# DICTIONARY DICHOTOMY: THE AMBIVALENT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NEED AND NONCHALANCE IN FRENCH IMMERSION DICTIONARY USERS

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**ABSTRACT**

This article describes the results of a small-scale study of French Immersion high school students' reported use of dictionaries as a possible means of lexical growth. Students recorded their most common sources of new French words, their motivations for improving their vocabulary, their attitudes towards dictionary consultation and the importance of lexical development. The results revealed a range of motivators for acquiring a richer vocabulary, but indicated an ambivalence toward the dictionary as a tool for improving their lexical repertoire. Some suggestions for promoting classroom dictionary use are proposed.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Vancomelbeke (2004:8) succinctly summarizes the critical need for lexical competence in this way: "*Vocabulary is essential to human communication, and to psychological, social and cultural growth and development*" (author's translation). Just as physical growth is a natural process, so too is lexical growth, and just as essential, whether among native speakers or language learners who hope to communicate. And as for the general public, the dictionary is a source—if not *the* source—of lexical knowledge for language learners (Nation 1989). The dictionary is seen to contain everything there is to know about the words of a language. Unvaryingly, "our everyday concept of vocabulary is dominated by the dictionary" (Read 2000:16). It remains to be seen, however, if language learners rely on the dictionary not merely to complete a reading or writing task but to actively build their lexicon. Do learners believe they *need* the dictionary? If so, how do they use it? If not, why not? In their view, is there a relationship between using a dictionary and growing as a language learner?

That growth necessarily begins with an awareness of the words of the target language. Lexical competence includes knowledge of the meaning(s) of the word in question and knowledge of the use of that word in the construction of a phrase or a sentence, in multi-word expressions or individually. It therefore entails both receptive and productive abilities (Tréville & Du-



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quette 1996). But for some, "knowing" the word[1] and how to use it must extend to *naturalistic* use. In other words, it must involve "the capacity to recognize and to use the words of a language as do the native [mother-tongue] speakers of that language" (SIL 1998). Of greater concern for others is the concept of lexical competence in its holistic sense. For Tremblay (2009:121), lexical competence is "the sum of lexical knowledge and abilities which allow the efficient and effective use of the words of a language" (author's translation). This definition, we feel, best unites the idea and the ideal of lexical competence. Its focus on lexical abilities leads a pedagogue to believe that this competence may be taught.

In this article, we are interested in the language learner's perception of the utility of the dictionary as a contributor to lexical competence. The first section deals with previous research on dictionary use in the language classroom and what factors may contribute to its use or non-use by learners. In Section 2, we describe the context of our research, namely high-school French Immersion in New Brunswick (Canada), where students are expected to achieve certain language proficiency levels. The government-mandated outcome targets and the realities of provincial literacy testing results are briefly presented here. Section 3 details a self-report questionnaire administered to a group of French Immersion students participating in a vocabulary enrichment study, one section of which involved five questions on the importance of personal lexical growth and their own dictionary use. The students' responses to the questionnaire are treated in Section 4. In Section 5, we summarize the findings, and in Section 6, we propose some pedagogical solutions to the problems generalized from student responses in the hope that vocabulary teaching and learning might make room for deliberate dictionary use and subsequent growth in lexical competence.

## 2. THE DICTIONARY IN THE LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

Lexical competence begins with the learning of new words (Scott, Nagy & Flinspach 2008). Language learners have access to an ever-increasing number of lexicographical tools: traditional monolingual and bilingual print dictionaries, digital reference sites, extensive corpus-based learner dictionaries, etc. (Frankenberg-Garcia 2005). Because the dictionary is by nature "an inventory of individual words with their associated meanings" (Reed 2000:16), it is unmistakably the quintessential resource for any language student interested in deciphering unknown words. Even the word 'dictionary' connotes a serious compendium of knowledge about words and phrases designed to typify and represent language. It serves both to help decode the language ("What does this word mean?") and to encode it ("How does one say this?") (Nation 1989).

Language learners with these existing encoding and decoding skills can mine the dictionary for its many riches. According to Lew and Galas (2008), these consultation skills include knowledge of the architecture (layout) of a dictionary article, inference (understanding the meanings of words and other linguistic information contained in the article), phonetic and grammatical

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[1] Nation (1990) defines knowing a word along four axes: the word's *form*, whether spoken or written, its *position*, including grammatical patterns and collocations, its *function*, meaning frequency and appropriateness, and its *meaning*, signifying its concept and associations.



