

Exploring motivations of non-native Persian adult students in learning Farsi in an
Iranian school in Montreal: A teacher's observations, insights and hopes

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ABSTRACT

Exploring motivations of non-native Persian adult students in learning Farsi in an Iranian school in Montreal: A teacher's observations, insights and hopes

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This study examines the motivations of non-native adult learners of Farsi in an Iranian school in Montreal, Quebec. The research is also aimed at exploring the possibility that Persian language cannot be revitalized and maintained by Iranian immigrants and their children alone, but that enthusiastic non-native Persian adult learners can play a role in achieving such a goal. Experiences and insights of six participants spanning a wide range of ages (25 – 48) have been used in this inquiry, in addition to my own observations resulting from five years of experience of teaching Farsi to foreign learners. The main emphasis of my study has been examining the narratives of the six participants, listening to their ideas, motivations and hopes for learning, reading and sometimes writing Persian, as well as socializing with the Iranian peoples in Montreal, to better understand Persian culture and traditions.

The study reveals that more research is needed in order to understand to what extent non-native adult learners can be agents in preserving the Persian language. Researchers should listen to learners' voices and use their insights and experiences to better understand their potential as promoters of disappearing languages, as they cannot be kept alive in the immigrants' host country by only the native speakers.

Keywords: non-native adult learners, Persian language, motivation, insights, hopes, culture, tradition, revitalization, saving, maintaining.

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DEDICATION

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- 3) Norouz: Iranian New Year and the first day of Spring in Iran
- 4) Jashn-e-vajeha: The yearly ceremony of words of Dehkhoda school. Children traditionally perform, dance, sing and play different instruments

Chapter One: Introduction

I teach Persian (also known as Farsi) at Dehkhoda School which is a Persian school in Montreal, Quebec. The role of this school is to revitalize and save the Persian language among the second and the third generation of Iranian immigrants. Dehkhoda School offers classes for a full school year, from mid-September to mid-June, geared towards children from the age of five to fifteen/sixteen. Some of these children were born in Canada but some have immigrated here with their parents. Among them, there are children whose both parents are of Iranian origin and those with only one Iranian parent. Starting from seven years ago, the school has been offering a class for adult, non-native Persian learners and I have been teaching it for five consecutive years. Apart from Persian classes, the school also teaches Iranian dancing, singing, poetry and traditional tales which the children can perform. In this way, the school promotes and celebrates Iranian traditions alongside Canadian ones. Adult learners of Persian are able to take part in cultural and traditional events and thus learn about Persian culture and traditions while taking language classes.

During my five years of teaching Persian at Dehkhoda Persian School, I have noticed that the adult learners of Persian, some of whom are married to Iranians, attend the classes just because they are interested in them and not because they are somehow compelled to. This makes me always strive to look for ways to keep them engaged in their learning by making it relevant to their lives. For instance, after a few weeks of teaching at Dehkhoda School, I noticed that the students, especially beginners, preferred to improve their speaking skills rather than writing. They did not want to learn how to write the Persian alphabet, which is completely different from Latin, and written from

right to left. Therefore, I tried to be creative and teach them using the Latin alphabet. For example, instead of teaching them آب” which means “water” in Persian, I would teach them “aab” which is its Finglish (Farsi letters+English letters) equivalent. I think using this technique might be the reason why the class size has increased from the initial three to eleven. In a usual class, vocabulary and example sentences are based on different topics to be discussed and given to the students on photocopied handouts. As there are both French and English speakers in my class, the handouts have translations into the students’ first language as well as into Finglish. For those who are interested, Persian alphabet transcriptions are provided too.

My non-native Persian adult learners seem to be very excited to learn the language while being able to get to know Iranian history, literature, culture and traditions in the process. It would appear therefore that this enthusiasm could be instrumental in saving the Persian language for future generations. In this respect, Badger and MacDonald (2007) state, “It has long been recognised that language is a realisation of cultural reality (Halliday, 1978, p. 242; Kramsch, 1998, p. 3) and that both, language learners and their teachers, need to be aware of this relationship. In addition, Mughan (1998, p. 41) posits that, “In order for language learners to apply language skills fruitfully and effectively, a knowledge of the cultural environment is essential.” Language teachers should seek to “make their students aware of the proper linguistic performance in diverse types of intercultural settings’ (Dunnett et al., 1986, p. 158).” Through my own teaching experience, I have come to believe that without being connected to the culture and traditions of the language, it is very hard for learners to maintain their motivation and learn effectively.

My Personal Interest in the Topic

This study has led to a better understanding of the experiences of non-native adult learners of Persian. The study has given the students an opportunity to talk about their integration process and the experience they have gone through when learning the Persian language as well as about knowledge of Persian culture and traditions they have gained. According to Splitter (2009), “Students do bring to bear their past experiences (perspectives, beliefs, values, attitudes)—and their understandings of those experiences—in any learning situation; accordingly, meaningful teaching requires some acknowledgment and incorporation of this psychological reality” (p. 139). Through carrying out this research study, I hoped to gain useful insights into ways of saving and revitalizing Persian for the children of immigrants in countries outside Iran. It is a well-known fact that children of immigrants lose their mother tongue as they integrate into their new home. Consequently, it is the non-native adult learners of Persian, regardless of whether or not they have any relationship with Iran, who can play a part in saving the language and share with others their experiences of learning it, as well as their knowledge of Iranian culture. As Kolb (1984) says, “Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience” (p. 41). I believe that, echoing Stambaugh (2011), “We are not only teaching the language, we are teaching our culture and who we are”. As teachers, our mission is to “revitalize the language so that it is used daily so that becomes strong and we are never under the threat of losing it” (p. 6). Consequently, one of the main reasons why I undertook this study was a conviction that as a Persian language teacher I was somewhat responsible for helping to preserve the language. I believe that non-native Persian adult learners can be instrumental in achieving this goal. As teachers,

we need to do more than just teach the language; we need to make sure our students get the chance to become interested in more than just the linguistic side of language learning. Any students, but particularly adult learners, need to be provided with a happy, nurturing atmosphere in which they can thrive and be encouraged to promote the language to others.

Statement of the Problem

Canada is a multicultural country. In such countries, people of diverse cultural backgrounds interact with each other, and get to know each other. These interactions can be through marriage, friendship, work, and other reasons. It is language that plays an important role in fostering communication and better understanding. Mother tongue is of particular importance here as it is a tool allowing for culture and national traditions to be passed on to the next generation. In this respect, Moore and McDonald (2013) say, “First Nations revitalize, protect and sustain their languages, dialects and culture for future generations” (p. 704).

Experiences of Iranian immigrants who represent the population of almost 16,185 in the whole of Montreal, could offer valuable insights into how to preserve the Persian language and how to better integrate other non-Persian adult speakers into the efforts of promoting the language effectively.

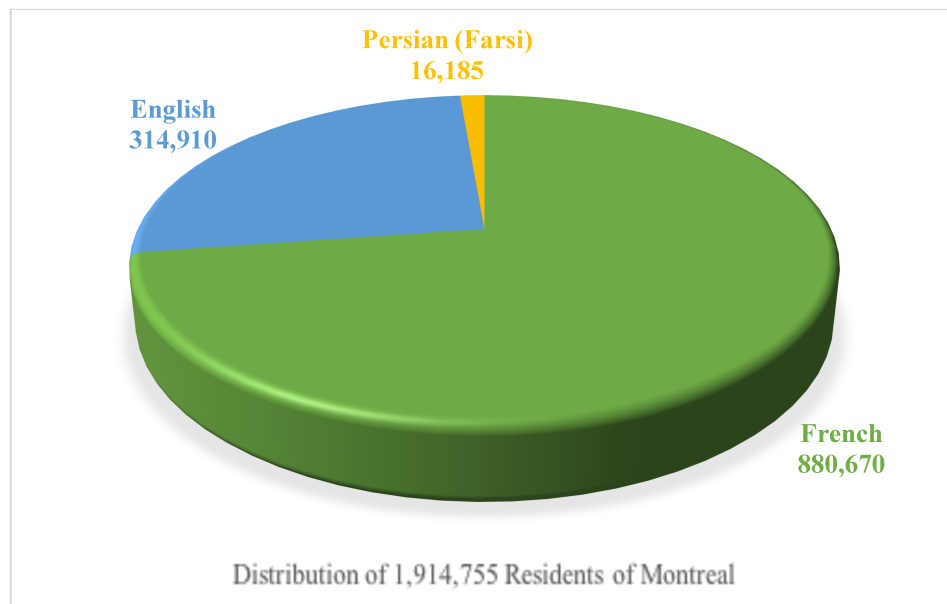


Figure 2 Le journal de Montréal, 04 août 2017- Statistique Canada

Gaining experience teaching Persian to adult learners could offer new methods of teaching and preserving the language that cannot be found in any textbook. Adult students who are willing to attend Persian classes are not there by force, but because they need to learn it or simply because they would like to learn it. Petersen (2017) quotes Malcolm Knowles saying that “adults learn best when they understand why something is important to know or do.” (p. 1). Accordingly, we could say that non-native adult Persian learners, like any rare language learners, know what their needs are and look for most time-effective and efficient ways of learning it. Adults do not have extra time to waste, especially when it comes to learning different languages like Persian that can only be learnt when they feel the need to learn it. They will not study unless they have the motivation to do it.

In the relatively near future, languages like Persian will no longer be spoken or taught outside of Iran because of dominant languages like English and French. Sometimes,

Iranian immigrants due to the daily habit of speaking the language of the host country, forget the Persian words they would normally use within their families. So, step by step when words are forgotten, and the language is not practiced any more, the language can fade away. “The potential loss of Persian is a tragedy because it is a language with such a long history and it is extremely rich in literacy heritage” (Saving Lesser Taught Languages, 2016). Therefore, Iranian immigrants who teach Persian could help save the language from being lost and they could do it in an easy and creative way. Teaching Persian should be done in a pleasant environment so that adult learners are encouraged to continue studying it, and their number as well as the length of time they persevere with it increases. Teachers of Persian can also show their students the value of Iranian culture, history and traditions so that it can be preserved for future generations.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research study is to examine motivational factors for non-Iranian adult students to study this endangered language. Therefore, their opinions and points they make are very important in a multilingual country, but also in a country with large numbers of Iranian immigrants. For the purpose of this inquiry, a qualitative research study has been conducted. Non-Persian adult students in a Persian School in Montreal, Quebec, were interviewed on what motivates them to study the language. Some of these students are married to Iranian nationals while others have Iranian friends or simply have interest in Persian language and/or Iranian culture and traditions.

The results of this study could help develop better and more useful methods of teaching Persian based on experiences of both students and teachers. Some non-native Persian speakers hope to only learn how to speak the language with their Iranian partners

or friends, while others are drawn to the Persian writing system because they find it beautiful and artistically pleasing and want to learn how to read and write it. This demonstrates the need for a teaching method that could satisfy all types of learners. Above all, what is important is to find ways in which the Persian language can be preserved and more students motivated and encouraged to take it up and continue with it. Canada, as a host country, can play an important role in supporting such endeavors. Similarly, the results of this study could help promote the Persian language, which would, in turn, lead to the promotion of Iranian culture and traditions. I therefore view the experience of my teaching Persian as an opportunity to not only help save the language, but also increase cultural and historical awareness of Persian people.

Research Questions

This thesis is an exploratory study about a topic close to my heart as a teacher of Farsi based on the following main research question: What are the motives moving non-native Persian adult students to learn the Persian language?

Based on this main question, I developed the following probing questions to use during the interviews with participants in this study.

Probing questions and probing questions for the interviews:

- What motivates you to study Persian?
- What makes you continue learning Persian?
- What are you hoping to gain from learning Persian?
- How do you see yourself making use of your knowledge of Persian?
- What do you do to improve your Persian language skills?
- What teaching methods do you find the most useful?

- How long do you plan to continue taking Persian classes?
- Would you recommend this Persian course to your friends and family?
 - o Why? Why not?
- How has this course changed your perception of Persian culture and traditions?

The result of the study will help me better understand:

- How can non-native Persian adult learners keep the Persian language alive and in demand?
- How can the learners keep pursuing their interest in the Persian language?
- How can teachers keep the study of the Persian language interesting for learners?
- How can the learners become motivated so that they continue their studies and return the following year?
- What can the learners do to promote Persian language, culture and traditions through learning Persian?

Context of the Study: Dehkhoda School in Montreal

Dehkhoda Persian school is a Persian language and cultural support centre in Montreal, Quebec, aimed at the children of the members of the city's Iranian community. The school is located within a French school in Montreal to which it pays a monthly rent. All the school's expenses are covered through the tuition fees paid by parents of children who attend Farsi classes there. A portion of the fees goes towards covering cultural events. In an effort to promote Persian language and culture, the school also offers Farsi classes to non-native adult learners, and the fees gained are used to support the school.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Definitions

Persian as Foreign Language

There are many reasons why adults may choose to learn a language like Persian outside of Iran. They might be planning to get married to an Iranian or perhaps wish to pursue it as part of their professional development. Some adult learners might be driven by a desire to take on a new challenge and do something new and fun. Overall however, it can be said that unlike young learners, adults are clearer about their objectives, whatever they may be. Indeed, Balenovic (2011) believes,

a foreign language is learned for practical reasons and that instrumental motive will lead to success in learning. A large portion of young learners tend to learn languages out of curiosity, interest or simply love for a foreign language, while on the other hand adults have different reasons for learning foreign languages which tend to be far more pragmatic (p. 211).

