A Comprehensive Look at Intergroup Relations and Contact Between International Students and

the Host Community

Oguzhan Tekin

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By: Oguzhan Tekin

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Signed by the final examining committee:

_____ Chair
Dr. Miranda D'Amico

_____ External Examiner
Dr. Amy S. Thompson

_____ Arm's Length Examiner
Dr. Fanny Macé

_____ Examiner
Dr. Kim McDonough

_____ Examiner
Dr. Walcir Cardoso

_____ Thesis Supervisor (s)
Dr. Pavel Trofimovich

_____

Approved by _____
Dr. Sandra Martin-Chang, GPD   Chair of Department or Graduate Program Director

March 26, 2024
_____
Date of Defence

_____
Dr. Pascale Sicotte   Dean, Faculty of Arts and Sciences

ABSTRACT

A Comprehensive Look at Intergroup Relations and Contact Between International Students and the Host Community

Oguzhan Tekin, PhD

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Previous research has demonstrated that intergroup relations and contact between international students and host communities may be challenging. While international students sometimes experience discrimination on- or off-campus, international students themselves may also form negative attitudes toward host community members based on imagined or real experiences with them. Therefore, to address this issue, this dissertation set out to investigate variables that may lead to potentially prejudicial attitudes between international students and host community members and to examine the link between such attitudes and the quantity and quality of intergroup contact.

Study 1 explored potential factors that inform francophone residents' attitudes toward international students in English-medium universities in Montréal and examined the link between their quality and quantity of contact and their attitudes and perceived threat. First, between-group comparisons revealed similarly positive attitudes toward and relatively low levels of perceived threat from international students, except for linguistic threat, which was significantly higher for non-student francophones. Non-student francophones also reported considerably less frequent and lower quality of contact with international students. Second, while symbolic threat was the common predictor of attitudes for both student and non-student francophones, intergroup anxiety also emerged as a significant predictor of student

francophones' attitudes toward international students. Third, contact quality yielded significant associations with both attitudes (positive) and all types of perceived threat (negative except for stereotypes), whereas contact quantity was linked with intergroup anxiety only for student francophones.

Study 2 essentially replicated Study 1 to provide the international student perspective regarding intergroup attitudes and contact. International students reported similarly low perceived threat from (except for linguistic threat) as well as comparably high quality of contact with student and non-student francophones. However, they indicated significantly more favourable attitudes and more frequent contact with non-student francophones. While intergroup anxiety was the predictor of attitudes toward student francophones, stereotypes predicted their attitudes toward non-student francophones. Contact quality yielded positive links with attitudes and negative associations with all perceived threats, except for stereotypes. Contact quantity, on the other hand, was associated with intergroup anxiety, linguistic threat, and stereotypes only for non-student francophones.

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First and foremost, I extend my deepest appreciation to my supervisor, Dr. Pavel Trofimovich. He saw something in me that even I was unable to see and by inviting me into his world many years ago, he changed my life in so many ways that I could write another dissertation about it (but I won't!). His unwavering support, intellectual guidance, and constructive feedback have been instrumental not only in shaping my research but the trajectory of my academic career. I am fortunate to have had a mentor like him who is committed to supporting his students through thick and thin not only in the academic sense but also well beyond that on a personal level. What I appreciated about him the most as a mentor, though, is the fact that he listened, cared, *and* remembered and was never afraid of being vulnerable when and where necessary. This was extremely empowering and is something I plan to carry on and emulate as a professor in the future.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to all who have been "other-ed," marginalized, and been

perceived as a threat based on their race, ethnicity, sex, gender, sexual orientation, culture,

socioeconomic background, and what language they speak and *how* they speak it.

Contribution of Authors

The two studies in this dissertation are co-authored with my supervisor, Dr. Pavel Trofimovich. Study 1 has been accepted for presentation at the American Association for Applied Linguistics (AAAL) conference, and both manuscripts are currently being prepared for journal submission.

CRediT author statement (Study 1) – Oguzhan Tekin: conceptualization; methodology; investigation; formal analysis; visualization; writing – original draft; writing – review and editing. Pavel Trofimovich: conceptualization (supporting); methodology (supporting); formal analysis (supporting); writing – review and editing (supporting); funding acquisition; supervision.

CRediT author statement (Study 2) – Oguzhan Tekin: conceptualization; methodology; investigation; formal analysis; visualization; writing – original draft; writing – review and editing. Pavel Trofimovich: conceptualization (supporting); methodology (supporting); formal analysis (supporting); writing – review and editing (supporting); funding acquisition; supervision.