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content such as derivations, verb tenses and phrasal verbs, and that "extra information" (Gavriilidou 2013:139) that allows the user to understand the contextualization of the word in the world. These four skills may be maximally employed if a group of users possesses what Hartmann and James (1998:41) call dictionary culture, that "critical awareness of the value and limitations of dictionaries and other reference works in a particular community". A language classroom is one such community, but whether or not all members have equal consultation skills remains to be seen. For example, Tomaszczyk (1979) held that "advanced learners and speakers seem to know what they can expect of their dictionaries and appear to be getting the most out of them". However, these layers of awareness of the dictionary's wealth may be slow to accumulate in some learners: studies of dictionary use in the language classroom demonstrate that students search primarily for low-frequency words (Lew 2012), those new words as yet unknown. Searches tend to focus only on the lexical classes (nouns, verbs, adjectives) rather than on grammatical words (Atkins & Varantola 1998).

Certainly, it would appear that knowledge of and physical access to dictionaries does not necessarily mean better use of these tools, nor do they guarantee enhanced lexical development. One problem is the lengthy, often opaque architecture of a dictionary article, perhaps the biggest impediment to sustained use of the dictionary (Harvey & Yuill 1997). Along with "poor reference skills and a lack of knowledge with regard to dictionary typology", this opacity is seen as the greatest barrier to proficient use of dictionaries (Carstens 1995: 105). Even among more capable users, word meanings could be misunderstood and collocations misapplied (Nesi & Meara 1994); superficial reading and other mis-consultations can result in "serious errors" (Nesi & Haill 2002). Recent research has confirmed that learners primarily search for spelling and meanings of words, but do not see the dictionary as a tool for lexical growth (Tremblay, Anctil & Vorobyova 2013). They may prefer the rapid access (that allows for immediate understanding) of a bilingual L1-L2 dictionary and are not interested in the "future benefits" of a looked-up word (Laufer & Levitzky 2006), despite its potential strong connections with improved reading comprehension and fluency (Pikulski & Chard 2005; Prichard 2008) and writing abilities (Elola, Rodrigues-Garcia & Winfrey 2008). Dictionary use is intermittent at best and its value, underrated. Too often, the dictionary is treated as a last-resort resource when the meaning of an unknown word cannot be gathered by inference or other means (Schofield 2005:185). In fact, dictionary consultation is, for some students, synonymous with failure (Walz 1990:79).

To date, much of the research into dictionary use in the language classroom has focused on how the tool can be used and not how it is used in reality (Frankenberg-Garcia 2005). Having completed a multi-year study of deliberate and systematic vocabulary instruction and witnessed the apparent lack of engagement with lexical resources in the classroom, we are led to ask, what do student attitudes towards the dictionary as a source of lexical knowledge say about its value in the development of lexical competence? This is the question this article attempts to address.

## 3. CONTEXT OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE: FRENCH IMMERSION IN NEW BRUNSWICK

The reflections on dictionary use and lexical growth described here were one part of a multi-part questionnaire administered to the participants in a wider study testing French vocabulary acquisition and retention (Spracklin 2017). The subjects were 58 Anglophone high school French Im-



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mersion (FI) students attending the same school in Riverview, New Brunswick (NB); about two-thirds had been FI students for 11 years; the others had been studying French in that program for 4 years.

In order to contextualize the study, a brief description of the FI program is useful here. In NB (as in other jurisdictions across Canada), non-Francophone students receive instruction in French, which is at once the language of and subject of instruction. In the 2016–2017 academic school year, of the province's 68,922 students, fully 20,019 (representing 29%) were enrolled in FI. The program is considered an enormous success. Beginning as early as Grade 1 (with students 5–6 years of age in a program known as "early" immersion), 90% of the instructional day takes place in French. Students wishing to begin French studies later may start the program at the Grade 6 entry point (at 10–11 years old; "late" immersion) and are exposed to French for approximately 70% of their school day. This percentage decreases as the students move to upper grades; by Grade 9 (with blended early & late immersion cohorts), 50% or less of the academic school day is conducted in French (www2.gnb.ca).

### 3.1 Lexical Competence in French Immersion

According to the Department of Education in NB, the stated objective of FI is as follows: "graduates will be able to understand, speak, read and write in their second language… and be able to communicate effectively" (L'art du language 2003:35). This expectation means a CEFR-equivalent level of B1 for Late FI graduates and a higher B2 level for Early FI graduates. As for lexical competence, the guidelines state that "[t]he student will be able to employ a well-chosen, precise and nuanced vocabulary" (Framework 2013:28). Depending on the level, students will know how to use printed or digital resources to help in word selection (Grade 8 Writing), they will be equipped to choose appropriate vocabulary for the message they convey (Grade 9 Writing), they will use "a wide variety of words and expressions" (Grade 9 oral skills) and will use classroom tools (including dictionaries) to self-edit their work (Grade 11 Writing) (ibid.).