Persian as Mother Tongue

Persian is a mother tongue not only to Iranians in the form of Farsi, but also to people in Afghanistan as Dari, and in Tajikistan as Tajik (Taleghani, 2009). There are approximately sixty million Persian speakers in the entire world. In spite of that relatively significant number, when Persian leaves the above-mentioned countries, it begins to fade away in the new host countries, of which Canada is one example. The immigrant Persian speakers find it hard to ensure their children continue using Persian because they neither need it for their education and career nor use it in their daily lives. Another reason could

be, as Weinreich (2010) states, “the speakers’ critical attitude towards it, which is based on the fact that they perceive their traditional mother tongue as playing a negative role in determining their social position in society.” (p. 53).

Persian as Second Language

When a language becomes a second language, it means that it becomes necessary in a person’s daily life or career. For example, those who migrate to Iran for work or for personal reasons without prior knowledge of Persian may suddenly discover it is important for them. Persian might not be the first language they would normally want to learn, especially as it is often portrayed negatively by the media. However, as they start their new lives in Iran, they experience first and then need to learn it as quickly as possible. As Engin (2009) says,

Gardner and Lambert (1972) found that the pragmatic purpose for learning a second language was derived from a personal desire to know the native speakers of the target language. Second language learners are interested in learning about native speakers of that language and understanding the main purpose of the ways of life in the target language (p. 1035).

Persian Language, Culture and Traditions

Persian language can become more interesting and attractive for non-native Persian adult learners if it is not taught only through grammar or vocabulary. Usually, learners prefer to study the language together with cultural and traditional elements. Learning any language needs to be linked to culture and traditions of the country whose language it is. If not, it is hard, especially for adult learners, to study the language and

keep engaged in it. Knowledge of culture and traditions helps create a stronger commitment on the part of the learner. Indeed, learning a new language should never be done without the cultural component. Schwartz and Dobrin (2016) explain,

In other words, the ultimate aim of language revitalization is not just to revive or maintain the use of a particular lexical and grammatical code in a community but to use a heritage language's association with an ancestral past to enrich the cultural present—and sustain a cultural future (p. 114).

Persian Language, History and Literature

Persian, with its long history of literary tradition can be a stimulating undertaking for learners. If the teacher of Persian has broad knowledge of Persian history and literature and is able to talk about it in class, she is sure to observe the stimulating and motivating effect it has on her students. Indeed, some students who have no Iranian friends or spouses say they want to learn Farsi because they wish to read and understand Persian poems. Wiles (2015) comments, “Dante attempts both artistic and theoretical solutions. He is at once a sensitive user and appreciator of language and a student of its nature, function, organization, and history” (n.p.). He further adds, “It speaks of the nature of a higher love and is also the movement that most explicitly addresses the nature and function of language, especially as it is used in poetry” (p. 761). Dante believes that a language can be learnt if it is following the trajectory of its history, art and nature. Learning a language cannot be an attractive proposition if it is not linked with art, history and literature of the country.

Persian Language and Social Integration

As we see in the responses of almost all the students interviewed for this study, the desire to make Iranian friends or become part of the Iranian community in Montreal is the driving force behind them taking Farsi classes. The students are interested in knowing about the Iranian way of life as well as the sense of values. Learning the language is a way into the community, a path to social acceptance, which is known to help learners develop language skills. According to Ritchey and Dean (2014), “For new immigrants, having or gaining skill in the language of their host country is critical to successful social integration. As such, language is a form of human capital.” (p. 55). With reference to what Ritchey and Dean posit, in a way similar to how immigrants want to integrate with people of the host country, non-native adult learners of Persian want to improve their language skills in order to socialize with Iranians.

Persian Classes and Environment

A pleasant classroom environment allows adult learners to participate more freely and in turn, learn more effectively. For most non-native learners of Persian outside of Iran, learning the language is not necessary therefore it is paramount that classes are enjoyable and stress-free. A friendly, welcoming class is also the one that could attract new students and make sure they stay. Vu and Vu (2012) comment saying,

Our teaching practice indicated that one answer to this question is to include humor and create a pleasant learning atmosphere in the classroom to make the learners feel relaxed and safe. In fact, the value of humor in education has long been recognized (as cited in Minchew & Hopper 2008, p. 44-45).

When the teacher manages to create a pleasant and safe classroom for her students, the learning process becomes faster and more attractive ensuring the students continue learning the language.

Theoretical Framework

While I have referred to a large number of scholars throughout the process of writing this thesis, the educational theories of Obiero (2010), Barette (2016) and Abasi (2014) are the most closely relevant to this study. The initial objective of my thesis was to examine how Persian can be revitalized through non-native adult learners. In the process however, it changed to an inquiry into learners' motivation to study Farsi. The current focus of my study is inclusive of both these themes, as I realized the relevance of learner motivation to revitalizing of Persian by non-native adult learners. In this respect, my approach was informed by Obiero (2010) who believes that "the successful revitalization of a mother tongue allows its speakers to regain a collective sense of worth and identity that gives them the impetus to participate in all aspects of community life" (p. 287). Revitalizing a previously underused mother tongue has a hugely positive effect on its speakers and encourages them to make greater efforts in keeping it alive while strengthening the bond between them. According to Barette (2016) "larger and geographically central language communities have more resources available and more highly-educated speakers participating in revitalization efforts" (p. 277-78). In other words, non-native learners can become involved in the preservation of a language- Abasi (2014) also declares "American learners in an advanced-level Persian-as-a-foreign-language course with the aim of gaining insights" (p. 225). As already mentioned in this thesis, attracting non-native adult learners and encouraging them to take up Farsi is to a

large extent dependent on the teaching methods used in class. Flexibility and meeting the students' needs seem to be the key. If learning the Persian alphabet poses problems to beginner learners, "Finglish" (also referred to here) can help facilitate the process. It is evident that making learning easy and accessible to non-native adult learners needs to remain at the forefront of efforts to keep Persian from disappearing in the diaspora. Teachers need to adapt to the learners' needs and create for them a welcoming and nurturing learning environment as well as finding a teaching method that can make them motivated to stay in the class and be among the other classmates. Stern and Sterne (1958) believe that "Further experience with these tutorial methods revealed that the adults profited more from group study than from independent reading. They wanted to meet with their tutors at more frequent intervals, preferably weekly" (p. 60). As can be seen from all the theories used in my study, creating a motivating environment for learning is crucial if preservation of this language is at stake.

Literature Review

Revitalizing Language and Cultural Preservation

The literature review of this study includes theories and research on saving language and cultural preservation. With disappearing languages, histories, culture and traditions also disappear. When immigrants integrate with the local population of the host country, the future of their native language and heritage begins to look bleak (Saving a Tribal Language, 2010). When you lose your language, you lose with it all the knowledge that has been refined over millennia. It is not the number of speakers that predicts language vitality but a low transmission rate. The reason why some languages begin to disappear is the attitude of both the dominant and minority language speakers. People from minority

culture just abandon their language due to a sense of hopelessness. According to Harrison (2016) children of such people grow up and often regret they don't speak their parents' language. It is really sad to see a language die instead of it being preserved because, as I stated earlier, preserving a language means preserving culture, history and tradition. As Gibbs (2002) said, "Language is the most important element in the culture of a community. When it dies, you lose the special knowledge of that culture and a unique window on the world" (p. 80). Every language opens-up a door to understanding the culture, especially in reference to two different languages and cultures. People tend to understand each other better when they know each other's languages that later can be passed on to their children. Language teachers can play a very positive role in saving languages in multicultural countries like Canada. Edwards (2007) believes, "To make a real contribution to the lives of those whose "small" languages and cultures are overshadowed by large and overbearing ones" (p. 102). When words of a language are not repeated and used constantly, the language cannot be saved. Isurin and Seidel (2015) say: "Using himself as the only subject of experimentation, he found that increased repetition during a period of study provided savings in relearning at a later time" (p. 768). Preserving their mother tongue or practicing it for the immigrants who need to speak the dominant language like English or French is not easy. When a language is not practiced, it can vanish. Saving endangered languages have become the centre of attention during these recent years, and numbers of experts are working to keep and preserve native languages. Immigrants can help experts with revitalizing the ignored languages, along with teachers who can find ways of attracting students and making sure they continue learning. Grenoble and Whaley (2006) believe,

the politically and emotionally correct answer to the question of whether people want to preserve or revitalize their language and culture is invariably yes, although unspoken but deep doubts, fears, and anxieties about traditional language and culture may actually mean that people are not willing to become personally involved. Instead, they may believe that others can “save” the language for them. Yet any revitalization program requires an ongoing personal commitment from at least a large percentage of community members (p. 48).

Language teachers play a positive role in keeping the language alive and with it, help preserve culture and traditions. Respectively Johansen (2004) states: “Why teach language? Little Bear said that ‘language is the basis of sovereignty,’ as well as the vessel of culture. During the nineteenth century, said Little Bear, the United States showed its respect for Native American languages’ essential role in culture by trying to eliminate them” (567). Language is an archaeological vehicle, full of the remnants of dead and living pasts, lost and buried civilizations and technologies. The language we speak is a whole palimpsest of human effort and history (Zuckermann, Shakuto-Neoh, & Quer, 2014). There are many studies regarding endangered languages in need of saving.

Many minority languages are facing language genocide and loss with the widespread use of dominant language in nation-state. The minorities in mainland China also meet this problem. The assimilation and acculturation from the host culture are very obvious and overwhelming. Many minority people have accepted mainstream Han ideology, culture and language for economic and political reasons, falling into mixed identity problem (Chun Zhang & Qingchun, 2012, p. 713).

Women can also play a role in saving local language and culture. Sadiqi (2007) explains, Moroccan women have played an essential role in preserving Amazigh language and culture, a role that has only very recently started to be fully appreciated. Indeed, the complex question of the point where ‘gender’ and ‘language and culture’ meet, and the relationship between that meeting point and the general status of women, is still a subject very little discussed in Morocco, although the citizenship and status of women in this multilingual and multicultural country are closely tied in with the Moroccan languages and their usage (p. 26).

Female teachers of Persian in a host county can try their best to find pleasant and easy methods to teach Persian to non-native learners who attend classes. Saving a language in a multilingual and multicultural country needs constant work and attention.

Adults’ Motivation to Learn Languages

Adults usually start to learn something when they feel motivated and wish to increase their knowledge. In other words, lack of sufficient motivation to learn a language other than their own means adults are unlikely to try their hand at it. Luke and Justice (2016) state “Motivation has a significant influence on adult learners because it enhances and mediates learning during instruction and is a consequence of the learning” (p. 75).

Also Gom (2009) explains that,

To understand other issues related to motivation, you cannot go past knowing what it is. Motivation is an influence or a stimulus. This stimulus, whatever it might be, drives people towards the achievement of something in their lives. People’s efforts are expended on a given task in which their behavior simultaneously changes towards reaching the goal (p. 17).

This assertion describes a process most people can identify with. The drive to learn something affects how we act and how much energy we are prepared to devote to the task ahead. The six participants of this study can serve as one example. Their drive, resulting from necessity to communicate daily in Persian, is what made them start learning and, as my analysis of the interviews with them show later on in this thesis, it changed their attitudes and perceptions. Their motivation is directly linked to their objectives. As Ritchey and Dean (2014) succinctly state “In brief, goal theory posited that motivation is intimately linked to both student interest and student self-efficacy (i.e., a student’s belief in their ability to complete a task in a specific context)” (p. 57). The non-native adult learners of Persian I have taught over the years showed that, even if the students need to learn the language but do not like the teacher’s approach or indeed the teacher, they are unlikely to continue learning. Students need to have a good relationship with both the teacher and other classmates for their learning to be successful. McEown, Sawaki, and Harada (2017) comment as follows,

The theory proposes that the motivation to learn a language is caused by attitudes toward the learning situation. Their series of studies showed that the evaluation of teachers and their classes can play important roles in terms of achievement, regardless of language contexts (Gardner, 2005; Masgoret & Gardner, 2003, p. 535-36).

As the world we are living in is becoming increasingly globalised people move from country to country with greater ease. New arrivals can motivate the original inhabitants of a place to learn a new language. Montreal is just one of many examples of multicultural cities where people begin to get interested in speaking more than just

English and French. Commenting on this, Dornyei and Al-Hoorie (2017) declare, “While Global English maintained its high profile in terms of the learners’ language attitudes, the results revealed that the study of the other targeted languages became an increasingly specialized domain of interest” (p. 456).

Chapter Three: Methodology

The participants of this qualitative exploratory study are non-native Persian adult learners who have been studying the language with me for the last five years. First, I sent the students a letter of introduction inviting them to participate in the research study and asking them whether they would agree to being interviewed. Six students were chosen; three of them were new students studying for less than a year and three others were selected from among those who had been studying for about two years. There are male and female participants included in the respondents and representing a range of educational, working and professional experience. The participants spoke at least three languages, English, French and a third language before starting to study Farsi. The one-hour interview took place face to face, one by one, and was audio-recorded with prior consent. Gibbs (2007) states, “observing actions as well as interviewing respondents are useful” (as cited in Glesne, 2016, p. 45). I have transcribed each audio-recorded interview and I shared the transcribed texts with each of the students and gave them two weeks from the date of receipt of the text in order to do any corrections and changes. The next phase was to analyze the narratives and find emerging themes.