Both authors reviewed the final manuscript and approved the contents.

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Table 12. *Pearson Correlations Between Contact Quantity and Quality and Rated Variables of*

Attitudes and Perceived Threat

Definitions of Key Terms

Allophone. For the purposes of this dissertation, allophones are defined as individuals who self-identify with a culture other than French or English and speak a language other than French or English as their first language.

Anglophone. For the purposes of this dissertation, anglophones are defined as individuals who self-identify with the anglophone culture and speak English as at least one of their first languages.

Francophone. For the purposes of this dissertation, francophones are defined as individuals who self-identify with the francophone culture and speak French as at least one of their first languages.

Intergroup attitudes. For the purposes of this dissertation, intergroup attitudes are defined as individuals' context-based and subjective evaluative tendencies about members of other social groups with various racial, ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic backgrounds.

Intergroup prejudice. For the purposes of this dissertation, intergroup prejudice is defined as negative attitudes toward about members of other social groups with various racial, ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic backgrounds.

Intergroup contact. For the purposes of this dissertation, intergroup contact is defined as interactions between members of social groups who vary on account of their race, ethnicity, culture, religion, and language use.

International student. For the purposes of this dissertation, international students are defined as individuals pursuing tertiary-level education in a country of which they do not hold citizenship or permanent residency at the time of the study

CHAPTER 1

General Introduction

International Students

Existing definitions of international students highlight their specific characteristics, including their status as foreign nationals, temporary residents (in the sense that they are expected to leave upon graduation), and speakers of a language other than the one used in their host communities. Traditionally, international students are defined as "students who have crossed a national or territorial border for the purposes of education and are now enrolled outside their country of origin" (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2006, p. 178). Elsewhere, they are defined as "individuals enrolled in institutions of higher education who are on temporary student visas and are non-native English speakers" (Andrade, 2006, p.134) or as "[individuals] at university level who do not hold citizenship or a permanent residence visa in a country where they apply to study" (Phakiti et al., 2013, p. 240). International students have been attracting much attention not only because of their growing numbers across the globe (OECD, 2013), but also due to how they embody the concepts of globalization, diversity, and exchange of know-how across diverse communities around the world—notions which have become mainstream in the past couple of decades. Thus, many countries around the world compete intensely to attract as many international students as possible (Douglass & Edelstein, 2009), particularly because international students offer socioeconomic benefits to their host communities (Smith, 2016).

From a financial perspective, it is estimated that, in Canada, international students contribute approximately $22 billion to the country's economy each year and create around 170,000 jobs (El-Assal, 2020). A similar trend is observed in the United States, which hosts the largest international student population (Hegarty, 2014). Indeed, international students generally

pay three to four times more in tuition compared to domestic students (Anderson, 2015), which makes them even more attractive to university administrators who are searching for ways to increase their revenues. To illustrate, 96% of Canadian universities prioritize internationalization in their strategic planning (Internationalization in Canadian Universities, 2014) as they strive to get a fair share of this fast-growing market. However, tuition fees account for only a fraction of the economic contribution that international students make to their host communities; they also contribute in the form of accommodation, travel, and other living expenses (Esses et al., 2018). In addition to these economic benefits, and perhaps even more importantly given the present-day emphasis on globalization, international students bring a multitude of cultures, languages, and ways of thinking to their host society and make it possible for local residents to connect with the outside world in the comfort of their own community (Anderson, 2015; CBIE, 2015). Since only a small proportion of Canadian students (3.1%) opt to study abroad (Internationalization in Canadian Universities, 2014), international students clearly bring major benefits to their Canadian peers.

Slow population growth is another issue that international students may help their host communities to tackle. As explained previously, existing definitions of international students underscore their temporary status; however, this is in stark contrast with the current realities of the world where the lines between international students and immigrants are blurred. In fact, in many host countries, with Canada being a case in point, students have the potential to become immigrants thanks to government policies. According to Choi et al. (2021), around 50% of international students who pursued their master's degrees in the 2000s became Canadian permanent residents within 10 years of their arrival, and this percentage was even greater for doctoral-level students. Thus, in addition to receiving high-quality education, many international

students are attracted by the prospect of settling in and contributing to Canadian society (Netierman et al., 2021). To counteract the effects of slow population growth and sustain its economic and social vitality, Canada has been welcoming immigrants for decades, as a result of which immigrants now constitute almost a quarter of the country's population (Statistics Canada, 2022a). In this regard, the Canadian government considers international students as outstanding candidates for permanent residency because of their young age, proficiency in at least one of the two official languages, and earned credentials from Canadian universities (Government of Canada, 2019). Thus, international students appear to play a key role in maintaining the economic and demographic vitality of their host communities, particularly in countries with rapidly aging populations such as Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States which attract thousands of international students every year (The World Bank, 2020).