However earnest the desire to produce effective communicators from within the FI program, annual provincial testing results tell a different story. The reality is that in reading comprehension (a receptive skill), only 78.3% met or exceeded expectations (2013). Writing results (a productive skill) are much more discouraging: only 32.2% met or exceeded expectations for their grade level in the same testing year. Furthermore, lest the textual nature of these tests be deemed a muddying factor, oral competence among high school FI students was at 41% meeting or exceeding expectations (2017) (www1.gnb.ca/results). These worrisome trends occur year after year.

With these results in mind, can it be said that graduating FI students are able to communicate effectively in French? Not in the students' own words. In a recent annual exit survey (2016 Grade 12 Exit Survey), after 6 (late immersion) or 12 (early immersion) years of FI instruction, 61% of graduates said they understood their classroom teacher; only 50% felt "at ease" using French outside the classroom, and fewer than 23% would use French in their daily lives in school or without. Clearly, competence and comfort in the French language are targets yet to be met.

In order to address this problematic gap, we undertook a study involving an original program of systematic vocabulary instruction among FI students. In addition to participating in weekly vocabulary lessons and various assessments of their progress, the students completed a question-



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naire containing, among others, questions on their attitudes towards dictionary use. The questionnaire is described in the next section.

## 4.0 THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The 58 subjects' responses discussed here were recorded on a short English-language (L1) questionnaire of sociolinguistic and demographic information (age, first language (L1)/mother tongue, number of years in FI, etc.) in three Grade 11 FI classes in Riverview NB. Participants were all 16–17 year-old native (L1) English speakers. Along with these sociolinguistic questions were 26 questions on vocabulary acquisition strategies using a 5-point Likert scale, and a set of five free-response questions on vocabulary sources and dictionary use. A five-digit unique code was applied to the responses of students on the questionnaire (as well as on all work subsequently completed by the subjects), in order to assure confidentiality and anonymity. The five questions are as follows:

**Figure 1**

Questions on Vocabulary Sources and Dictionary Use

Q1: Where do you typically learn new French words?
Q2: "When I consult a dictionary, I am typically looking for…"
Q3: "Sometimes I don't check a new word in a dictionary because…"
Q4: "Is learning French vocabulary important to you? Why or why not?"
Q5: "In order for me to develop a richer French vocabulary, I…"

These open-ended questions were framed to elicit personal reflections on the importance of words, of learning new words, and of the dictionary. We clarify that no mention was made in the questions of the language of the dictionary (English, French, bilingual or bilingualized, that is, monolingual L2 with L1 definitions provided as well), of the dictionary type (standard dictionaries of the Petit Robert genre, encyclopedic dictionaries like Larousse, learners' dictionaries, thesauruses, glossaries, etc.) nor of the means of conveyance of lexicological information (print or electronic via apps or standard computer software). Student responses were collated and are discussed in Section 4 which follows.

## 5.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, we will briefly present student responses to Questions (Q)1–2; more emphasis will be placed on student responses to Q3–Q5, particularly as they pertain to the role of the dictionary in developing lexical competence.

All 58 subjects were asked to respond in writing to these five questions. Note that students were not required to provide only one response; the numbers below therefore reflect the