Presentation of Data

This exploratory study is based on the insights I gained through my own teaching experience, from literature review as well as interviews with six participants who are my non-native, adult students of Persian. The data comprise my observations and views, the different ideas from experts in the literature review, and of course the students’ ideas and viewpoints. The interviews were recorded, transcribed and analyzed. My reflections, drawing on personal experience, are also included as part of the analysis. I present the

data in the form of narratives describing experiences of six non-native adult learners who study Farsi at Dekhoda Persian School as well as in private classes. The school is mainly for children from five to twelve years old but this year, responding to parents' requests, the board of the school intends to open additional classes for children who are thirteen to seventeen or eighteen. For the last six years Dekhoda Persian School has also been offering a class for non-native, adult learners of Persian. Six among those who volunteered, were chosen to participate in this study. The three female and three male students who volunteered to do the interview are between 25 and 48 years old and have different cultural, educational, and professional backgrounds. The transcribed interviews offer insights into the students' motivations for learning Farsi. The theme of the study emerged from the data analysis of the interviews. In addition, my own reflections gained from literature as well as my experience, have been added to the analysis.

Introducing the interviewees:

Name	Gender	Age	Occupation	learning Persian	Education
Tatiana	Female	34	Student - architecture	2 years	Master
Marc-Antoine	Male	25	Student – civil engineering	1.5 year	Bachelor
Valerie	Female	48	Instructor	Almost 1 year	Master
Georges	Male	39	Community worker	2 years	Ph.D.
Cheraquie	Female	41	Customer service	Almost 1 year	Bachelor
Patrick	Male	43	Programme analyst	1 year	Bachelor

Table 1. Interviewee's information

Presentation of Interview Results

The following section presents the thoughts and experiences of six volunteer participants who have studied Persian at the Dehkhoda school and privately. Dehkhoda Persian School offers classes of Persian to Iranian and half-Iranian children from five to twelve years of age. The class for adults started six years ago and I have been teaching it since 2012. The school accepts non-native adult students of Persian who are Canadian citizens of different ages and origins, and who speak either French or English. The class welcomes all adults from 15 to 70, with different educational and professional backgrounds. Three women and three men were interviewed and their personal experiences and opinions interpretations are mentioned as transcribed by the interviews to express the personal perspective of each participant.

Tatiana

Tatiana, a 34-year old student who studies architecture at the level of master's degree at the University of Quebec in Montreal (UQÀM) has been studying Farsi for two years. Her engagement and subsequent marriage to an Iranian has made her determined to improve her Persian. Becoming part of an Iranian family and having several Iranian friends made learning Farsi imperative for Tatiana.

What motivates you to study Persian? After getting married to her current husband Tatiana's motivation grew significantly as she realised speaking Persian would help her communicate not only with him but also his friends and family when they come to visit from Iran. In response to my question she says,

For me, I begin to study Persian when I met my boyfriend's friends and everyone was talking in Persian. So, I thought it would be a privilege if I find

some words to use at the beginning for being polite and for greetings, then little by little, I discovered that there is a school like Dekhoda to go and to improve my Farsi language. I thought it would be a good idea to learn just for a bit of communication, but now my situation has changed because when I get married I have to find some more words and sentences and some ways to talk and to communicate with the family of my husband. So, I am now more interested in it and I have serious motivation. I am attempting to understand better and speak better.

For Tatiana speaking Farsi is a way of building a closer relationship with her husband's family and friends. Moreover, she recognises the need to improve her Persian as she is now facing the possibility of frequent encounters with native speakers of Farsi.

What makes you continue learning Persian? Tatiana is a person who likes to discover new cultures and traditions and learning a language is part of that process for her. In addition, as mentioned above, becoming part of an Iranian family with Iranian friends and acquaintances is a source of motivation for her. Her long-term goal is being able to read Persian literature. She hopes to continue studying as long as she is able to. She explains,

I like to continue learning Persian because I love Iranian peoples, I love my teacher also, and of course, I am thinking of the future also to connect with Iranians here and peoples from Iran and eventually to understand my husband's family and their traditions and cultures. There is also a big advantage for me to read the Persian literature which is a treasure, of course, I am not sure if one day I can read them, but it would be excellent, it is a long term target. For short term continuation is to have enough knowledge for friendly and family communication, but thinking of Persian academic study needs to take a longer time and many years. But, I think I like to continue as much as my spare times allow me to.

It is clear that what drives Tatiana in her determination to keep learning Persian is her circumstances. Had she not been married to an Iranian, it is likely she would not have any interest in Farsi classes.

What are you hoping to gain from learning Persian? When I asked Tatiana what she wanted to achieve from learning Persian, she talked about the effect that learning a foreign language can have on one's mind. She believes that learning a new language builds bridges between people and opens their minds to new cultures and styles of living. She explains,

Actually in general learning, any foreign language gives you like more opportunities that you can be more open minded. So, you can understand better the other culture and not only your own culture. Learning language is much more than just words and sounds because there are some words that maybe do not exist in my language and it is only and really cultural. When I am learning Persian, I am learning and gaining knowledge about traditions and cultures and then I find that it is very interesting.

For Tatiana, learning a language is much more than acquiring a useful communication tool. It is also an opportunity to learn about culture and traditions of a given country. In addition, Tatiana is interested in learning words and sounds that cannot be found in her own native tongue.

How do you see yourself making use of your knowledge of Persian? Tatiana talks about her experience of learning Farsi and about the importance of making studying enjoyable. She also mentions her new Iranian friends. She says,

For the beginning, it was just like for fun to say hello, comment ca va, salaam, and well, all the time, it was just like playing with words with friends. I talked about something that they could respond me. Even though I do not

talk Farsi at home and only French, but when I am with Iranian friends and family coming from Iran, then actually I am obliged to talk whatever I have learned in words and in sentences. So, this obligation makes me use of my Persian knowledge. I am also motivated to use my Farsi knowledge to have another vision of life; Iranians have another style of life even another tradition and religion, everything is different. All these aspects motivate me to use my Farsi knowledge to connect. The other element that makes me use my Farsi is watching Iranian movies that they are actually well-known abroad, and they have got some prizes. I watch movies sometimes with subtitles and sometimes not and when I don't understand, Ali, my boyfriend and future husband translates for me. I also watch cartoons and talk to children that in this case I use my Persian knowledge in a better way. When Iranian children say that my sentences and words are correct, I become proud of myself.

Tatiana is using her Persian to communicate with friends and family, to watch movies but also to sometimes talk with children. Her talking to children is of particular interest to me because through it, we could see how someone like Tatiana can help preserve Persian among the third generation Iranians in Montreal. As a non-native speaker of Farsi she could be perceived as a positive role model for Iranian children born outside of Iran. It is common among third generation Iranians to mix Persian with their other mother tongue (French or English) so meeting someone like Tatiana, who makes a real effort to learn their language, could have a positive impact on their motivation to speak Farsi.

What do you do to improve your Persian language skills? For Tatiana, Farsi classes, books written in beginner-level Persian, as well as her husband Ali are the best sources of knowledge of Farsi. As she is a student and often busy with coursework, going to classes at the Dehkhoda School is frequently all she can spare time for. She explains,

At the moment, I don't really force myself to do something extra than going to my Farsi classes because I have school, my classes, semesters and everything. But, I attend Farsi classes routinely that help me keep going even if I don't have so much free time to study more. In summer time, like last year, when I had a lot of free time, I went to the library, I took some books for Farsi beginners, and I really liked to read them to discover some more words, some more simple phrases and sentences. But, for the rest of they year, it's just only the Farsi classes that improve my Persian language skills, and of course I can say that Ali helps me to make my sentences better.

At busy times, taking classes is really helpful as it provides Tatiana with the only opportunity to maintain her level of Persian and practice speaking.

What teaching methods do you find the most useful? Tatiana likes the actual speaking practice in class the most. She likes to have vocabulary items written on the board as it can help her learn new words and incorporate them into speaking. She believes that all methods used in class are useful and is very positive about utilizing every opportunity to practice and learn. She explains,

The best way of course is to have dialogue, making dialogues, going through some simple vocabulary, verbs and phrases around one topic and then practicing accordingly. And of course repetition, which is the most important part for speaking practice. Writing on the blackboard in the class is also a real helping part for speaking. For me visual learning, listening and speaking and making connections between an image and a word is very helpful. I find

learning from kids' books very helpful. As I am an architect, so, I learn more visually and from keeping the words and imaging the words in mind. And eventually, learning through objects like teaching children and having cards with images, having Iranian homemade food with the real traditions and in a restaurant in order to discover the different dishes and the tastes all can be good methods besides teaching and classes methods. In general, we can say that there are thousands of methods for learning a language.

In her response, Tatiana expresses her enthusiasm for less traditional ways of learning a language, for example through enjoyment of food and partaking in real life experiences such as going to restaurants serving food of the country one is learning the language of. She remains positive about the more traditional teaching methods used in the language class she attends as well.

How long do you plan to continue taking Persian classes? When I ask Tatiana how long she plans to take Persian classes she replies,

It is difficult to say how long I need it or how long I feel like continuing the Persian classes. It depends also on the future. I don't have a real number of years in mind now, it depends on the possibilities and staying in Montreal, but I like to keep on going to Farsi classes even if we move to another city. It is very interesting for me and can help other students who are just at the beginning level of learning Persian. But, I think of two more years for going to classes because there is no doubt that it can be a development besides studying by self.

Tatiana would like to continue taking Persian classes for two more years or until she feels she could help others learn. Her confidence is impressive and I applaud her for it. It is sometimes the case that there is a late joining student at our school in which case it could be good if an older student with some knowledge of Persian was able to help them

settle in. With her enthusiasm, confidence and the possibility that she might one day be a teacher of Farsi, Tatiana seems to be a good candidate for that role.

Would you recommend this Persian course to your friends and family?

When asked this question, Tatiana immediately responds,

Yes, I would recommend this Persian course to my friends and family, especially for students who want to begin learning Persian, it gives them a very good introduction like vocabulary, words, dialogues and other related elements. For example, Dehkhoda school is not the only language school, there are other schools that give you just the language, and you keep learning only grammar, sentences, structures and verbs or maybe they are more focused on the language. But, here in our Persian classes and the school itself we learn other related issues. For example, you can see the Iranian community, and children who go around because it is a children's school. Iranians there make tea, kebab, their own food, so for our class breaks, I go down and just listen to people who are native speakers and they are very friendly and welcome to answer my questions, if I do want to ask anything. You can see their behaviour, their styles of communication, their greetings' words as everything it is different. So, it is not just for learning Persian language, but you have an opportunity to see the people and to be connected. This school can also give you the chance to attend the Iranian dance, music, art and calligraphy classes. I choose this course and recommend it to others because if I need to get to know more about something particular, I can freely ask my teacher, and she comes with appropriate vocabulary that it is really for me. So, it is also like an individual lesson. In fact, it is a class that you get just to know the topics that are interesting for you, and we are not talking about something that we do not need and are not important for us. It is good because we learn individually and in a group. We are always progressing, but I can suggest to have some books or even to create a Facebook page among

our teacher just for adults' class besides the photocopies we receive from our teacher.

Tatiana would recommend the Persian classes not only because she believes they provide a sound instruction in the language but also because of what the Dehkhoda school offers outside of it; namely cultural events and the opportunity to meet Iranians, adults and children alike. Tatiana also feels that the classes cater to each student's individual needs and makes the effort to understand what is important to them.

How has this course changed your perception of Persian culture and traditions? Tatiana does not think the course has changed her perception of Persian culture and traditions, but believes it has provided her with more knowledge about it while helping her improve her Farsi. In response to the question she explains,

For me personally, I cannot say that it has changed my perception but it had made it a wider range of knowledge for me. It is like everyday things that you can discover only if you are involved with. Of course, I can say that I had a little knowledge, but then when I started coming to our Farsi class, I got more about the culture and traditions, and this is something that I am proud of it. So, as you give us more details, it makes my perception wider for Iranian's culture, traditions and history. As you are a professional teacher, and you have the knowledge, so, you can explain more professionally like teaching the language. Well it has improved my vision, but I could not say that it has changed completely, it is mostly like making my perception wider.

Tatiana appreciates the opportunities offered by the Dehkhoda school and is positive about learning Persian. One day this young woman might have half Iranian children and the responsibility of ensuring they speak Persian will then fall on her. If that happens, she will be a positive agent in preserving this fading language.

Marc-Antoine

Marc-Antoine is a 25-year old student of civil engineering at École de technologie supérieure of the Université du Québec. He has been studying Farsi for two years, and I have found him to be very passionate about learning it even though he is neither married to an Iranian nor has any close Iranian friends. He seems naturally motivated to learn Persian and get to know the culture, traditions and even Iranian poetry such as that of Hafez. He sometimes asks me to read him Hafez's poems and translate them for him. He is also interested in learning how to cook Iranian food because he thinks not only the language, but also the food culture of a given country can make one's interest in it grow deeper. He is always happy to speak with Iranians on and off his university campus. Here is how he replies to the following question:

What motivates you to study Persian?