In light of these contextual issues, it is unsurprising that over a million students chose Canada to pursue various academic degrees in 2023 alone (CBIE, n.d.), placing the country among other top destinations for international students such as the United States and the United Kingdom (Erudera College News, 2020). However, attracting international students may only be half the story because many students' decisions to stay or leave after graduation are based on their first-hand experience in a given host community, for example, in terms of feeling accepted or not (Netierman et al., 2021). For instance, international students with local friends are almost twice more likely to apply for permanent residency in Canada (Esses et al., 2018), which implies that a host community's attitudes toward international students as well as the quality and quantity of intergroup contact may impact their choice to remain in that host community.

With respect to students' and host community members' general attitudes and their contact, previous research suggests that there is ample room for improvement. On campus, local

students often exclude international students from group work (Haugh, 2016) or from their social circles outside instruction (Surtees, 2019), mock them on account of their low language proficiency (Dovchin, 2020), and blame them for receiving low grades (Myburgh et al., 2002). Surprisingly, contrary to these quite negative perceptions reported by many international students, domestic students in various research contexts usually tend to express moderately positive attitudes toward international students (Quinton, 2019; Mak et al., 2014; Spencer-Rodgers, 2001; Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002; Ward et al., 2005), which may point out a potential gap between domestic students' reported attitudes and their actual behaviours.

For university faculty and staff, a bias against international students also seems to affect how professors evaluate and communicate with them (Gopal, 2016; Jean-Francois, 2019; Lee & Rice, 2007) and to impact the quality of students' interaction with university staff (Hanassab, 2006). Off campus, international students seem to experience even more discrimination as they seek housing and part-time employment and engage in communication with host community members in public spaces (Gopal, 2016; Hanassab, 2006; Kormos et al., 2014; Kukatlapalli, 2020). Such negative attitudes and discriminatory behaviours in the host community are likely to cause feelings of resentment and negativity in international students. Indeed, international students often find local residents ignorant, arrogant, and superficial (Lee & Rice, 2007; Senyshyn et al., 2000; UKCISA, 2004) and refuse to be a part of the local scene due to cultural differences, for instance, in terms of acceptable public displays of intimacy or consumption of alcohol (Briscoe et al., 2022; Pritchard & Skinner, 2002).

One conspicuous implication of the negativity between international students and host community members is the quality and quantity of intergroup contact between these two groups, which is frequently unsatisfactory. In the United States, the majority of Asian, African, and

Middle Eastern international students, for instance, reported having zero or very few American friends (Rajapaksa & Dundes, 2002), which concurs with the accounts of domestic students who reported no or very little contact with international students (Williams & Johnson, 2011). In Australia, despite having been matched based on common interests, international and local students did not report any long-lasting friendships (Gresham & Clayton, 2011). In Canada, international students described their friendships with local peers as limited and superficial (CBIE, 2015; Gopal, 2016; Zhang & Zhou, 2010; Zhou & Zhang, 2014). Not only do locals seem to avoid contact with international students because they believe it requires considerable effort to adjust culturally and linguistically (Harrison & Peacock, 2010; Surtees, 2019), but international students also choose not to engage with locals if they expect them to be racially biased (Briscoe et al., 2022) or if students themselves express such biases toward members of a local community (Ritter, 2016). Considering the multiple benefits of positive intergroup contact, which include enhanced social adjustment and support (Hechanova-Alampay et al., 2002; Ye, 2006), it is crucial to identify various sources of negative attitudes as barriers to intergroup contact, in order to ensure that both international students and members of their host communities derive the maximum benefit possible from a social, cultural, and academic exchange.