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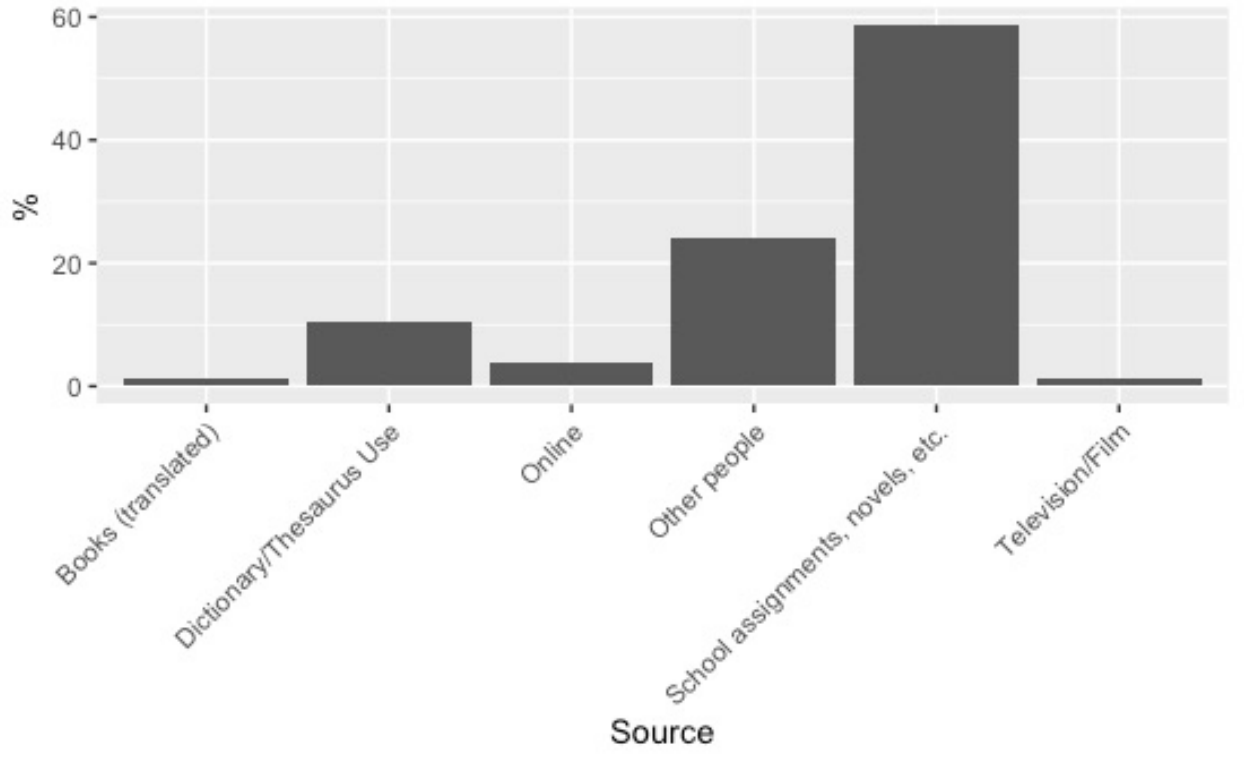
occasional multiple answer from any number of students. For example, in Q1, 75 answers total were collected from the 58 subjects.

### 5.1 Question 1: Where do you typically learn new French words?

Q1 asked where the students typically learned new French words. The top three responses listed school (sources such as assignments, novels read in class, etc.), other people (including family members, friends and teammates, work colleagues), and when looking up words in the dictionary or thesaurus. Several students mentioned the utility of online sources such as Google Translate, wordreference.com and French Wikipedia or of television, films or English books in translation. The results can be found in Figure 2, below:

**Figure 2**

Sources of New Words




Of the 75 different responses to Q1, fully 59% pointed to the classroom as the source of new words. Only 11% specified the dictionary as a source. However, one student indicated the incidental benefits of using the dictionary, where he learned a new word when chancing upon it:

(1) In the dictionary, when looking for other words (some catch my eye).



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Given the focus in the classroom on literacy (reading and writing), it is not surprising that the majority of students relied on classroom printed materials as their primary source of new words, whether or not these words were fully acquired. For example, for one student, incidental word-learning through reading was not always productive:

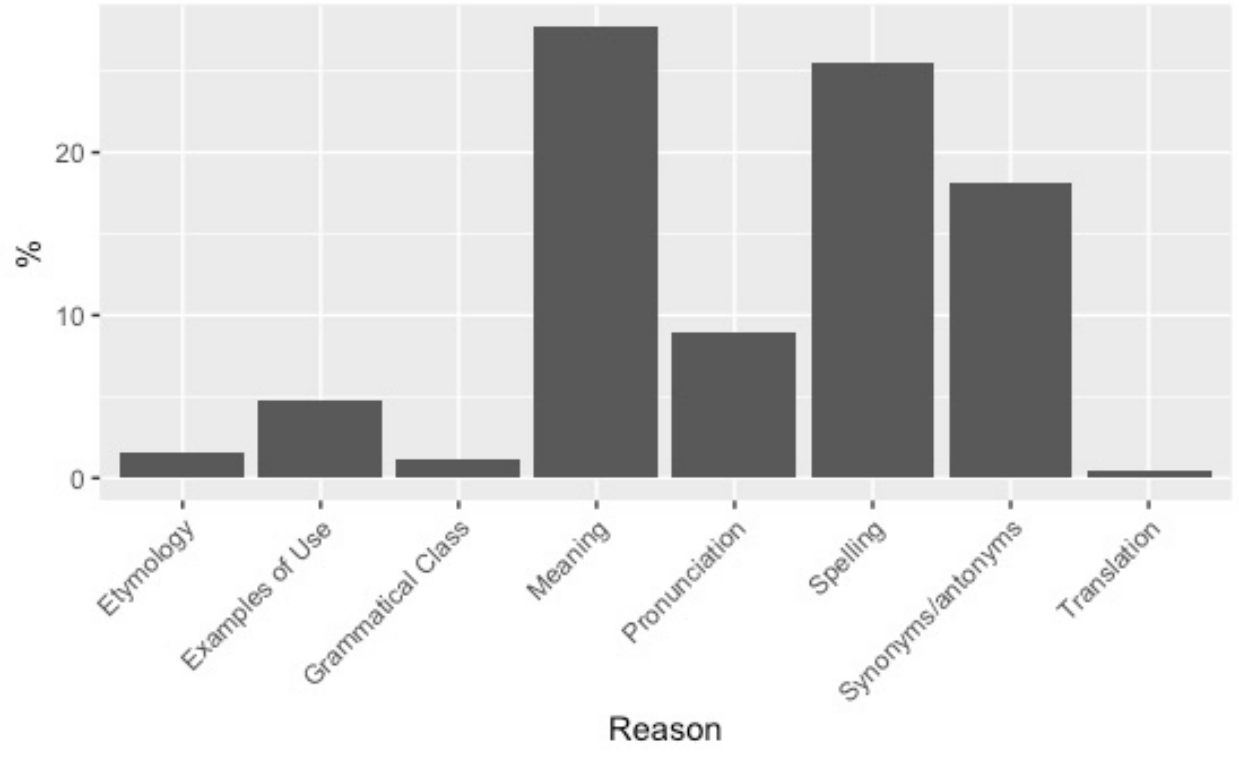
(2) I learn them when I read … but I still don't understand them sometimes.