First, I met a few native Farsi speakers who gave me a certain introduction to the Persian culture. At the time, I was looking for a new language to learn, so, at the beginning of my investigation, I really got interested in the history of the culture, and as I learned from the contacts, I really fell in love with the Persian cultural heritage and it became one of my motivations to learn Farsi. Second of all, the values and traditions that I got acquainted with, made me more motivated to study this language. additional elements into my motivation. My curiosity pushed me to continue and even go further because it is such an interesting and rich language and culture. The third point, I can say that by learning other languages, studying Persian can also be the one that motivates me to study it and learning it fluently to go to Iran and speak the language properly. And because of my love for history and my love for knowing the culture keeps me interested in learning Persian and progressing.

Marc-Antoine's interest in going to Iran, visiting sites of ancient history and learning about the culture is what motivates him to study Persian. His desire for learning the language made him look for and find Iranian friends. I often see him trying his best and succeeding at speaking Farsi to Iranians whenever he has the chance. He also promotes the idea of learning Farsi among his Quebecer friends.

What makes you continue learning Persian? Marc-Antoine is a very sociable person and as I see it, this is one factor that makes him continue learning Persian. He elaborates as follows,

Actually, it is a part of the answer that I have already said for the first question. I would say the people I have met really make me realize that certain part of me get influenced by my learning. My learning the custom, is important for certain perceptions. When I started learning Persian, I thought I could be good in learning this language and know the enriched culture, and I also started to be influenced by it now. Even though I am studying, working and have a lot of things to do still this kind of class that I have on the side gives me a kind of oasis. It gives me a kind of diversity and a certain access to culture and something that makes me feel good. Continuing learning Persian has become a hobby and a part of me. I wish I could have more time and more Iranian people around me to practice more besides my class. My Farsi class has become a ritual, and I continue because it's a pleasure for me and I am progressing. It is just to say that I feel good.

As a teacher and an Iranian, I am very happy when I see Marc-Antoine's eagerness to continue studying Persian as well as his great interest in not only learning to speak it fluently but also getting to know the culture and traditions of Iran. It makes me feel like I, a Persian language teacher and a member of the Montreal community, can also

play my part in keeping Persian alive. Of course none of this would be possible without the help of people like Marc-Antoine and others who choose to learn Farsi.

What are you hoping to gain from learning Persian? I asked him what he hoped to achieve through learning Persian and he replied,

My hopes, my hopes, if I go through all I have said, I am already gaining something from it. If I go specifically to the third point of my motivations I have already told about, I can say that this is a travel for me and it is like a contact with a part of the world that is far away. But, at the same time, we can say that it is also close, because I see a point of interaction between Iran and the West in certain things and to realize these connections, for me it can be very good and interesting to have this human link. When I go to Iran and have a tangible experience of that part of the world, I can learn a lot from it. In fact, learning Persian is to exchange, and to learn from one another.

When I asked him what he meant by “to exchange” he said he meant to exchange knowledge of culture and traditions but also to find commonalities in history and our respective languages. Marc-Antoine believes that Persian and French have some similarities and that both cultures have things in common. As a matter of fact, I once gave students a 17 pages long handout containing words that Persian shares with French and the students have found them useful in their learning.

How do you see yourself making use of your knowledge of Persian? When I ask him how he sees himself making use of his knowledge of Persian, he explains,

The most evident thing that we can imagine from learning Persian is travelling to Iran or meeting people here in Montreal that are native speakers and making connection with these people and building a better relationship. In fact, all is about human aspects and to preserve this diversity and the knowledge of such an interesting and nice culture in the map of the world. It

is good to try to make people hear and realize this language and culture because there are many confusions and people often generalize. By the knowledge I got from learning this language, I found meeting Iranian people, and learning new traditions, and seeing it in a much more positive way. I would say, it is more about changing mentalities and educating myself.

Marc-Antoine appears to be saying that through learning Persian he can learn new things and broaden his horizons. Persian is for him a window to an entirely new world where he can learn not only the language but also about culture, traditions and people. He confesses to have some preconceived ideas which he now understands to have been wrong. Learning Persian has allowed him to better understand his Iranian friends and Iranians in general.

What do you do to improve your Persian language skills? To this question Marc-Antoine confidently says,

Of course, I think that I am not a very good student. I would say, because I don't have enough time to leave it for my Persian language. I am working a lot, I am studying a lot, I don't have close person to make me practice on a daily basis. It's a bit harder for me to really make a strict discipline. I think the most important thing in my case is to really speak and read and make it into two different steps. First, I need to review and put the words in my memory and then use it because when I use it, I easily keep it in my mind. Something that I must do and practice it as a certain job while I am at home and before going to the class, so, I can practice it accordingly in the class, and also when I am out of my class, to review what I have learnt and what I have said. In fact, it is to put everything into practice to improve and progress my Farsi.

I asked Marc-Antoine whether he tried to speak Persian when he met Iranians to which he responded that he would normally first try to speak in English or French and then try to greet the person in Farsi. If the person smiled, he would then try to speak in Persian thus creating an opportunity to practice it. He explains,

I have more courage now to speak Farsi than before. When my vocabulary was not sufficient, I was scared to speak, but now I think, I have the courage to do so. Of course, still, I need to improve and progress because I cannot go to deeper conversation with Iranians.

What do you do to improve your Persian language skills?

Of course, of course, I want more, I want to go further, it is one of my objectives. I know, it's not utopia, and I know it is kind of hard, but I want to reach a certain capacity to be able to analyze Persian poems, classical poems, maybe it is a very ambitious issue. Now that I am getting confident to speak to other Iranian people and I am not feeling shy any more, I feel proud about it especially when Iranian people get happy seeing me speaking their language make me happier to improve my Persian language skills.

Marc-Antoine is committed to getting his Persian to a level high enough for him to be able to interpret poetry and have more meaningful conversations. He is someone who likes to go deeper in conversations so it is not surprising he expresses the above ambitions.

What teaching methods do you find the most useful? There are several teaching methods that have proved helpful for Marc-Antoine. He believes his weekly Farsi class to be very beneficial for him as he does not have daily contact with the language. He explains,

For me, my weekly Persian class and its method is a pleasure to do and it has become like a hobby for me. To have a weekly conversation in our class and do a revision of some aspects, sometimes we take a subject and we use the relevant words and verbs, we focus on them and we do conversation. I think this way is the most efficient method for me because I learn almost all the vocabularies of one subject and then go to another and then another. Reading small stories, listening to the songs, reading the songs' texts and repeating the words can be also helpful and useful, as I can put a melody to the words. As I like food and taste different kinds of food, so reading the Persian food's recipe and cooking it lately is not only learning the words, but you eventually put it in a plate to eat. So, two things are done at the same time, eating delicious food and learning the language. This is also a good method.

Marc-Antoine is clearly taking the full advantage of his Persian class and even though he does not have any Iranian friends to practice with, I see him improving his Farsi. He has found his own effective way of learning and his efforts are paying off.

How long do you plan to continue taking Persian classes? Marc-Antoine is someone who does not seem to give up what he is doing without giving it a proper try. Apart from French (his mother-tongue) and English, he also speaks Spanish and Portuguese. His Spanish is particularly fluent. Commenting on it he says,

I continue as long as my teacher is tired of me, and then he laughs. I don't have a date of ending, even if I travel to Iran and return to Montreal, I will continue learning Farsi because I am not trying to learn something and go

somewhere else and drop it. For me, learning a language like Persian becomes a part of me and my identity, of course, I do not become a Persian, that's for sure, but it is a part of me. It is a connection that has been created and that is something that I want to keep it, it is a personal enrichment.

Marc-Antoine seems to want to continue learning Persian as long as it takes for him to become fluent in it. I can see him as someone who could help promote Farsi to others and thus help preserve it.

Would you recommend this Persian course to your friends and family? When I raise this question to Marc-Antoine, he immediately answers by saying,

Yes, I already did. The atmosphere, the environment of learning this rich language is so nice and pleasant. You are not only learning a language with the very straight structure, you are really meeting the people and you as a teacher give me the courage to recommend this course to any of my friends or member of the family who wants to learn Persian. A book is not enough because learning a book is like learning a code, but attending the classes and the face that the teacher shows while teaching is something that is definitely needed. So, yes, yes, I have already recommended this to one of my friends, and I want to recommend it to two more friends that they have become interested.

Naturally as a teacher I am very pleased to hear one of my students speak so enthusiastically about the course I teach. I feel a sense of pride in knowing that my mother tongue is being preserved through students like Marc-Antoine. The concept of “teacher’s face” he mentions means, in my view, that a teacher can inspire students to continue learning. The teacher is like an ambassador of the language she teaches, its “face”, as it were. It is the teacher’s duty to be a positive model for students, especially when it comes to languages that are in danger of disappearing.

How has this course changed your perception of Persian culture and traditions? Marc-Antoine draws on his experiences of learning Persian and talks about how the course helped change some of his perceptions. He acknowledges that his growing awareness of the language has helped him to better understand Iranian culture and traditions. He states,

Changes are important. I think learning about Persian culture and traditions specifically here in this part of the world can change your perception very easily because you have a small window that often opens by the media and there are not very much contacts. So, I think, when you start learning Persian language, you are open to learn a lot and to talk a lot about Persian culture to other people and they become interested because they realize that there is a part of the world that they don't know and they need to gain and comprehend a lot about it. Instead of saying, the course has changed my perception, I can say that beside my Persian course, the warm welcoming and humanity that I have received from the Iranians with their sense of humour has given me a very great important link of culture. Iranian people are very open about knowing their culture and present it nicely. The Persian culture is really different from what we Quebecers have, but due to my curiosity and promoting my knowledge, I sometimes think that we can learn from each other and interact together which usually ends-up with changing our perceptions. One of the things that charms me in Persian culture and traditions is the importance of poetry. We Quebecers have interesting poetry and heritage, but not many people are interested in it and read it. But, for Persians, if you talk about Hafez, Rumi or Sadi, Ferdowsi and his Shahname, you know, almost everybody knows them and they give you a sentence of that poet, sometimes they speak with each other in a poetic way. This thing really changed my perception, and attracted me. When a language course gives you the opportunity to know about the culture, the importance of the

traditions, the authors, the poets and the history, your perception about the country and its people can be changed.

For Marc-Antoine it is the people he met in the process of learning Persian that changed his perceptions about Iranian culture and traditions. His remarks suggest that being open to non-native speakers of a language, allowing them to participate in important cultural events and engaging with them on a personal level can lead to those non-native learners gaining a new positive insight into our own culture.

Valerie

Valerie is a 48 years old instructor who has been learning Persian for one school year. She is married to an Iranian and even though she speaks French with her husband and his two sons, she is still eager to learn Persian. She does not mind it when her husband and his sons talk in their mother tongue because she believes it can help her improve her Persian listening skills. Valerie is a serious and motivated non-native Persian adult student who always comes to class prepared. What follows is the questions I asked Valerie, her direct answers and my reading of some of her responses as well as my own comments. The first question asked was,

What is your motivation to study Persian? Valerie responded as follows,

My main motivation is to learn something new and to be able to understand some conversations with my husband's family. In fact, it really depends on many different things. I like to learn new things, so, as I am married to an Iranian, it makes sense to learn Persian language. If I was not married to an Iranian, I might have chosen another language to learn. It basically depends on the need to always learn something new.

Valerie's motivation to learn Persian is a direct result of her being married to an Iranian so it could be said she is driven by personal reasons. What is clear here is that Valerie has a practical need to learn Persian and without it, it is uncertain she would pick Persian as her language of choice. In other words, if she were not married to an Iranian she might have not made the same choice, regarding language study. Consequently, we can suppose that the need for adults is equal to their motivation. In Valerie's case, the Persian language is vital for her marriage as it deepens the understanding between spouses.

What makes you continue learning Persian? During this schooling year, I realized that Valerie is a serious student and anything she does or starts, she sticks with and tries to see through to the end. In other words, as long as she is able to do something she continues with it. Commenting on this aspect she says,

I do not like to give-up easily, so, I am certainly going to work at it for quite a while. In fact, for the same reasons that I was motivated to start the Persian classes in the first place.

Judging from Valerie's response to this question it is clear that she wants to continue learning Persian language as long as she can and that her motivation is linked with her marital status. Having an Iranian family and friends is what inspires her to continue learning. Without knowing it herself, by interacting with her Iranian family, this non-native Persian adult learner is not only developing her own knowledge of Persian but also acts as a promoter of Farsi to her husband's sons who, seeing her speaking it, might be encouraged to speak in their maternal tongue as well. It could be further claimed that by doing so, she is helping to preserve Persian in Montreal.

What are you hoping to gain from learning Persian? Valerie says,

Well, first of all, I found it interesting to learn the fourth language. You know, it is interesting to be able to communicate with people from different cultures and to be able to listen to what people say. I would also like to travel to Iran and to speak with people there and to socialize and to mingle with them. So, those are the goals that I hope to gain from learning Persian.

