

The perceptions of adult immigrant learners about intercultural activities created in a francisation class

Presented by Fauteux

Student-researcher

Master's degree in language teaching, UQAM

Under the supervision of Dr. Valérie Amireault

University professor, Department of Language Education

Faculty of Education, UQAM

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Contextualisation

- Work experience with adult immigrant learners registered in a francisation class of the Ministry of Immigration, Diversity and Inclusion (MIDI).
- Reactions, judgements, misunderstandings on the part of a number of learners about cultural elements presented in class.
- Period of cultural shock for some students.
- Culturally diverse classes: conflicts or misunderstandings between some students

Objectives of the intercultural dimension in teaching/learning languages

1. “Make the learner acquire as much an intercultural as a linguistic competence;
2. Prepare him/her to relationships with people from other cultures;
3. Allow the learner to understand and accept these “other” people as individuals with different viewpoints, values and behaviours;
4. Help the learner understand the rewarding nature of these types of experiences and relationships.” (Byram and al., 2002, p.11)

Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC)

“The capacity to adjust oneself by modifying one’s own criteria and references and not the capacity to describe the culture of the other as a cultural object, which entails a deep understanding of one’s own culture.”

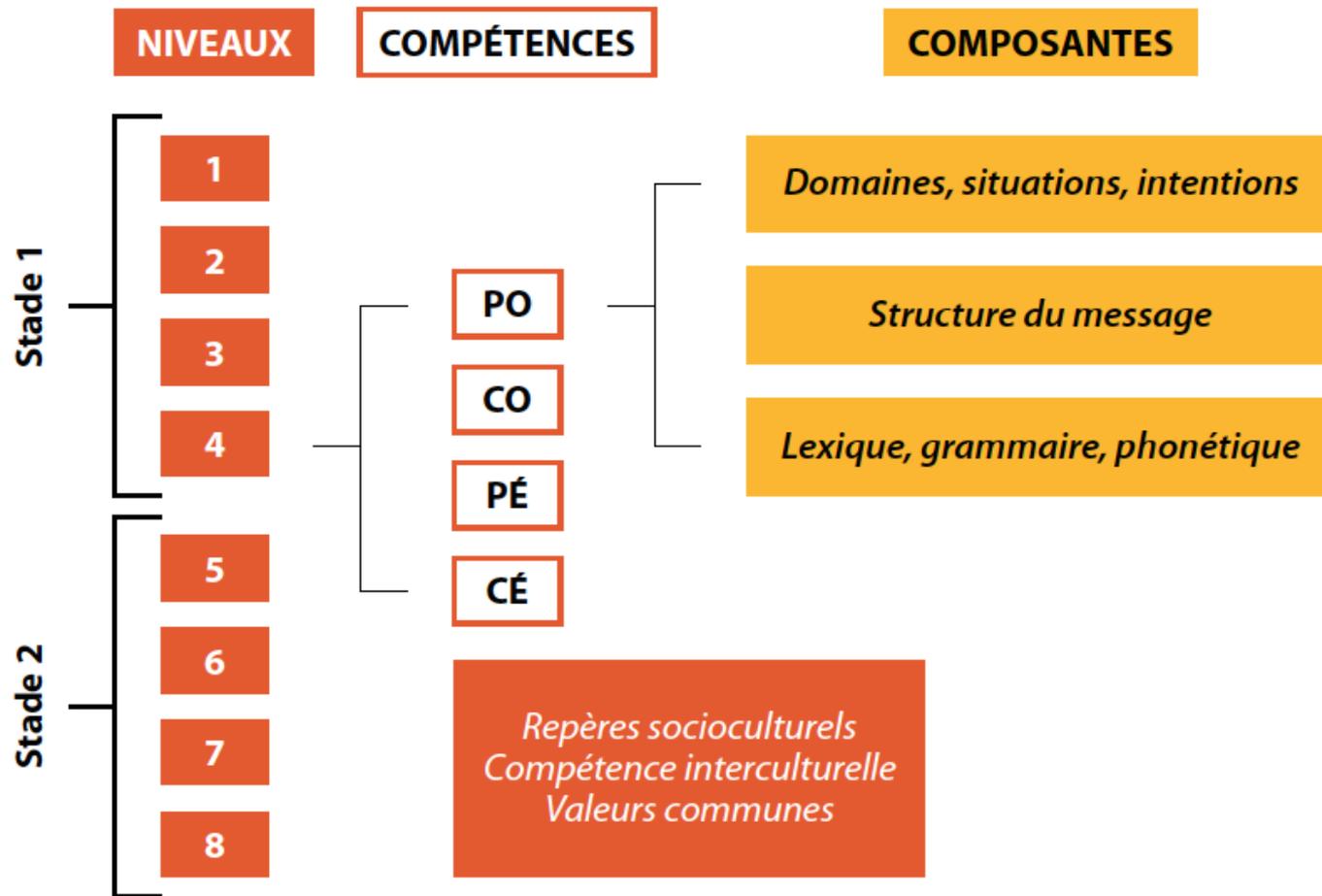
*The Intercultural Communication competence requires certain **attitudes, knowledges, and abilities** on top of a linguistic, **sociolinguistic and discursive competence.**”*

