you do often?
      iii. Is there another example you’d like to share?

15. If a student whose native tongue is not French or English does not understand, what might you do to help them make connections (e.g. set up a buddy, offer one-on-one, visual aids, rephrasing)?
Section E - Next Steps and Recommendations

16. In your view, how might different cultures and languages impact the French language classroom?

17. With the growing number of students who speak languages other than English or French at home entering Canadian schools, how do you think this will affect French language learning programming in Ontario?
   a. Does this differ between Core, Extended, and Immersion? If so, how?

18. What advice do you have on supporting plurilingual students for French language teachers such as myself who are entering the profession?

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this research study and your contemplative responses.
Appendix B: Protocole d'interview

Merci de votre participation à mon étude. L’objectif de la recherche est d’explorer les expériences d’un nombre d’enseignants et d’enseignantes de la langue française en enseignant et en donnant le soutien aux élèves plurilingues. Le but est de partager mes découvertes avec les enseignant(e)s et les futur(e)s enseignant(e)s.

L’interview devrait durer environ 60 minutes. L’interview inclut des questions sur le parcours des participants, suivi de questions qui se concentrent sur la communauté scolaire et les considérations pour les langues que les élèves parlent chez eux. L'interview se termine avec des questions concernant le soutien, des défis et des prochaines étapes pour les enseignants et les enseignantes.

J’aimerais vous rappeler que vous pourrez vous abstenir de répondre à n'importe quelle question et que vous pourrez aussi retirer votre participation de cette étude.

Comme j'avais expliqué dans la lettre de consentement, l'interview sera enregistré.

Avez-vous des questions avant de commencer ?
Pour commencer, pourriez-vous me dire votre nom ?

A Les renseignements et le profil linguistique du/de la participant(e)

19. Pourriez-vous me parler de vous ?
   a. Depuis combien de temps enseignez-vous en Canada ?
   b. Comment en êtes-vous venu à l'enseignement ?
   c. Comment et où êtes-vous devenu enseignant de la langue française ?

20. Quels autres rôles avez-vous à l’école, à part d’être enseignant(e) ? (e.g. entraîneur/entraîneuse, superviseur d’un/des club(s), conseiller/conseillère, excursions…)

21. Depuis combien d’années enseignez-vous en Ontario ?
   a. Quelles classes et quels niveaux enseignez-vous maintenant ?
   b. Quels autres sujets avez-vous enseigné et combien de temps ? Souvent ?
   c. Quelles différences avez-vous noté entre écoles ou entre disciplines ?

22. Que signifie pour vous être enseignant(e) de la langue française ?
   a. Est-ce que vous identifiez vous-même comme enseignant(e) ? Pourquoi (pas) ?

23. Quelles langues parlez-vous ? Quelles langues comprenez-vous ?
   a. Avez-vous une langue préférée ?
   b. Quelles langues avez-vous étudié ?
   c. Comment et où avez-vous appris ces langues/cette langue ? (e.g., à la maison, en voyageant, à l’école, etc.)
      i. Est-ce que vous diriez que vous parlez la langue _____ couramment ?
      ii. Comment décrivez vous l’aisance avec une langue ?
      iii. Avez-vous partagé votre apprentissage des langues/de cette langue avec vos élèves ?
          1. (Si OUI) Comment et dans quelle contexte ?
          2. Comment est-ce que les élèves ont réagi ?
d. Quelles seront les différences et les similitudes entre les expériences de vos élèves et vos propres expériences d’apprendre une nouvelle langue ?
   i. Est-ce que vos expériences affectent vos stratégies pédagogiques ?
      Comment ?

24. Vous considérez-vous une personne bilingue/multilingue/plurilingue ?
   a. (Si OUI) Qu’est-ce que cela signifie pour vous ?

Section B - Le plurilinguisme à l’école
25. Comment décririez-vous la communauté dans laquelle votre école se trouve ? (e.g., la diversité linguistique, la catégorie socio-professionnelle, endroit urban ou rural)
   a. Pendant combien de temps avez-vous enseigné dans cette école-ci ?

26. Pouvez-vous décrire le corps étudiant ?
   a. À votre connaissance, quelles langues est-ce que les élèves parlent chez eux ?
   b. Est-ce que les élèves qui ne parlent pas l’anglais ont du soutien et des ressources au sein de la communauté scolaire dans leur propre langue ?

27. Quelle est la valeur de l’apprentissage des langues à votre école ?
   a. Quels élèves s’inscrivent normalement dans les langues comme cours facultatif ?
      a. Quels programmes et cours offrent les départements des langues ? (e.g., niveau ouvert)

28. Est-ce que le paysage linguistique se distingue du reste de l’école ?
   a. (Si OUI) Comment ?
   b. Dans votre salle ou à l’école, est-ce qu’il y a des supports comme des dictionnaires, des livres, des revues, des journaux, des affiches, des logiciels, etc. dans des langues à part l’anglais et le français ?

29. Est-ce qu’il y a l’occasion dans votre école pour que les élèves apportent leurs langues principales ? (e.g. dans la salle de classe, dans la communauté scolaire)
   a. (Si OUI) Pourriez-vous les décrire ?

Section C – La pédagogie de la/du participant
30. Qu’est-ce que vous travaillez avec vos élèves en ce moment ?
   a. Est-ce que ce type d’activité/thème/sujet/tâche est typique dans votre classe ?

31. Quelles valeurs sont à la base de votre salle de classe ?
   a. Comment vous assurez-vous que les élèves comprennent ces valeurs ?
   b. Quelles stratégies employez-vous pour démontrer ces valeurs ?
      i. Comment est-ce que vous élèves réagissent à ces stratégies ?

Section D - Questions concernant l’emploi de la diversité linguistique des élèves
32. Est-ce que les langues principales à domicile ont une présence dans votre salle de classe ?
   a. Trouvez-vous que les parents cherchent des ressources à double langue ? Est-ce que les élèves les cherchent ?
   b. (Si OUI) Pourrez-vous décrire un exemple où vous avez inclut les langues principales à domicile dans une leçon ?
      i. Comment est-ce que les élèves ont réagi ?
      ii. Est-ce que cet exemple est quelque chose qui arrive souvent ?
      iii. Avez-vous un autre exemple à partager ?
33. Que faites-vous pour les élèves qui ne comprennent pas et l’élève n’a pas le français ni l’anglais comme langue maternelle ?

Section E - Prochaines étapes et les conseils
34. À votre avis, comment les langues et les différentes cultures peuvent affecter la salle de classe française ?
35. Avec le grand nombre d’élèves au Canada qui parlent une langue à part l’anglais ou le français chez eux, qui est en pleine croissance, comment ceci pourrait affecter l’apprentissage de la langue français en Ontario ?
   i. Aurait-il une différence entre les programmes du français de base, intensif, ou d’immersion ?
36. Quels conseils avez-vous pour les futurs enseignantes et enseignants comme moi qui travailleront avec les élèves plurilingues ?

Merci d’avoir pris le temps de participer à mon étude. Je vous remercie énormément pour vos pensées méditatives.