It seems that Valerie also likes to get close to different people's cultures and traditions and to understand them better. She seems to be now taking the full advantage of the opportunity that being married to an Iranian presents to her. If she were not married to an Iranian, maybe she would not have chosen Persian as her fifth language (she is already quadrilingual), but now, since she is somewhat connected to this language, she is using it to achieve her own objectives.

How do you see yourself making use of your knowledge of Persian? Valerie's response to this question is very direct. She states,

Mostly in Iran, but here also. Mostly in Iran because we are hoping to go there to visit my husband's family, but here as well as sometimes spend with various Iranian families, and they mostly speak Persian with each other. I mean they speak English with me also and even together in order to enable me to understand them. So, for me is to listen to what they are saying and maybe to contribute to some of their conversations. In fact, I like to make use of my knowledge of Persian either in Iran or here when I am in contact with Iranians and my husband's family and friends otherwise I don't see myself using it.

From Valerie's response, especially towards the end, we can understand that Persian is not used outside of Iran and here, in Canada, it is mostly used among the first or maybe the second generation Iranians only. Of course, Valerie can go to Iran with no

knowledge of Persian because these days there are travel agents that organize English-speaking tours of Iran so that travelers do not need to know the language. Accordingly, Valerie only needs to use her knowledge of Persian when she is with her husband's family or friends in order to make their mutual relationship better.

What do you do to improve your Persian language skills? Valerie works all week and when she gets home, she feels too tired to study. She has little energy and time to work on her Persian but she has her husband who is able to help her, if needed. She explains,

Not enough. Besides my Farsi classes, I study a little bit at home because at the end of the day, I don't have the energy to study and I don't want to open my eyes in front of the computer's screen any more after six hours working. So, what I try to do instead is to make my husband speak to me in Farsi, and I should remind him to keep on doing that because he forgets practicing with me. He is now speaking more with me in Persian since he likes me to improve my Farsi. So, if we do not make any effort together, we easily switch to French which is more comfortable. Most of the time, I am not spontaneously able to make sentences without books and a piece of paper. So, I say words and my husband puts it in a sentence and translates for me, and then he asks me to repeat it until I learn it. Another way, is that he speaks in Farsi, and I just listen to him in order to improve my listening skills. Now after all the mentioned practices, when I listen to people speaking Farsi, I hear words here and there, and I recognize them. Sometimes even though I recognize the word, cannot immediately click to understand the meaning of them. But, I am sure that this is just the beginning for improving my Persian language skills. I have just started going to Farsi classes almost a year, trying to speak with my husband and when his sons are in our house, I ask them not to worry about me and speak in Farsi because it doesn't bother me at all, and I am sure that it can be a good practice for me to listen and to develop my

language skills. Even though I am not surrounded by Farsi speakers every day, but I am trying my best to at least communicate somehow with my husband's family and friends that we might visit every two or three months.

From the above we see that Valerie's husband helps her and encourages her to improve her Persian language skills. Even her husband's sons play an important role in helping her improve her Persian. We can say that the non-native spouses of Iranians can play positive roles in promoting the use of Persian and helping to preserve it among the Iranian diaspora.

What teaching methods do you find the most useful? Valerie's response to this question is,

For learning languages, I know that for me what works the best or what has worked the best with English and Spanish which was to study documents, to study something in writing. I am like some people who have visual memory because I don't remember what I hear, if I see the word, then it makes a big difference for me. For instance, if you give me somebody's first name, if it's not a first name that I am used to hear and use, I will forget within a minute. But, if you write it down and I see it written then I will remember, exactly like the way you do in our class, you write the words, verbs and sentences on the board and I write them down and remember. So, for me, the more information I have on paper, the better my understanding of Persian language can be. The problem that I have with reading Persian is that I cannot read the letters as I could read Spanish and English. So the way that we learn in our class like Finglish (Farsi+English) can help me until I learn how to read Farsi alphabet. It is difficult to say that Persian writing is hard to read because the characters are not written with vowels, and the pronunciation can be said wrongly until you are quite fluent in the language. I wish we could use the Persian alphabet later in our class as we go further.

Valerie, not unlike other students in the class, needs the words to be written by the teacher and then she needs to write them herself in order to memorize and learn them better. From my experience with Valerie's class, I have found that most of the students prefer everything to be written on the board. Sometimes, if I do not write something, the students ask me to do it in both the Farsi alphabet and in English. Since it is a rather time-consuming way of learning Persian, I have come to believe that non-native Persian adult students should continue taking classes where both Farsi and English are used for at least two years.

How long do you plan to continue taking Persian classes? Valerie is someone who does not easily give-up and does not study Persian as a hobby, which could suggest that she will continue taking classes until she finds herself fluent in the language. In response to my question she explains,

I think it's going to take quite sometime for me to be comfortable with the Persian language. So, I would think that it would probably take several years, but I don't know how I will plan to learn it during several years. I know that it certainly takes several years with any language really, especially Farsi that is not similar to French, Spanish, English, etc. In general, I know that I would definitely want to continue until I easily speak this language. I want to learn it very good, otherwise I wouldn't be here in this class. In fact, this is my personality, I do not do anything or I do not start anything if I do not want to continue with it.

From her response it is clear Valerie will keep on studying Persian with the encouragement and help from her husband but also because of her character. She can be therefore viewed as a kind of promoter of Persian I have already mentioned here.

Would you recommend this Persian course to your family and friends?

Valerie is certain she would like to recommend the course, which is reflected in her decisive answer. She says,

Of course, I definitely will. I have actually recommended to my friends. I have already mentioned it to one of my friends who is francophone and lives with an Iranian man. I know that she needs to speak Farsi in order to understand Iranian's friends. I have told her that I am taking this Persian course and I am sure it can be fun for her to take it. Yes, we have fun in the class and study both together.

Valerie has indeed introduced two non-native Persian students to the Dehkhoda Farsi course for this schooling year (2017-2018), which in effect means that she has become an agent in preserving the Persian language. This illustrates how the course has encouraged her to become a promoter of it among her friends.

How has this course changed your perception of Persian culture and traditions? Since Valerie is married to an Iranian, by the time when she started coming to our Farsi classes, she was already aware of some Persian traditions and culture. She replies,

I don't think that the course changed my perception, but made it stronger for me, because you know there were many things I was aware and familiar with due to my husband who shares with me a lot about his culture, traditions and his growing-up in Iran and everything. He is very communicative for that and that's the thing I like as I have always been interested in other cultures, traditions, and languages. So, as long as he is willing to share these, I am willing to learn and is very much interesting for me; in fact, it is something that I appreciate very much. So, yes, this course hasn't really changed my

perception, but it has added to what I already knew and was studying to know and understand.

When Valerie started coming to our Farsi class, she had already had a lot of information about Persian culture and traditions so that she used to sometimes explain things to other students in some detail. For instance, once she talked about a Persian tradition called Chaharshanb-e-Souri which celebrated on the last Tuesday night of the year. The fact that she was able to do that suggests that, thanks to her husband, she had already learnt about Iran and its culture. What is more, Valerie was able to have a positive influence on other students by sharing her knowledge and perceptions of Iranian culture and traditions.

To sum up, Valerie is a non-native Persian adult student who is motivated to learn Farsi mostly because of her marriage with an Iranian. Her positive experiences with the culture make her encourage others to learn Farsi, which means that although she is not a native Farsi speaker, she can help preserve the language in a city like Montreal.

Georges

Georges is a community worker and has studied Persian at Dehkhoda school for two years. He is 39 years old and loves learning Farsi and speaks it quite well due to having a very close friendship with an Iranian family. Georges has been friends with the family for a long time, before they even had children. Now he is also close to the son and daughter of the couple. He makes a lot of effort to speak Farsi, also with the family of his friends whenever they come to visit Montreal. He is very interested in going to Iran and learning about the Iranian culture and traditions. Here is what he says about his motivation to study Persian.

What motivates you to study Persian?

The reason that I have chosen Farsi language to learn, it is due to my Iranian friends whom I know since 2003. They have a son and a little daughter, these four friends are extremely close to me and I always feel myself a part of the family and being involved in their daily activities and traditions. So, that's why and that's the reason I have chosen to learn Farsi language. In fact, I feel more close to my friends and also integrated with their conversations, and of course I can be easy for me to understand what they say. So, instead of waiting for them to translate everything in English or in French for me, I can understand the conversations myself. By going through the Farsi language and speaking with my friends in their language, and feel much closer to them, I also learn about their cultures. So, these mentioned elements are my main reasons and motivations to study Persian.

Being friends with an Iranian family has been instrumental in keeping Georges motivated to learn Persian. It is evident that having a human connection to a language, i.e. through friends or as a result of marriage, can make any language interesting to discover. Georges' positive attitude to Persian is a direct result of him being close friends with Iranians. The stronger such friendship is, the greater the motivation to learn the language and stick with it for a long time.

What makes you continue learning Persian? One of Georges' interests besides his field of work is history. He sometimes asks me very specific questions about Iran's ancient history as well as old traditions and religion. It is clear that for Georges, the desire to learn Persian is also spurred by his interest in gaining knowledge about historical issues. To attest to that, he states,

I would say that there are two reasons. First because I know that only one year is not enough to learn a language, it takes more years than that. I thought

and I hoped I could learn Farsi in two years, but now I am sure that if I can and have free time, I will go with three, four, five or more, especially one day per week for sure with my Farsi classes at Dehkhoda school. The second reason that comes from the first reason is because I want to learn a big part of Persian vocabulary to be more expressive with my sentences and also to understand mostly what my Iranian friends are saying. I really want to know more about this language, especially that this language is a very old one in the history and in this regard, I push myself to learn more. As I know more about this language, there are more historical aspects that I like to know and they are very well-known in the world. For example, Norouz that means the beginning of the new year for Iranians and which is not only the new year ceremony and celebration, but it is also about religion such as Zoroastrians, philosophy, poems and historical aspects. So, my intention is to continue and learn more about this language and discover unknown subjects.

As we see Georges' interest in continuing to learn Persian springs not only from his desire to communicate with his friends and their families, but also to enable him to learn more about issues that interest him.

What are you hoping to gain from learning Persian? Georges is a student who likes to participate in different Iranian activities that Dehkhoda school organizes, such as Norouz (on the 21st March and the New Year), Chaaharshanb-e-Souri (on the last Tuesday evening of the year), or Shab-e-Yalda (on the last night of Fall). He has also demonstrated interest in the yearly ceremony of Jashn-e-Vajehaa (the ceremony of words) when children sing, dance, play different musical instruments as well as put on theatre plays. These different celebrations are performed in Farsi and are an integral part of Iranian culture and traditions. It is clear that Georges' hope to improve his Persian is a result of him wanting to better understand the meaning of these events. He states,

I can answer you by two points. The first one is to be able to share conversation with my Persian friends, a family that I spend most of my time with, and in some occasions, this family expands into a bigger group by receiving siblings, parents, in-laws and their children. So, my hope is to gain this language to better communicate with them and to be a part of them in their gatherings. I also like to have conversations with you and your husband only in Farsi and not any other languages. Our Farsi class is a different case where sometimes we need to speak either in English or in French as it is needed. The second point is about the Persian ceremonies that are related to their culture and traditions. I really like to attend in these historical events or their yearly Bazar which is the representative of their traditions. Going to these occasions can be a very good opportunity for me because I not only develop my knowledge, but also I can to talk in Farsi with the people around and practice my Persian language, and have various Iranian food which also talks about their culture and life style.

From this interview with Georges, we can see that he is really enthusiastic about learning Persian so that he can communicate fluently with his long-term friends. Being able to deepen his knowledge of Iran transpires as another motivating factor.

How do you see yourself making use of your knowledge of Persian? After a short pause Georges answers,

For me as a beginner with this language, it is basically to be able to make small sentences, to express myself even with the small sentences. To have a short conversation, not necessarily about very complicated topics, but the basic elements of daily life. I want to understand if someone in my friends' family tell me something or something very simple to be able to understand it and respond simply. Or, when having dinner or lunch together and at the table if they ask me to pass them something, I know what they say and take the action, for instance to know "aab" as "water" or "bokhor" means "eat". So, you see, as far as I know these kinds of relevant words and verbs, I can at least have a dinner-table conversation easily. These sorts of conversations are maybe the basic elements, but make me satisfied because I understand and step by step as I am more involved in their talks and can improve my speaking. I want to use my knowledge of Persian as much as I am able to understand more subjects, more topics, and more complicated sentences. At the beginning, I was satisfied with a bit, but now I want to be able to use more.

Georges seems to use his knowledge of Persian whenever he is with Iranians so that he can feel and be seen as part of the group, part of the family. His long-lasting friendship with an Iranian family has made him determined to learn Persian as best he can. This human relation for Georges has made him build-up his knowledge and use it accordingly.

What do you do to improve your Persian language skills? I always see Georges using a lot of different books and articles in Farsi. His table is covered with his notes and a number of dictionaries. Commenting on it, he declares,

For this question, I have three points to share. The first point is try to repeat words, verbs and sentences. I try to repeat alone and by myself every single thing that I learn from the three hours of our Farsi class. In the class, through the conversation that we students have among ourselves and every one of us have individual dialogue with our teacher make me improve. The discourse that we have between each other in the class and try to repeat and repeat whatever we learn make me memorize. The second reason, second point, it is improving my skills through CDs for language practice. These CDs have words, verbs grammar and conversations related to many topics from daily life to almost every issues in the world. And the third one is again being constantly with my friends as a family, in fact, whatever I do not understand and have question, I ask them to translate for me. Their two kids are very much helpful and involved in my Persian skills' improvement, as children continuously talk and ask and repeat words just the way I do when I am alone at home.