(Toussaint et Fortier, 2010, cited in xenoreferences.ca)

Dimensions of ICC

- **Knowledges:** *elements of knowledge linked to collective memory, the diversity of ways of life, the sociocultural context of societies and cultures of communities where a particular language is spoken.*
- **Know-hows: abilities.** *Know how to be linguistically functional by speaking in the target language. Interact in different environments or ways of life and adjust to different contexts by integrating new experiences.*
- **Know-how-to-be: attitudes.** *Knowledge of oneself, of one's own identity. Increasing awareness of other cultures. Respect for the values of others.*

The Programme-cadre de français for adult immigrants in Quebec (MICC and MELs, 2011)



Representations of teachers in relation to intercultural dimension

- Openness to the teaching of culture and the development of the intercultural competence but difficulty of integrating this competence in their pedagogical approach (Zarate *and al.*, 2003)
- Teachers dedicate the majority of teaching time to the development of purely linguistics competences (Olivencia, 2008).
- Teaching of Culture (art, history, geography) as opposed to culture (ways of life, beliefs, values). (East, 2012; Lázár *et al.*, 2007; Lussier, 2004, Olivencia, 2008; Sercu, 2002).
- Lack of training, time and pedagogical material to operationalize intercultural objectives.

Intercultural activities

Activities which aim at developing ICC, and more particularly intercultural awareness and understanding.

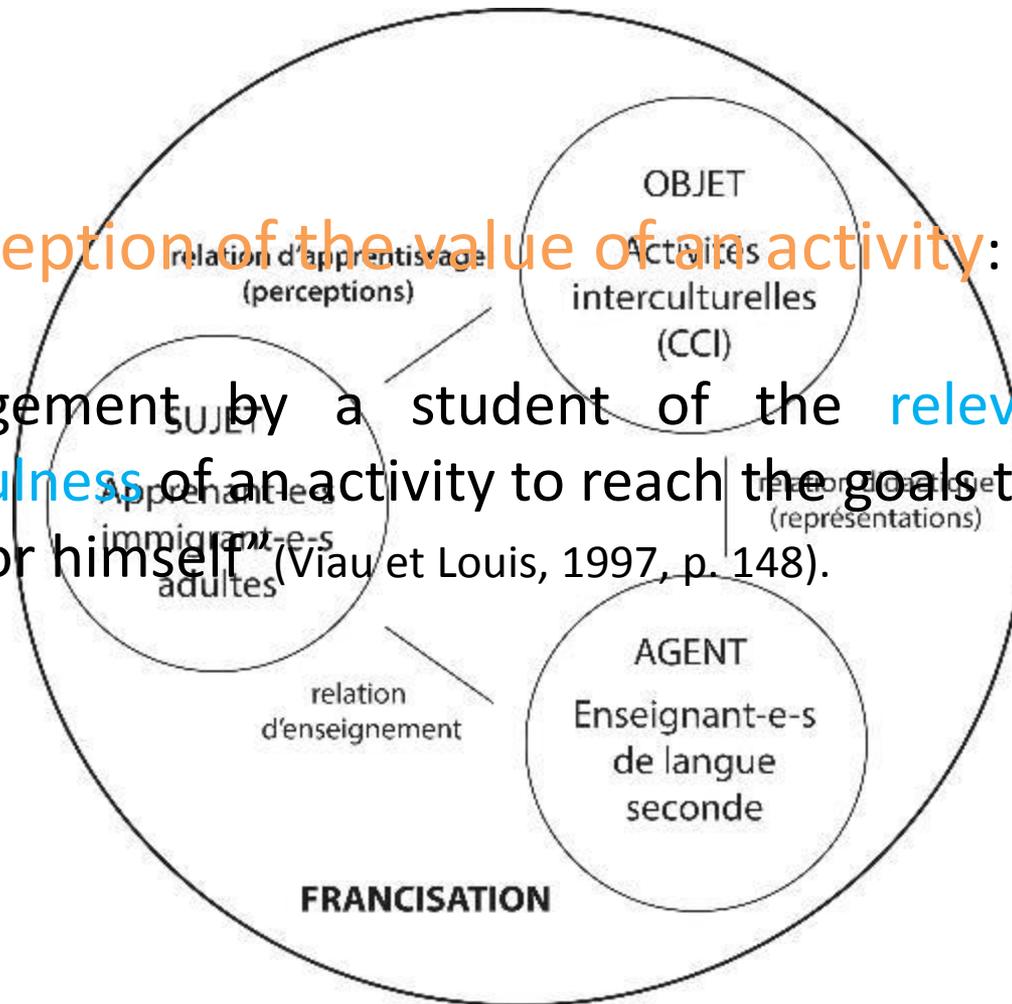
Examples:

- Discussions on cultural differences and similarities while making sure not to fall into the trap of conveying subjective and stereotypical visions (Huber-Kriegler, Lazar et Strange, 2005 ; Lopez-Garcia, 2005) ;
- Activities that explore differences in values and intercultural dialogue (Stringer et Cassiday, 2003; Houghton, 2012).

Perceptions of learners in relation to intercultural activities

Perception of the value of an activity:

“Judgement by a student of the **relevance** and **usefulness** of an activity to reach the goals that he has set for himself” (Viau et Louis, 1997, p. 148).



Questions and specific research objectives

What are the perceptions of adult immigrant learners in relation to intercultural activities created in a francisation class?

Specific objectives:

Describe the following perceptions:

- Interest for intercultural activities;
- Usefulness for learning French;
- Usefulness for the integration into host society.

Approche méthodologique

Cadre de référence du développement de la CI
en éducation aux langues (Lussier, 1997, 2005)

+

Programme-cadre de français pour les personnes
immigrantes adultes au Qc (MICC et MELS, 2011)



3 activités interculturelles

Quel genre d'égalité?

Des droits pour tous.les

Le français, une langue à défendre?

Questionnaires
de rétroaction

Groupes de discussion

Analyse quantitative

Analyse qualitative
thématique

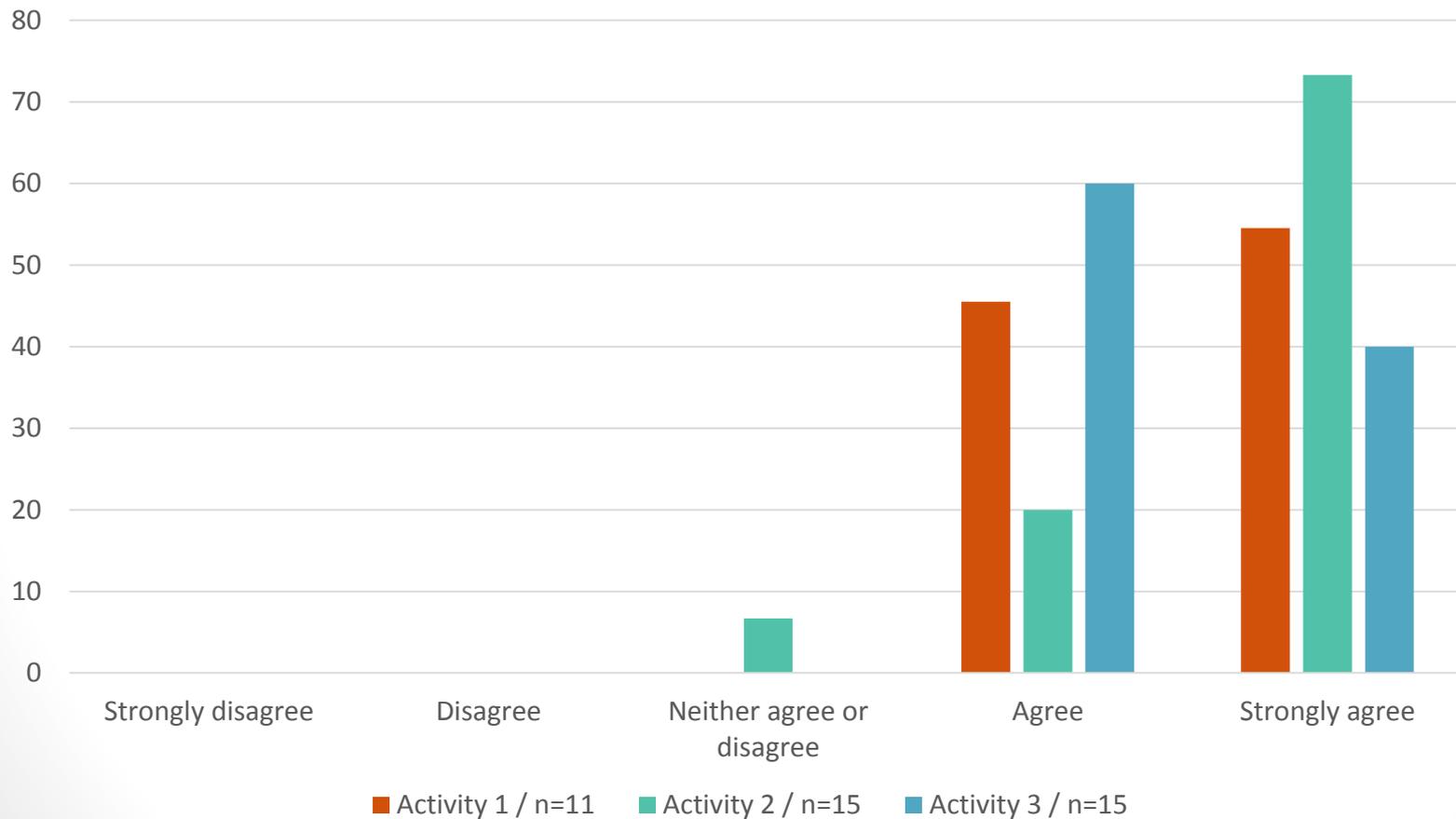
- Programme
de francisation
commission
scolaire montréalaise
-17 participants
-Intermédiaires (niv.6)
-18 à 47ans