### 5.2 Question 2: "When I consult a dictionary, I am typically looking for…"

This question asked students to articulate their reasons for dictionary use. As expected, most of the answers involved searching for a word's meaning, spelling, synonyms or antonyms, pronunciation and examples of the word used in a sentence. Other less frequent responses included finding a word's etymology, a translation or its grammatical class. Results are illustrated in Figure 3, below:

**Figure 3**

Reasons for Dictionary Use




The 188 responses to this question are in keeping with expected learner usage of dictionaries (see Tremblay, Anctil & Vorobyova 2013), namely to find a word's meaning (here, 28% of responses), spelling (25.5%), synonyms or antonyms (18%). Students also wanted to see how



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the word was used in context ('Examples of Use', 21%), which indicates a level of awareness of or interest in the word beyond its initial orthographical or semantic presentation.

Before presenting the results of Question 3, we will first examine the responses to the more abstract Question 4, which asked students to speak to the importance of learning French vocabulary.

### 5.3 Question 4: "Is learning French vocabulary important to you? Why or why not?"

Is learning French vocabulary important to you? Why or why not? We sorted the responses to this question into several broad categories, namely family/friends/community, education/academic motivation, employment, personal motivation and intellectual self-improvement.

#### 5.3.1 Communication with family/friends/community.

Many students named speaking with family, friends and teammates as their primary motivation for using or improving their vocabulary. Where neighbours were French-speaking, students expressed the desire to talk to them in their L1. One subject mentioned that she came from an exogamous family where the father's family was French-speaking. This increased her motivation to improve her own French.

#### 5.3.2 Academic concerns

Academic concerns were also listed as strong motivators, whether to be a better writer or to avoid writing poorly or repetitively. One student summed it up thus (3):

(3) Yes because widening vocabulary makes you a better writter [sic], speaker and reader.

#### 5.3.3 Employment.

Using French for current or future employment figured high on the students' list of importance. At least 11 responses mentioned how important French was for helping customers now, and for securing jobs in the future (4):

(4) Yes, because French looks good on a resumé. [sic]

#### 5.3.4 Personal motivation

Students were driven, too, by intrinsic motivation, often related to their desire for improvement in writing or in day-to-day conversations (5). At least 20 answers pointed to this personal improvement goal, often couched in terms of individual bilingualism (6):

(5) Yes, because I don't want to sound repetitive and I want to expand the variety of my conversations in French.



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(6) Yes, being bilingual is very important and being able to communicate with more people is also important.

Respondents certainly recognized the value of being bilingual in a province and/or country where French and English carried equal weight (7):

(7) I think it is kind of important because we live in a country with two main languages.

5.3.5 Intellectual Self-Improvement

Some students made a clear connection between learning vocabulary and intellectual self-improvement, claiming knowing more words would make them 'smarter'. However, not every student response was as categorical. Among the ambivalent replies to the importance of learning French vocabulary were those that stated learning new words was an exercise of little personal use (8):

(8) It is not important for me specifically, but I understand the importance of it.

Negative responses justified the lack of interest in learning French vocabulary by dismissing its relevance (9) or by rejecting the associated linguistic identity (10):

(9) Not really, I only have one French class so I spend my time learning stuff more relevent [sic] in my life.