In conclusion, it is evident that Georges has both adults and children who help him to improve his language skills besides what he learns in class. He also works on his Persian with the aid of CDs and books made for non-native adult Persian students. It seems however, that it is Georges' Iranian friends who are instrumental in helping him achieve his study goals.

What teaching methods do you find the most useful? Georges studies Persian in a number of different ways and the fact that he interacts with his friends and their families is also a great source of linguistic support. Commenting on the issue he tells us,

I would give you two methods that have been used during these two years of learning Farsi. The first one was to choose a topic, so, try to understand and repeat and practice the sentences related to the topic. For instance, if the topic is about wearing winter coats, so we try to build-up small sentences and put it into a conversation. Then, our teacher provides us with different subject, and based on the subject she gives us a list of the related words and verbs and sentences as examples. Then, we students in the class pick-up the words and make good sentences to express ourselves about the relevant situation for example wearing a coat during winter in Canada. Finally, in the next class, the teacher distributes photocopies in French, English, Finglish and Persian of whatever we have already discussed, so, we can easily practice and use. This is one useful method for me. The second one that I appreciate is a conversation between the classmates; we make a group of four/five and we try to talk with each other in Persian. In fact, we imagine that we are in Tehran or other cities in Iran and speak about whatever we think of. Or, we explain about our weekly activities and entertainments. This is another kind of learning method that I truly like.

Georges seems to make a good use of the class and the notes he takes in them as well as the photocopies I provide the students with. His Persian course proves effective in helping him improve his language skills.

How long do you plan to continue taking Persian classes? Georges is always very enthusiastic about continuing with the classes as he hopes they would help him improve his speaking so that he can communicate more effectively with his Iranian friends. He explains,

Well, honestly, as much as I can. I have already read two years and my plan was to do around four or five years, but it seems that I cannot respect my plan because I do not have enough time. If I find enough time that doesn't affect my job and my private life, after these two years, I would definitely go for more years.

Most of the students I encounter, plan to continue taking classes for more than one or two years, but whether they do or not, depends on how busy they are at work and in their private lives. Since Persian is often not a language that non-native Persian adult learners need for work or in daily life, learning it is tightly linked to availability of spare time and motivation.

Would you recommend this Persian course to your friends and family?

Georges' response to this question is direct. He says,

Yes, I will recommend it to someone who has interest and who has the intention of adding a new language into his prior knowledge and know about a different culture. A language doesn't come alone and comes always with the culture and traditions. My answer would be yes, but it is divided in two sections. First, I would recommend this language because it is so rich and I feel having the capacity to communicate easier with Iranians and it has opened my personal life to a new culture and to new ideas. I can say that the richness of this language contains many valuable cultural and historical elements that it is worth to know it and to discover it. The second part, I recommend this course because of my good experience that I have had at my

Persian classes, and due to more reasons that I explained it in the question related to the teaching methods. I recommend it due the method of practicing, method of exchanging ideas and dialogue between me and my classmates and my teacher. And eventually, I recommend it because the Persian community that I have known during these two years of my studying including kids and their parents, in fact a group of adults plus kids that make us speak during break hours. To make the story short, the teaching method and regular activities at school make me recommend it for anyone who is willing to add something new.

Georges' interest in learning Persian is visible here through his eagerness to recommend the Farsi language course to his friends and family. It seems he likes the teaching method used in the classroom as well as the opportunities of interaction with both adults and children during cultural events organized by the school. In other words, Georges promotes his Farsi course to others not only because of the language itself but also the other elements mentioned in his response.

How has this course changed your perception of Persian culture and traditions? Learning a new language can help a person better communicate with people and gain new insights on many different issues.

In response to the question Georges says,

I made myself understand that Persian is not a simple language that I am trying to learn and to practice, but it is something more than this. It opened the gate for me to see that there is a very deep language with all its traditions and the culture involved that are not only related to the Persian country and the Persian society due the ancient Persian Empire, that I like to know more about it. This language is also spoken in Afghanistan and Tajikistan and they also have some kinds of similar traditions. So, as far as I go further with this

language and get to know more about the culture, beliefs, behaviours and traditions, I feel that my perception is changing from what I used to hear through media. So, this course teaches us Farsi and a big part of history, poems, myths, and Iranians' life style that with no doubt can affect our thinking and insight.

Even if some students are not interested in learning about the culture and traditions associated with the country whose language they are studying, the teacher cannot, but introduce some aspects of it in class. It is impossible to just teach the language as such, without linking it to its greater context. It is not always the case that a language course changes how the students see the world but it is always going to be a source of new knowledge and learning.

Cheraquie

Cheraquie is a 41 years old student of Persian who works at a bank in customer services. She has chosen to learn Persian because of her long-standing interest in Iran as well as the fact that she has a child with an Iranian (she is now divorced) and because she often has to deal with Iranian customers at work. Her enthusiasm for speaking Farsi and learning about Persian traditions including Iranian cuisine for example, is contagious and I too find myself inspired to teach her my mother tongue. She sends me messages almost every day inquiring about a variety of different things and I try to respond to her as fast as I can.

What motivates you to study Persian? Cheraquie explains,

I studied Political Science related to particular countries such as Cuba and Iran, and ever since then, I have always been attracted to these two countries. So, at the university, it was easier for me to learn Spanish, and I took Spanish

classes three years in a row. Now that I am much older, I still have interest in Iran. So, I decided to take the Persian courses to get acquainted with the language because to me to understand a culture, to understand a country, the way that people think and live, we have to be able to understand and speak the language. I know that it's a rich culture, it is rich in literature and I am really attracted to literature. So, I would like to be able to read and write and understand. It is only my desire to enter really more into the culture and traditions and to transfer it to my daughter as she needs to know about his father's country and anything related to. So, that's why I am motivated to take the language.

Cheraquie's motivation to study Persian is not something new. Rather, she has had a connection with Iran since her university times and with time, her interest in the language and culture only grew stronger.

What makes you continue learning Persian? Cheraquie says,

It is my interest, personal interest to know the people, to understand the way of thinking, and I guess to penetrate the world basically. I cannot say that I am interested in a special group or in a specific country if I am not being able to understand or to read. When I am with my clients at work, I really like to know their thoughts and minds so I can give a better service to them. So, the only way to get through that is by being able to learn the language. So, all make me continue learning Persian.

Cheraquie has clear reasons for learning Persian and they motivate her to continue with her studies. An adult learner without a study goal may find it hard to start studying something, especially if it is not related to her daily life.

What are you hoping to gain from learning Persian? Her answer to this question is short and direct, she states,

An open, like an open mind, better understand and better socialize. When I say basically to better understand it is like to know other people in this world and enter into their world. This can be done like through their readings, through their music and films and even their way of cooking and eating food; basically, everything that make me able to comprehend their society.

How do you see yourself making use of your knowledge of Persian? Her reaction to me asking this question suggests Cheraquie has been anticipating it. She is visibly excited and says,

Very interesting question. First of all, being able to speak the language, right now where I am working at the bank, I am surrounded by Iranians, so, that would be nice to speak with them in their language. Also to get a better understanding of their needs and that would be one thing. Make them more comfortable because from what I can see, they are very nice people, but some have difficulties to explain their needs, and I think that here the language is a barrier. So, to go like beyond the surface, it is valuable to really understand what they want and I get that. Another thing is that being able to read and understand the Persian music and literature because it seems very rich from what I can see, in fact, their music is very poetic. So, in general, my knowledge of Persian language can be used for making me able to understand to feel what I'm reading and what I'm listening to. I also like to and try to transfer at least some of my knowledge to my three-year-old little girl who has Persian blood.

Cheraquie is very fond of Iranian music, literature and even movies. She sometimes introduces me to music and movies I myself have not heard of. So, I have no

doubt that she shares her knowledge of Persian language with others and make the best use of it.

What do you do to improve your Persian language skills? Cheraquie answers,

I order books on Amazon, I try to read them and understand. I listen to music and see if I can recognize words. I have recently downloaded like a few games on my phone to learn and listening to a few lessons that I have downloaded on my phone. So, I have found it interesting while walking to work and coming back home or at gym to listen to for instance music in order to strengthen my listening power and adapt my ears to the pronunciations. What else that I do at home, I have my youngest little daughter that I try to talk to her by saying the words that I know and have her to respond to me. I have found that if you are learning at the kid level then it is probably easier to get the vocabulary and to get the words. So, that's basically what I do. I have also found myself improving while I am at the class even though we are at different levels. Being in the class is interesting because my mind is working, then I can visualize everything in my head, but when it comes for the words to come-out, there's a lot of difficulties especially when I need to put them together and make a sentence. Maybe because I am just a beginner and later when I have a lot of knowledge of the grammar and words in my mind I can make it just like the ones who are with more years of studying Persian. But, I can say that if we want to improve our language in any language, we should not translate from French or English or whatever, we need to only concentrate on the learning language itself like Farsi. Last but not least, I try to improve my Persian language skills like talking to Iranian customers or friends if in any case they are around. I believe that talking to native speakers and using your knowledge is the best way for improvement.

Cheraquie tries several different ways to improve her Persian. The most interesting is her idea to listen to Iranian music, which helps her with pronunciation.

While she is still unable to understand every word I say, listening allows her to get used to the sound of the language, which in the long run, will strengthen her comprehension skills. I believe listening to songs is a really valuable and effective technique for any adult who tries to learn a new language.

What teaching methods do you think you find the most useful? Cheraquie finds all classroom techniques useful. She says,

Honestly, I think all the methods that we practice in class such as talking on different subjects, listening to music and songs and having relevant photocopies, and of course discussing and making dialogues among students in class are all useful and efficient. I strongly believe in basics like learning alphabet and pronouncing it like the way we learn English and French. But, at the same time, we are all adults, and we need to expose ourselves more to different methods to find the most suitable one. So, listening to music is very important because everything that we learn in the class or we read in books can be better recognized by getting acquainted with different sounds.

Whatever we learn in the class or what our teacher tells us in the class can be better memorized or words can be recognized by listening to music. And from the music, and the conversations that we get in our class, we realize that when we also watch a movie, we get to hear the words correctly. So, all these elements help me better learn besides the course methods.

Cheraquie seems to like it when what we do in class is somewhat related to authentic materials or talks about lives of ordinary Iranians. She enjoys learning through songs and movies as they not only help her with the language but also are sources of knowledge about Iran, its people and culture.

How long do you plan to continue taking Persian classes? Cheraquie wants to learn enough Persian to be able to understand Persian songs and movies as well as be able to better serve her Iranian customers. Her long-term objective is transferring her knowledge to her young daughter. In response to the question she says,

OK. that's a very good question that I want to ask you personally. What could I do? What my goal would be for the next years? Could I go to the university and actually take Persian classes there and keep taking classes with you, with Dehkhoda? As I am happy with my Persian classes right now, and each time, I am really looking forward to it, I am thinking of taking both, the university and my present classes. I am adult and can handle both as I know what I want to achieve as much as I am able to read almost everything and to understand it properly. But, for the time being, I think I should think of having another year of my Persian classes and then go to university maybe achieve a higher academic level.

Cheraquie expects a lot of herself, which in turn might help her achieve more in her studies. Whether she is able to continue with the intensity she plans to, remains to be seen as it will depend on her personal circumstances.

Would you recommend this Persian course to your friends or to your family?

Cheraquie responds,

Yes, of course because I have found it very interesting and that's a good way to go. The programme is relaxed and it is done in a pleasant and peaceful class environment, and it is not in a big group of students, and that also makes the learning process better and easier. Honestly, I love having to know that I have exams as I work a lot under pressure, but we do not take any exams or quizzes and this is something that students prefer and learn better in such classes. It is a class that teacher writes every single thing on the board and makes sure that every student has completely taken notes. This course gives

students an introduction not only to the language but also to other important issues like culture, traditions, history and sometimes famous Persian poets. In fact, this is a pushing course to like the language and to continue it. So, why not recommending it to my friends or family who are interested in learning this language?

While Cheraquie aspires to pursuing her studies at a university level, she also likes studying in a relaxed atmosphere of her current class. The fact that she is willing to recommend the course to her family and friends is a testimony to that.