Interest for intercultural activities

RESULTS

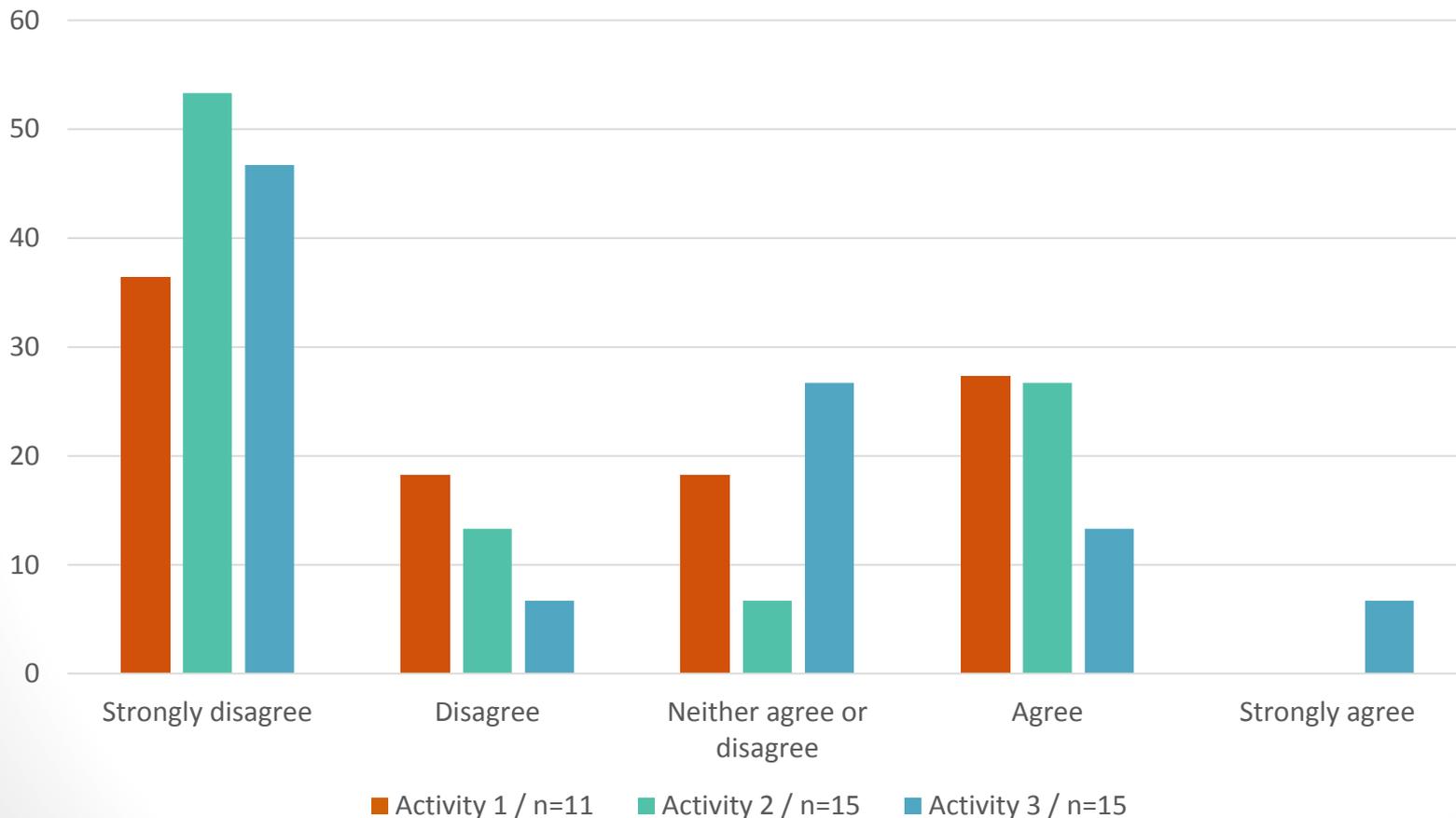
General Appreciation

QR6 – In general, I appreciated the activity



Feelings in relation to intercultural activities

QR5 – I felt (un)comfortable talking about particular topics.



Feeling of ease: comfortable with the topics addressed

- The main difference between intercultural activities and traditional activities is the nature of the topics.
- The topics addressed in the intercultural activities lead to a reflection on opinions and values.
- Comfortable discussing these topics because of the respectful environment and the freedom to speak one's mind during the discussions.

Feeling of discomfort in relation to intercultural activities

- Diverging opinions;
- Difficulty to express one's opinion due to linguistic limitations;
- Negative emotions triggered by the topic of discrimination.

« And... differences, that's the topic, because we never talk about that topic in class. Because I think it is taboo? Maybe? So... Someone can... feel uncomfortable? For me, it is not like that, but I think it is [the reason] why it is not included in the programme.»