(10) No I am not French.

In summary, Q4 makes a clear connection between vocabulary richness and success in school, at work, in future employment, in communication. However, regardless of the students' best intentions to better their vocabulary and even themselves, their frank answers to Q3 indicate that there is a chasm between that motivation and their reality. This point is reinforced in their responses to Question 3, which follow.

**5.4 Question 3: "Sometimes I don't check a new word in a dictionary because…"**

Perhaps the most revealing findings were from Q4, which asked students to explain why they did not use a dictionary. At least 20 students spoke of compensatory strategies, chiefly the ability to guess the meaning of the unknown word from its context (11). However, for some, this strategy was tenuous; students often relied upon their impressionistic understanding of a word but without certainty (12):

(11) I can make an educated guess.



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(12) I feel like I know what the word means.

Some students reported capitalizing on the similarities between the target French word and its apparent English equivalent. Other compensatory strategies also mentioned asking the teacher or a classmate for the meaning of the unknown word (8 responses) or modifying their writing to avoid using an unknown word (2 responses).

While compensatory strategies are certainly valuable, many students admitted they simply did not bother to look up the meaning of a word they did not know. Some blamed this on a lack of time or relevance of the material; others, on a lack of interest and an unwillingness to make the effort to search for the word in the dictionary. These responses are presented in the following groups:

5.4.1 Lack of time

If pressed for time, some students do not consult the dictionary (8 responses), even with the best of intentions to return to the word later.

5.4.2 Lack of relevance

If the word seems unimportant or irrelevant, or the reading boring, the student simply ignores it (11 responses, as in (13)):

(13) The sentence isn't very important and not worth the time to look up.

5.4.3 Lack of interest, lack of access, etc.

Many students (20 responses) related that for whatever reason (interest, sheer volume of new words, lack of convenient access to a dictionary or just embarrassment), they did not attempt to consult a dictionary:

(14) Because that's a lot of work.

Regardless of the obvious importance of improving their vocabulary, whether for their present schoolwork or conversations or for their future employment, it does not appear to be a compelling enough motivator for using the dictionary.

**5.5 Question 5. "In order for me to develop a richer French vocabulary, I…"**

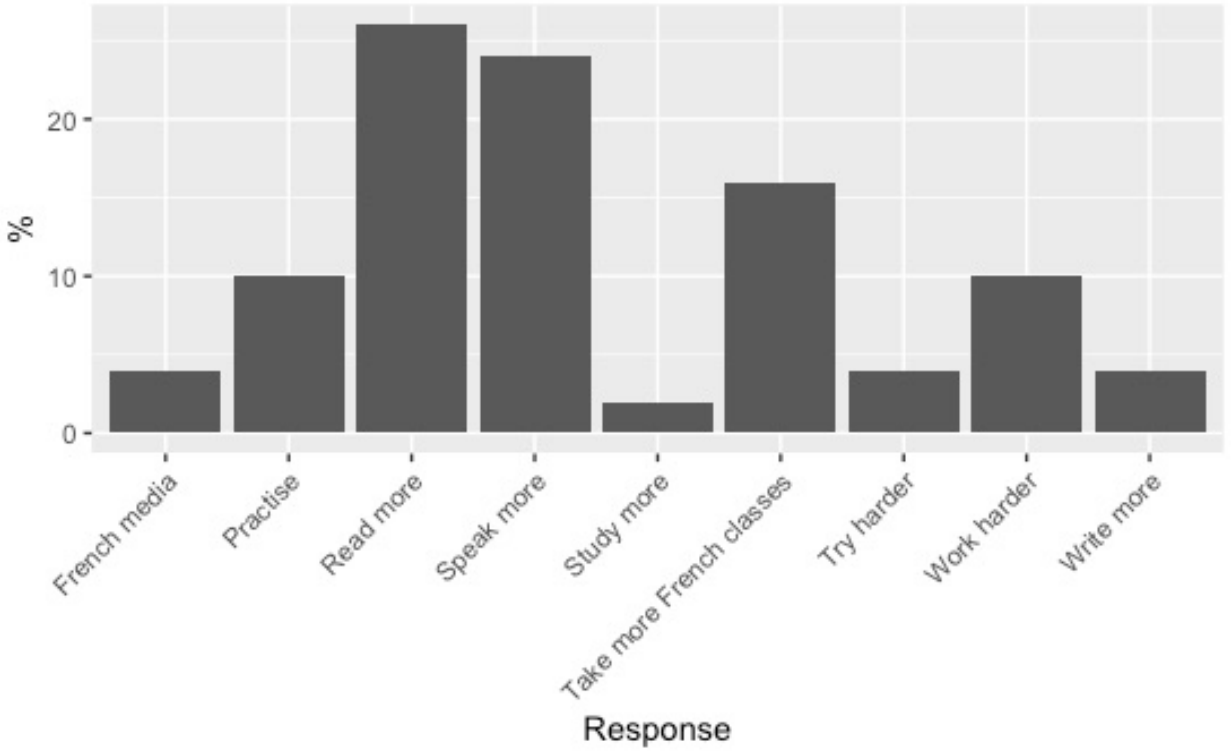
This question asked students to reflect on their personal ownership of their own lexical development. Figure 4 below shows the distribution of responses in answer to the prompt.