How has this course changed your perception of Persian culture and traditions? One could be forgiven for thinking Cheraquie is more interested in the culture and traditions of Persians than their language. She tries to cook Iranian food for her family at least once a week and she happily sends me pictures of her creations and asks about the spices that Iranians use in their cooking. It could be argued that her Persian language course has awakened in her new passions for Iranian culture. She says,

This course is introducing me to the traditions as I realize that we have a lot in common basically. When I am thinking about my country where I come from, I am from Haiti, and there is a lot of similar things between both countries and cultures. We are probably different, but not so different. I have honestly found that it is a beautiful culture with a lot of beautiful traditions. As I had the knowledge of Iran before, and I took the course because I like Iran. So that's basically it. I already had a spot sense for Iran, I don't know how to explain it, and this course makes it stronger and makes me want to go even deeper. I was attracted to Cuba and I learned Spanish and read their books, listen to their music and so when I do all and I feel all, then I have emotions because I understand what they are saying. So, I have the same feeling learning Persian now. When you start learning Persian, you start getting to know the culture and traditions of course. So, for example there are

two things, food which is always good for me (she laughs and both of us laugh). I love the food, I love spices and everything related to it, but in general when you learn a language, your perception changes. The second interesting thing that I like in Persian culture and tradition is their New Year (Norouz), I really like the way they celebrate, and it is completely different from other new years because each year the time for changing the year is different and it is exciting. It is interesting that whatever Iranians do for their New Year has a special meaning. So, maybe, I can say that this Persian course has not changed, but has added more things into my perception.

Looking at Cheraquie's response to this question, we can say that, learners usually have some previous knowledge and interest in the culture and history of the country whose language they are planning to learn. In other words, as was the case with Cheraquie, the language course, rather than changing perceptions and creating awareness, is a way of building and solidifying already existing knowledge of a country and its culture.

Patrick

Patrick is 43 years old and works as a programmer-analyst. He is very eager to improve his Farsi. This summer, he asked me for an English/French – Farsi dictionary because he wanted to translate a very traditional Persian story often used with elementary school children in Iran. Patrick completed the task beautifully and told me he was interested in translating some more. Even though he had found it difficult it was a very good first experience for him. He said he found translating to be very enjoyable.

I can imagine how proud Patrick is of his achievement. He has only been taking Persian classes for two years but can already try his hand at reading and translating short stories. He also volunteers to act as a substitute teacher if the regular teacher is off sick.

What motivates you to study Persian? Motivation can play a crucial part in learning a language and different people become motivated by different things. Having a personal relation to the culture or having interest in history are just some of many possible reasons for taking up a foreign tongue. Patrick has more than one reason for learning Farsi and so in response to my question he says,

At first, I met an Iranian friend and I wanted to be able to communicate with her and to show better respect. I believe that learning someone's first language is a way of showing respect to that person and that person's background and nature. So, that was my first motivation that made me to start studying Persian and after a while, it became easy for me as my fourth language. It brought me the same positive feeling as I was learning Chinese fifteen years ago, even though it was very far, very unattainable, very difficult to learn, still I managed to learn it, just the same as Farsi. Another motivation is to achieve something when you reach a certain age, when you are forties, you have already accomplished a lot of things in your life, your career, your family, and almost everything. So, in my world, I need new challenges, I think that learning Farsi fits my challenges.

Patrick likes learning different languages and was looking for a new challenge in his life when he decided to take up Persian. We could also speculate that his previous experience with language learning as well as the multilingual atmosphere of Montreal gave him confidence to start a new language.

What makes you continue learning Persian? Being able to communicate with people from different cultures is important in today's globalized world. Speaking another language can help reach out beyond one's own world and get an insight into someone else's. To answer the question Patrick says,

I believe that as long as I have contact with Persian people at work and outside of the work, and my social circle is surrounded by them, so all these factors make me continue learning Persian. I really like to communicate with them, and develop my Persian language. In fact, it is mostly related to human factor that I want to continue learning Persian.

For Patrick, communicating with his Iranian friends and colleagues is not only important but also a source of enjoyment. It is what makes him continue learning Farsi.

What are you hoping to gain from learning Persian? There are many reasons why we decide to learn a language. We might be looking for a new challenge or have a plan to travel and communicate with local people and learn about their lives and beliefs. Learning a new language can open our minds and bring with it new possibilities. Sometimes, we might be motivated by a desire to get a job, which would require us to speak the language we are learning. In response to the above question Patrick explains,

It is somehow related to my motivations, and what I am hoping to achieve is to reach a certain level. First of all, one of the goals that I want to gain is to become more autonomous, meaning that you don't really rely on books or classes and simply by interacting with native speakers and you keep on learning. So, I hope to reach and to gain a level of mastery where I can, for example, integrate into either social group in an evening, at night at a friend's place or at a restaurant or travelling to a Farsi speaking country like Iran, and being able to speak and to improve my Persian language. In a small scale, I like to really be able to ask in Farsi what I want and what I mean. My hoping

to gain Persian language is to reach to a point where I can fully take advantage. I like to be embraced into Persian culture and last but not least to have a level of communication with Persian people as I think I learn with mingling with and integrating with Persian people without relying on books and classes.

Patrick is keenly interested in socializing with Iranians here in Montreal and in Iran and hopes to reach a proficiency level that will allow him to productively benefit from it. He is really passionate about getting involved in the Iranian community of Montreal so that he can spend his free time making friends there.

How do you see yourself making use of your knowledge of Persian? Patrick has moderate hopes in this respect but the ones he does are truly relevant to him. He says,

One thing that I'd like to make use of my knowledge of Persian is in a few Iranian places in Montreal like restaurants and grocery stores where I will be able to fully communicate with vendors for what I am looking for. Or when I am in an Iranian restaurant, I like to know about the ingredients of the food I am going to eat and to order what I exactly want. When I am among Iranians, I like to respect their native language and try to communicate, just the same think that I like people to integrate with us, the French people and at least speak a bit of our language. I believe that if I use my knowledge of Persian with all the Iranian co-workers that have met so far, they become very impressed and start having a better professional relationship. So, I want to use my knowledge of Persian as much as I can as it gives more opportunities at work. And of course, my ultimate goal is that I want to go to Iran; I really wish to spend a whole month in Iran as I am sure it's going to be a huge learning experience. I can understand their way of living, culture and traditions because I am sure that when I am there my preconception will be totally changed while intermingle with Iranians, just like the same understanding that I had by staying in France and in China.

Being able to communicate more fully with Iranians in Patrick's life looms large in his response. He sees the ability of speaking Farsi as crucial in building good relationships at work, but also when he travels to Iran in the future. He would also like to teach Persian to new students. He says that he would like to put his knowledge of Persian to the test so that he can see how much he has improved.

What do you do to improve your Persian language skills? Besides taking classes, reading books and interacting with his classmates, Patrick has his daily contact with Iranians because of his work. He states,

Well, I have got a very close co-worker, she is on my team, and I manage her to work on a technical side. So, whenever I've got the chance I talk to her in Persian. For instance, when she sneezes, I tell her "aafiat baashe = bless you", or in the morning, I say "sobh bekhair = good morning" to her. So, I try to improve my Persian language through having communications with her. This week, we went to the restaurant and I asked her all in Farsi that what she had chosen, whether she like it and etc. So, whenever, I meet Iranian people at work, I will try to practice with them in order to improve my Persian language skills. I also read books on the way going to work and coming back either sitting in the metro or in the bus as I live quite far from my working place. And in fact, reading books is my main way of learning, I try so hard in the class and read the books as much as I can, and then I practice it. Besides all, I listen to simple Iranian music before going to our Persian classes, I watch YouTube videos that for me has a human touch, and of course the classes and communicating with classmates and teacher that make it all easier for me to understand. Recently, I am also taking private lesson with our class teacher in order to have more improvement in my Persian language skills.

Patrick is trying different approaches to improve his Persian outside of class. He is a very determined student who knows what he wants and who always strives to achieve his goals.

What teaching methods do you find the most useful? Adult learners, not unlike other types of learners, respond differently to different teaching methods. Sometimes adults arrive to class with a preconceived idea of what method is most efficient for them, other times they are open to learning a new approach. Generally speaking, as long as the students feel nurtured and encouraged, they welcome new ways of learning being introduced in class. Patrick's explains,

I can say that and I don't think that there is only one method or there is any better because first, it depends on the person, and everybody has different ways of learning. But, as a teacher and as a Persian adult student now, using variety of methods can be the most successful as one. So, a good method can be either within a class, within a private lesson or at home by practicing alone; in fact, I learn from all. I try to learn a lot of vocabulary and I simply practice to write and for me it is a way that gives me a better chance of learning. As I already said, methods like listening to music, contacting with native speakers or even non-natives who speak good Farsi. But, in general, as far as I have experienced, we cannot reach to a good level of mastery with only one especial method.

Based on my teaching experience, I feel that adult learners come to class with the hope of finding new, efficient ways of learning and if the method used by the teacher does not satisfy them they are likely to go elsewhere or look for their own ways of achieving their goals. Therefore, it is clear that a good teaching method used by the teacher can act as a magnet for students seeking to improve. As Patrick says, adults learn

in various kinds of ways and are capable of choosing a method which best suits their needs.

How long do you plan to continue taking Persian classes? Patrick is an adult student who is very interested in learning different languages. Besides French (his mother tongue), he is fluent in English and has some knowledge of Chinese from his one-year experience of teaching English in Taiwan and some time spent in China. Now he is learning Persian and he is planning to learn Spanish. It would appear that with such ambitious plans for language acquisition, he will not want to spend too long on Persian, even though he wishes to speak it fluently. He comments,

It very much depends on what will be next, but for sure, until I travel to Iran, I am going to keep on learning Persian language because I want to practice as much as I can to communicate easily with peoples there. But, when you go with learning the languages like Persian language that is not the most popular language here in Canada, and is not spoken that much, so, I really do not know how I have to keep my Persian language in later years. This is something that I have been thinking about it and I have not been able to answer and find a way for it.

Learning a language like Persian and retaining the knowledge of it comes with its own challenges. Students who, like Patrick, have no daily contact with Iranians, need to create opportunities to practice Persian outside of class in order to consolidate what they have learnt.

Would you recommend this Persian course to your friends and family?

Patrick's response is,

I haven't recommended to anyone yet. But, I do recommend it for sure to those who want to learn a third or fourth language. I always recommend my

friends to first learn English if it is not their mother tongue as a second language, and then they give a lot of value into learning at least a third and maybe a fourth language in a sense of it's a mental gymnastic and it keeps their brains active. In fact, learning languages for me it is like keeping you away from just becoming a zombie and watching TV, and that learning Persian is a very good choice for this purpose and because it is also challenging.

Sometimes, I think if I say to my family and friends to learn Persian, they might ask me what is the use of learning it, and I will tell them, absolutely. I will also encourage them to learn any languages because I believe that learning languages can grow our mental abilities and as we get older, we need to learn more.

Listening to what Patrick said reminded me of another adult student. She is from Quebec and has once stayed in Iran for three weeks. This experience was the reason for her to get interested in learning Farsi. She told me that learning Persian felt like taking drawing classes because the alphabet was so different from what she was used to in French. It was her opinion that learning a language with a different writing system can stimulate the brain in new ways, compared to the effect learning a Latin language would have.

How has this course changed your perception of Persian culture and traditions? Interacting with people speaking another language can truly alter our perceptions of their culture and the way of life. Also, as we learn a language and are introduced to different aspects of the culture, our interest in it grows. Many of my students of Persian, when they first start, have no concept of Persian cuisine, for example. Gradually though, while studying Farsi, they become interested in trying Persian food. I have on some occasions brought homemade Persian fare for my students to try and found that such experiences can spur their interest in the language. Often my students end up trying their hand at preparing the food themselves for friends and family. To my question Patrick responds,

I must admit that I did not know anything about Iran, and whatever I knew was through the glasses of the media. But, this course and learning Farsi and speaking with native people about their culture and traditions have made me realize that I should see it and look at it differently. I believe that Persian culture has offered me the possibility of changing my conception entirely and learning something totally different from my own culture and traditions. Now, I know that for example, Norouz, the Iranian new year or some other traditions are the true soul of Iranian people, the traditions and the culture that I had no idea about before I started this course.

Patrick often asks me questions about Persian culture and beliefs. His interest and zeal with which he approaches his studies demonstrate how keen he is to improve his Persian and expand his knowledge of Iran and its people.

The previous pages presented the interview data with each of the six participants and my own comments and observations for each one. This is an exploratory study and

the next chapter is going to present the analysis of data and the themes emerging from this analysis.

Chapter Four: Discussion

Data Analysis

Having read and reflected on the results of the six interviews with my non-native Persian learners, I have come to better understand their motivations for learning as well as the ways in which they try to achieve their linguistic goals. I embarked in this exploratory study motivated by my desire to better understand the process of learning and teaching Farsi to non-native speakers of the language. Having been involved in this work for the past several years, it was important for me to get direct feedback and to listen closely to what the students were saying about this process.

The human factor. What the six individuals at the center of my inquiry have in common is the human factor. They are all somewhat related to Iranians, be it through being married to or dating one, through friendship or work. These relationships seem to be where the learners' interest in studying Farsi springs from. With this primary source of motivation established, the learners begin to look for a secondary source that would keep them engaged. Initially, when these non-native Persian adult students enter the Iranian community, their premiere objective is to have satisfying verbal communication with Iranian people.

Interest in learning the culture. Once the initial motivation to learn the language in order to have better communication with Iranians in their lives brings them to the Farsi courses, they become keen on learning about Iranian culture, history, literature and traditions. They also enjoy reading famous Persian poems, and through them, they can imagine ancient Persia and its culture. Cultural entertainment is another element that can make learners feel connected to and integrated with the Persian language and Iranian culture and traditions. Listening to Iranian music and watching movies, which are internationally acclaimed, can offer much positive stimulation as well. Exposure to culinary arts is also an important motivating factor. Being exposed to and learning about Persian cuisine seems to play a positive role. Students often report enjoying going to Iranian restaurants and trying their hand at preparing Iranian dishes.