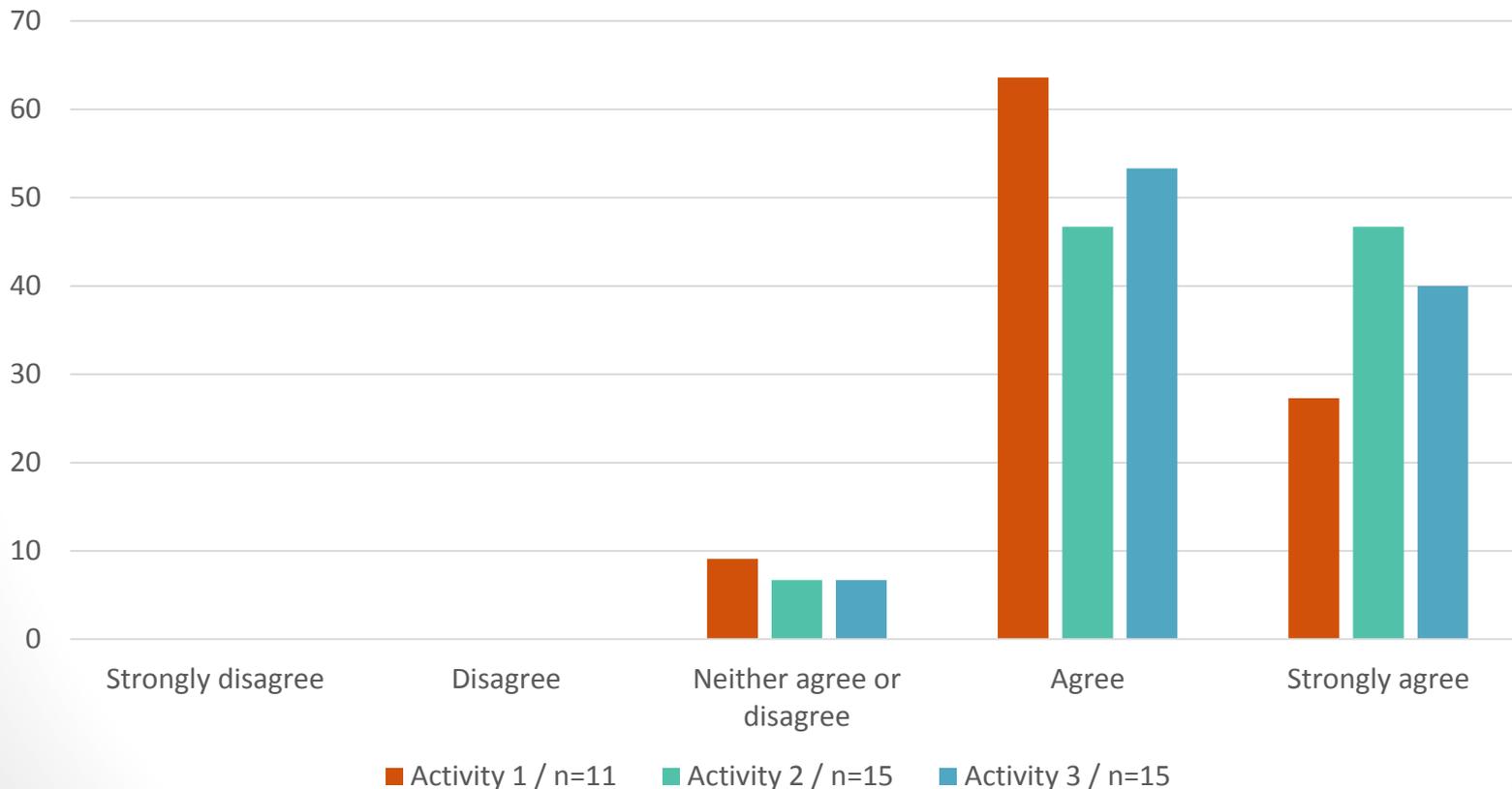
(participant M)