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**Figure 4**

**Imperatives**




Every student response understood the Q5 prompt as one requiring an imperative ("I must do X." as opposed to an indicative "I do X."). Responses generally related to personal effort: reading or speaking more in French, consuming more French-language media, and working harder in the classroom (including paying attention, taking more French classes and writing more). Students evaluated their own efforts as evidenced by answers such as "try harder to understand", "study more", "work harder", "put in more effort" and "practice". Here, students clearly accepted responsibility for their own lexical growth.

At the same time, some responses placed the responsibility squarely at the feet of their teachers; students wanted to be taught more French words. It is worthwhile to note that only four responses of 50 mentioned better (or any) utilisation of the dictionary, and only one response reflected on the student's existing lexicon (15):

(15) study, analyse and understand the relevance/importance of the words I already know.

In sum, students did appear to understand that genuine effort was required to expand their vocabulary; likewise, they were aware of the shortcomings of their current approach.



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## 6.0 Drawing Conclusions from the Questionnaire

If the student responses to the five questions on lexical development and dictionary use are to be taken at face value, it is evident that students clearly do understand the need for a richer vocabulary, for whatever end. And while they comprehend the importance in principium of the dictionary as a purveyor of lexical knowledge, they do not consider it an essential part of their word-building routine nor do they tend to avail themselves of dictionaries when at a loss for words. Personal and academic use of this tool does not coincide with their belief in the value of vocabulary-building. They know that lexical competence in French involves a richer vocabulary but seem ambivalent about working to acquire unknown words, perhaps because they compensate for lexical gaps in a variety of ways including using contextual clues and skipping the unknown word, sensible strategies common to language learners regardless of age or context. Nevertheless, the need for, or the desire for lexical competence does not appear to be a driving force. This dichotomy is summarized in the words of one student, responding to Q4, "Is learning French vocabulary important to you?"

(16) Yes and no. Like yes, I want to further my vocabulary but at the same time, I don't care enough to work in the dictionary every time there's a word I don't know.

Our research question at the outset asked, "Is there a relationship between using a dictionary and growing as a language learner?" The participants in this study appear to accept the need for lexical competence but to be insufficiently motivated to use the most obvious resource available to them to accomplish this goal. The gulf is still wide between the perceived importance of lexical growth for success—whether academic, professional or social—and the attitudes of these learners towards the role of the dictionary in their personal lexical development. Is the dictionary meeting the lexical (competence) needs of language learners? Judging from these students' own words, no, or perhaps not yet, but the need and the potential clearly exist. Some suggestions for bridging that gap follow.

## 7.0 Suggestions for Pedagogical Solutions

The subjects in this study understand the importance of knowing both of Canada's official languages. They know that improving their lexical competence will serve them well, personally and professionally, but their motivation seems lacking. How then to proceed in developing the vocabulary—more importantly, the lexical competence writ large—of French Immersion students? There are no quick fixes, given that vocabulary acquisition is a life-long endeavour, even for native speakers. We recommend the following means to enhance the process.

Firstly, school districts and leaders in curriculum development must identify and acquire classroom lexicographical tools (print and electronic) of good quality, as per Crystal (2010; see also Nist & Olejnik 1995). Print dictionaries must be reliable, accurate, clear and easy to use; authentic language and the elimination of "dictionarese" make the resource accessible to the learner (Swanepoel 2001:161). Electronic dictionaries are deemed "quality tools" if they are also fast and include multi-media content and links to the corpus and other dictionaries (Müller-



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Spitzer, Koplenig & Töpel 2011). For the context of our FI subjects, several French learners' dictionaries have passed muster, including the Frequency Dictionary of French: Core Vocabulary for Learners (Lonsdale & Le Bras 2009) and the Dictionnaire du français usuel (Picoche & Rolland 2002) along with its leaner counterpart Vocalire (Rolland & Picoche 2012). The prototypical electronic Dictionnaire de reformulation (Milićević & Hamel 2007) addresses more advanced users' needs for idiomatic expressions in oral and written paraphrasing tasks. Making vocabulary learning engaging and purposeful is key. As one student put it, "Can't just have someone saying a French word and the definition. It needs to be somewhat interesting to me". Tools that present the full range of linguistic features of a word in a palatable form are ideal.