Cultural tourism. Above all, most students expressed strong interest in going to Iran and experiencing it for themselves, rather than relying on often erroneous media representations of it.

The role of the teacher and teaching methods. In order for students to reach a satisfying level of linguistic proficiency as well as keep motivated to continue learning, the role of teachers and their teaching methods are crucial.

The participants of the study span a wide range of ages (25 to 48) and have a variety of academic backgrounds such as, Bachelor's, Master's and Doctorate degrees in subjects like architecture, and civil engineering. Professions included social worker, information technology manager, and trainer; all of the participants live in Montreal. This diversity comprises a number of different perceptions resulting from their varied experience. All of the concerns mentioned in the participants' narratives have been

instrumental in gaining further insights in planning my role and methods as a teacher of Farsi, the main reason for conducting this exploratory study.

Emergent Themes

After the preliminary analysis of the interview transcripts from the six participants I have identified the following themes to guide the teacher of Farsi to non-native Farsi speakers:

- 1) Inclusion of literature and history elements – teach the language in context.
- 2) Plan and encourage participation in cultural events and celebrations of important dates.
- 3) Teacher’s knowledge of Persian, French, and/or English, as well as history, literature, culture and traditions of the three cultures in order to better translate meaning and facilitate understanding of diversity.
- 4) Constantly work on one’s approach to inspire and maintain students’ interest in learning Persian by checking the level of the learners’ motivational factors from time to time during the course of the year.
- 6) Promote interactions between non-native learners of Farsi with the Iranian diaspora and across generations in the school setting and outside of the school setting.
- 7) Create a positive image of speaking Farsi among the second and third generation Iranian immigrants through interactions with non-native adult learners of the language.

The above-mentioned themes should be seen as complementary to the traditional language instruction in the classroom and are directly linked to fostering students’ motivation to continue studying Persian.

Pedagogical Implications

With reference to the participants' responses and my experience of teaching Farsi over the years, I believe the issues raised by the learners need to be addressed so as to encourage and motivate them to continue studying, in the most effective way.

It is clear that, a teacher of Persian should have a complete mastery of the language, as well as an intimate knowledge of Iran's culture, traditions, history and literature in order to enable her to respond to students' questions.

It is also necessary that a teacher finds a method that can be easily transferred to the students. Based on the outcomes of this study, we can see that a good knowledge of French and/or English is needed, especially at the beginning of the course, since the non-native Persian students might not know any Farsi. Being proficient only in Persian is not sufficient for a teacher of non-native adult learners.

Keeping non-native adult learners of Farsi motivated, is a necessary challenge. Rather than burden the students with the Persian alphabet, alien to them, it is better to swiftly shift to using French or English so as not to discourage them from learning. As mentioned in the introduction, this way of mixing English with Farsi is known as "Finglish" ("Farsi+English") and is useful in making the students familiar with the language before introducing them to the Farsi alphabet. Acting as a smooth entry point into Persian, "Finglish" can help new learners to stay motivated and continue studying.

The teacher's role in keeping the students engaged couldn't be underestimated either. Creating a welcoming and stimulating environment for learning is of particular importance when learning the language is not really a matter of urgency or necessity for the learner.

One practice that I found especially beneficial for learners is merging the non-native adult class at Dehkhoda Persian school with their regular class for Iranian children at least once a month. Both sides get stimulated by the experience; the non-native learners get a chance to speak Persian with native speakers and the Iranian children might feel a sense of pride in being able to speak in their mother tongue to those who wish to learn it. It is as if those children too were helping preserve Persian outside of Iran.

Recommendations for Future Research

Persian language, with its three regional varieties; Farsi in Iran, Dari in Afghanistan and Tajik in Tajikistan, is not a very common language. It is also not a dominant language like English, French, or Spanish. This research shows that one of the most important reasons for non-native adult learners outside of Iran to study Persian is the human factor, such as marriage or friendship with an Iranian. This human link binds the learners to the language and awakens their curiosity in Iranian culture, traditions, history, and literature. It is also, undeniably, what keeps the learners motivated. Highly stimulated students ask a lot of questions and the teacher is their first port of call in search of answers. It is therefore necessary for the teacher to be knowledgeable, not only when grammar is concerned but also on matters related to the above-mentioned areas of interest. Moreover, the results of my study as well as my teaching experience indicate that teachers' expertise on all things Iranian plays a significant role in ensuring consistency among students. A teacher of Persian needs to bring something more than grammar and vocabulary to class; she should engage and inspire the students. She should also remember that adult learners choose to study a language because they need to speak it or because they need a new challenge or simply because they expect it to be fun.

Last but not least, one of the important outcomes of this study is also the realization that second and third generation Iranians in Montreal or any other host city, might become encouraged to speak their mother tongue when they see non-native adult learners of Persian striving to use it. We can sometimes see that the children of Iranian immigrants are not very keen on speaking their mother tongue in and outside of their homes. Often, they choose to start learning other languages besides French and English and forget about Farsi. Taking into consideration my findings, I propose that the non-native adult learners of Farsi can help preserve this language for the next generation of Iranians abroad as well as the general population. They can be seen as ambassadors of Persian here in Canada and around the world. Their contribution will surely have a lasting effect on the well-being and longevity, as it were, of the Persian language.

One of the most pertinent issues that need attention is the diversity of motivations among Persian learners. Some only wish to learn how to speak it, while others want to read poetry. Some are very enthusiastic and respond well to all class activities, while others might struggle to adapt. Consequently, the teacher needs to be flexible in her approach to cater to all tastes and needs. The educational component should be such, that it does not become an obstacle to learning but rather help create a welcoming and nurturing environment for it. The key here is the teacher's ability to make the language accessible and not intimidating, so as not to discourage learners from pursuing their studies. For instance, if the Persian alphabet is too difficult for the students, the teacher should start with an easier way and let it be the entry point into Farsi.

The next step in this research should be the second and third generation of Iranian immigrants whose mother or father is non-native Persian speaker or even if both parents

are native Persian speakers. Teachers of Persian need to ask themselves important questions. What obstacles are they facing? Why do some of them lose motivation? What are their needs and objectives? Last but not least, teachers and educators need to work on creating a meaningful curriculum that will motivate these descendants of Iranian immigrants and make them feel proud in being Farsi speakers. Children of Iranian immigrants should be taught in a way that suits their environment and meets their very particular needs.

This exploratory study opened up several venues for further research as seen above and new studies should be designed to further probe and explore the different strands this exploratory study has unveiled.

The non-native learners of Persian are an important part of the struggle to keep it alive among the second and third generation Iranian immigrants in Montreal, Canada. They can become role models and motivators for Iranian children born outside of Iran.

My Reflections

I believe that the process of working closely with the participants of this study and listening to their concerns and experiences has greatly influenced my outlook on my role as a teacher of Persian to non-native adult learners. I have come to view my own journey of teaching Farsi as a truly enriching and learning experience. In other words, my students are not the only ones learning in my classes. This realization is something entirely new to me, in spite of the fact that I have long been in the teaching profession. Indeed, before coming to Montreal I used to teach English and French to non-native adult learners. Teaching Farsi in Dehkhoda school in Montreal has been a kind of transformative, personal and professional experience for which I credit my students. I

found myself reflecting on my knowledge and skills as a teacher and I feel that it has enriched me on many levels.

After five years of teaching Persian to non-native adult learners, I have come to ask myself some rather searching questions: am I really helping to save Persian in Canada? Am I having a positive impact on my students? Am I making them more motivated? If I stop teaching them, are they going to continue elsewhere and improve their Persian? Above all however, as my conclusions indicate, my non-native adult learners have motivated me to continue striving to offer them and my future students the best possible Farsi-learning experience and through it, play my part in preserving Persian outside of Iran.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Letter of Introduction and Invitation

Dear student,

My name is Samileh Mir Ahmadian and I am a student in the MA program in Education Studies, in the Department of Education at Concordia University in Montreal, Quebec. I am conducting a research study, based on my four-year-long experience of teaching Persian, for my MA Thesis entitled: Exploring motivations of non-native Persian Adult Students in Learning Farsi in an Iranian School in Montreal: A teacher's observations, insights and hopes.

I am writing to you to invite you to participate voluntarily in this research project. It will consist of an interview lasting between 45 to 60 minutes at a convenient place and time of your choice. My research project is approved by Dehkhoda Persian School as well as Concordia University.

You, as a non-native Persian language learner with experience and background in studying Farsi, can greatly contribute to my research, which is why your feedback would be very useful. Rest assured that the information you provide me with will be kept strictly confidential and pseudonyms will be used in place of real names. I would very much appreciate your contribution and am confident it will play a part not only in allowing me to successfully complete my MA degree but also help save the Persian language for the next generation of Iranian immigrants.

If you are willing to participate in my study, please complete the attached background questionnaire and return it to me either through e-mail or in our next class meeting.

Should you choose to accept my invitation to participate in the study, I will provide you

with a consent form requested by Concordia University. This form guarantees the confidentiality of your participation, your agreement to have your interview audio-recorded and the transcript reviewed for any changes within two weeks from the time you receive the transcription of the interview. The consent form will also inform you of your right to withdraw from the study at any time during the interview or after receiving the transcript of the interview. The last date by which you can withdraw your participation and the data you contributed will be the date at which you return the vetted transcription to me. Please do not forget to bring the copy of the consent form to the interview.

For any further information, you can contact me via e-mail at: samileh@yahoo.com, by telephone at: (514) 691 1876, or by contacting my academic advisor Professor Arpi Hamalian at (arpi.hamalian@concordia.ca).

Thank you very much in advance.

Samileh Mir Ahmadian

MA candidate in Educational Studies at Concordia University

Appendix B: Interview Questionnaire

Questionnaire to be returned with acceptance to participate in the study:

Kindly complete the following agreement questionnaire for the interview and return it to me with your acceptance to participate in the study:

1. Name:
2. Family name:
3. Gender:
4. Age:
5. Occupation:
6. Number of years of learning Persian:
7. E-mail address:
8. Telephone No. (not compulsory):

Appendix C: Consent Form

Consent to participate in a qualitative research study entitled: “Exploring motivations of non-native Persian adult students in learning Farsi in an Iranian school in Montreal: A teacher’s observations, insights and hopes.”

This is to certify that I agree to participate in a research study being conducted by Samileh Mir Ahmadian for the purpose of writing her thesis towards her MA degree in Educational Studies, Department of Education, Concordia University.

I have been informed that the purpose of this research study is to examine motivational factors for non-Iranian adult learners to study Persian. Therefore understanding my point of view is very important in order to improve the teaching of Persian in a multilingual city like Montreal.

I understand that I will be interviewed for about an hour and asked some questions. I am also aware that the interview will be audio-recorded and transcribed. I understand that my participation in the research study is not going to be used in any way to assess my involvement in my studies and for further evaluation of my progress in learning the language. I understand that at any time during the interview or after, before or after it is transcribed, I will have the right to change my mind and withdraw from the study. In such a case, I agree to personally inform the study researcher, Samileh Mir Ahmadian at (samileh@yahoo.com) or her thesis advisor Professor Arpi Hamalian at (arpi.hamalian@concordia.ca) about my decision. Once I have vetted the transcript (review, revise, add and subtract statements and responses and add comments) and returned it to the researcher two weeks after the receipt of the original transcript, I can no longer withdraw my data since analysis and writing of the thesis will begin at that time.

I understand that the data collected for this study will be published, but I am confident that the information I have provided will be kept confidential by the use of a pseudonym instead of my actual name.

Date: _____

First and last name: _____

Signature: _____

Appendix D: Dehkoda School Letter of Consent



Appendix D: Dehkoda School Letter of Consent

Date: 10 December 2016

To Whom It May Concern,

This is to certify that Ms. Samileh Mir Ahmadian, the teacher of our adult class, has been given the consent to interview six non-native adult Persian students in order to implement her qualitative research at Education Department, Concordia University. It is understandable that her interview with these students will be audio-recorded in English, sometime in January or beginning of February 2017. The name of the participants will remain confidential.

We believe that the consequences of this research study will be available at Concordia University for any further references. We wish Ms. Mir Ahmadian success in her study entitled "Saving and promoting Persian language through teaching it to non-native Persian adult Students in an Iranian school in Montreal, Quebec."

Sincerely yours,

Noushin Sabetghadam, Ph.D.

Principal of Dehkoda School



**Appendix E: Certification of ethical acceptability for
research involving human subjects**



**CERTIFICATION OF ETHICAL ACCEPTABILITY
FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS**

Name of Applicant: Samileh Mir Ahmadian
Department: Faculty of Arts and Science \ Education
Agency: N/A
Title of Project: Exploring motivations of non-native-Persian
adult students in learning Farsi in an Iranian
school in Montreal: A teacher's observations,
insights and hopes

Certification Number: 30007573

Valid From: March 17, 2017 to: March 16, 2018

The members of the University Human Research Ethics Committee have examined the application for a grant to support the above-named project, and consider the experimental procedures, as outlined by the applicant, to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "J. Pfaus".

Dr. James Pfaus, Chair, University Human Research Ethics Committee