Usefulness for learning French

RESULTS

Usefulness for learning French

QR1 – I found this activity useful for my experience learning of French



Usefulness for learning French

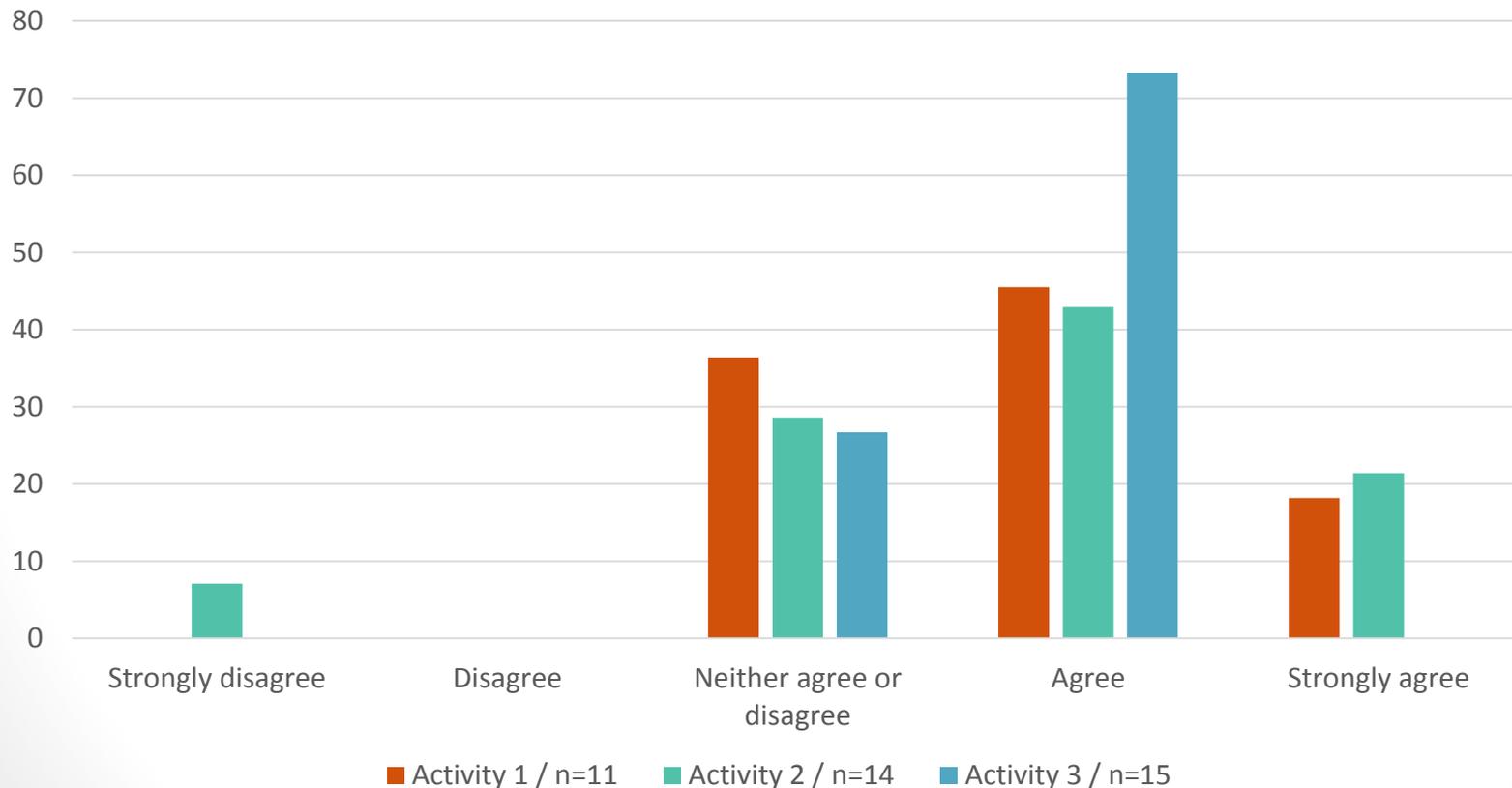
- + Language oral practice with the discussions;
- + learning of new vocabulary
- + Improvement of oral comprehension skills
- + Corrective feedback
- Vocabulary limitations to express ideas. More preparatory activities to learn new vocabulary and ease up the conversation.

Usefulness for the integration in the host society

RESULTS

Usefulness for the integration in the host society

QR4 – I found this activity useful for my integration in Quebec society



Usefulness for the integration in the host society

- Different definition of integration (linguistic, professional, sociocultural) and challenges which are likely to influence the needs and perceptions of learners;
- Learning of the French language: most useful element for their professional and sociocultural integration;
- Knowledges (i.e. behaviours, laws, opinions) allowed them to better understand cultural differences in the classroom and the host society and enhance their integration;
- Activities which allow for a better understanding, acceptance and respect for intercultural differences;
- Need for useful and practical information, especially for their professional integration.

Enhance sociocultural integration

“... for me, it’s...integrate, it’s understanding... Quebec society and... also take something that you like, something cultural, but... at the same time, keep your culture, but it’s... I mean... it is very important... the Quebecois understand... we have a culture too. Yes? We... I think it is going to be better here... people here respect... must respect sometimes or just a little our culture. But... it’s, it’s really important for us, learn or understand the culture... the culture of Quebec.” (Participant K)

Thank you for your attention!

If you have any questions or comments:

fauteux.maude@courrier.uqam.ca



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