Secondly, teachers should not assume that students have lexicographical prowess. They (students and teachers alike) must develop more than a passing familiarity with a variety of dictionaries and types of dictionaries as well as their nomenclature. There is a growing body of research on the process and the practice of dictionary consultation in the language classroom. Gavriilidou (2013:136) emphasizes "conscious awareness of when to use a dictionary and what type to use, and the ability to employ efficient… look-up strategies". In the classroom, teachers should promote both receptive use (nomenclature; symbols; polysemy, collocations; homonymy) and productive use when writing, for example.

Finally, repeated practice with dictionary use must be undertaken in an environment of deliberate and systematic vocabulary instruction. Incidental vocabulary acquisition has its place (in reading for pleasure, for example, or encountering a new word while in quest of another). Similarly, context-inferred word acquisition is a recognized and valuable strategy and should be encouraged in language learners. However, in order to promote genuine and sustained lexical growth, a specific and targeted program of vocabulary teaching is a vital part of the lexical competence equation.

Teaching and actively promoting dictionary use is a worthwhile endeavour. We are convinced that language teachers and students can and should intentionally use that grand repository of lexical knowledge as a pedagogical tool for efficient, effective and powerful lexical progress. It is our hope that the students' honest reflections presented here will compel teachers and curriculum planners to promote deliberate dictionary use and consultation skill development and, by extension, true growth in lexical competence.

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## Appendix

**New French Words: What do I do?**

**Dear FILA Student**: *We are conducting a study about learning vocabulary in New Brunswick's High School French Immersion program. Your opinions matter! This questionnaire should take about 15 minutes to complete, and all answers will be kept confidential. Please answer as honestly as you can about your own word-learning styles and practices. (If you would like to speak with the researcher, let your teacher know!)*

Please rate the following items on a scale of 1-5:

**1** means "**strongly disagree**" or "**never**" → → → **5** means "**strongly agree** or "**always**":

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | When I read a new French word, I try to guess the meaning from the context (surrounding words, paragraphs, topics). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 2. | When I read a new French word, I translate it into English. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3. | When I read a new French word, I break it down into smaller parts. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 4. | When I read a new French word, I pay attention to its spelling. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 5. | When I read a new French word, I skip it if I don't know it or understand it. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 6. | When I read a new French word, I ask my teacher for the English translation. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 7. | When I read a new French word, I ask my teacher for the meaning. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 8. | When I read a new French word, I try to think of words with similar meanings (synonyms) or opposite meanings (antonyms). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 9. | When I read a new French word, I try to think of other words I know in the same word 'family' (as in *aimer* → *aimable*). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 10. | When I read a new French word, I try to figure out its word class (noun, verb, adjective, etc.). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 11. | When I read a new French word, I try to use the new word in a sample sentence. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 12. | When I read a new French word, I use the surrounding information (photos and illustrations, etc.) to understand the meaning. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 13. | When I read a new French word, I try to paraphrase it (say the same thing in a different way). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 14. | I keep a written list of new words I encounter. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 15. | I own a hard copy French-language dictionary (like the *Petit Robert*). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 16. | I access a digital French-language dictionary online. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 17. | I often use a French-language dictionary when writing. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 18. | I own a bilingual French-English dictionary (like the *Collins-Robert*). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 19. | I access a digital bilingual French-English dictionary online. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 20. | I often use a bilingual French-English dictionary when writing. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 21. | I consider myself an above-average reader. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 22. | I use a wide variety of French words in my writing. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 23. | My school provides French literacy enrichment opportunities for me (workshops, visiting writers, etc.). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 24. | My teachers often use interesting, unusual or rare French words. | 1 2 3 4 5 |



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**4. Comment:** Sometimes I don't check a new word in a dictionary because…

**5. Opinion:** Is learning French vocabulary important to you? Why or why not?

**6. Opinion**: In order for me to develop a richer French vocabulary, I…

**7. Demographics.** Answer in a way that best represents your own situation. *All responses are confidential*!

1. Name (please print):
   _____
2. Gender (*optional*): male _____ female _____
3. Age: _____
4. Which language(s) did your family use in the home when you were young (before starting school)?
   English: _____ French: _____ other (please specify): _____
5. I consider myself bilingual in English and French – check one: Yes: _____
   No: _____ Comments? _____
6. I have been a French Immersion student for _____ (#) years, including this year.

*Thank you for your participation!*



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