Social Identity Theory and Intergroup Relations

Negative intergroup attitudes (including prejudice) and challenges regarding positive intergroup contact may be attributed to people's tendency to treat ingroup and outgroup members differentially. Tajfel's social identity theory (1970) posits that a sense of belonging is crucial for people's self-realization. Every society is comprised of intricate social structures which urge their members to find their position in it. As a consequence, people define their identities in

relation to a social group, which determines their perception of themselves and the affective value they attribute to that perception (Tajfel, 1974). Once people identify their positioning in relation to a social group, they develop their sense of belonging and define others in society accordingly through a process called social categorization (Tajfel & Turner, 2001). For the sake of simplification and predictability in social relations, this process accentuates similarities and differences among individuals in social groups based on their occupation, religion, political view, ethnicity, language, and so forth. These labels frequently become potent factors that designate one's social group, leading to differential treatment of others based on these socially constructed categories (Hogg & Abrams, 1998), where some individuals are perceived as ingroup members (i.e., those falling within one's social group) while others are relegated to an outgroup (i.e., those belonging outside one's social group). Social categorization initially emerges at the level of attitudes but subsequently permeates behaviours (Deschamps, 1984), such that individuals favour ingroup over outgroup members in intergroup interaction (Tajfel, 1970; Tajfel et al., 1971).

Perhaps more interestingly, early work on social identity theory demonstrated that the notion of "us versus them" may be sufficient to trigger bias even in the absence of any history of hostility. Indeed, "the mere awareness of the presence of an outgroup is sufficient to provoke intergroup competitive or discriminatory responses on the part of the ingroup" (Tajfel & Turner, 2001, p. 56). Since international students from diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds leave their countries of origin to study in a foreign country, they are often considered outgroup members by default, regardless of their country of destination, which makes this population a perfect candidate for investigating intergroup relations through the lens of the social identity theory.

Prejudice and Intergroup Relations

      To understand and address the challenges faced by international students when interacting with members of their host communities, a thorough investigation of various root causes of prejudice is essential. This research requires a focused look at various affective, cognitive, and evaluative dimensions of social interaction (Esses et al., 1993), considering a wide range of factors that may contribute to prejudice (e.g., culture, religion, language, social class, ethnicity). Inspired by Tajfel's social identity theory (1970), Stephan and Stephan's (2000) integrated threat theory of prejudice provides a suitable lens for an in-depth, comprehensive examination of intergroup attitudes. Attesting to its versatility, this theory has been previously employed to account for attitudes toward ethnic minorities such as African Americans, Latin Americans, and Indigenous people (e.g., Corenblum & Stephan, 2001; Stephan et al., 1999a; Stephan et al., 2002), religious groups such as Muslims (e.g., Croucher, 2013; González et al., 2008), and other communities and groups, including cancer and AIDS patients (Berrenberg et al., 2007), men (Stephan et al., 2000a), LGBTQIA2+ members (Brambilla & Butz, 2012), American spring-breakers in Mexico (Monterrubio, 2015), and international students (Harrison & Peacock, 2010; Mak et al., 2014; Spencer-Rogers & McGovern, 2002). In essence, the integrated threat theory postulates that ingroup members perceive various types of threat from individuals belonging to outgroups and that perceived threat leads to negative attitudes and prejudice toward these individuals. Moreover, perceived threat need not be real, given that a mere assumption of threat is sufficient to trigger prejudice (Stephan et al., 1999b). According to the integrated threat theory, there are four types of threat leading to prejudicial attitudes: realistic threat, symbolic threat, intergroup anxiety, and negative stereotypes. Despite moderate-to-strong associations

between these four types of threat (Riek et al., 2006), each accounts for a distinct proportion of prejudicial attitudes in individuals.

While realistic threats concern political and economic issues as well as the overall wellbeing of a group, symbolic threats encompass threats to a social group's worldview comprised of morals, values, and beliefs (Stephan & Stephan, 1996). To elaborate, factual or not, when individuals are concerned that outsiders contribute to increased crime rates, take away limited job opportunities, and put a strain on the health or education systems, they experience realistic threats. On the other hand, potential frictions between ingroup and outgroup members regarding work ethic, religious beliefs, organization of social life, and moral values create symbolic threats. Intergroup anxiety corresponds to feelings of apprehension, embarrassment, or rejection resulting from intergroup contact. Therefore, when individuals expect their intergroup contact to be unpleasant and awkward, they may perceive this as a threat on a personal level due to the risk of losing face (Stephan, 2014; Stephan & Stephan, 1985). Lastly, negative stereotypes encompass individuals' beliefs about outgroup members in general. For example, these may involve notions of outgroup members being untrustworthy, lazy, or unclean, which may lead to perceptions of threat emanating from these individuals.

Which of these four types of threat becomes more or less prominent seems to depend on the research context and the targeted population. For instance, Stephan and Stephan (2000) explored prejudicial attitudes held by Americans and Mexican immigrants and found that intergroup anxiety and negative stereotypes accounted for both groups' attitudes. However, realistic threat (i.e., fear of losing resources) was a significant predictor of attitudes only for Americans, whereas symbolic threat (i.e., fear of losing one's values and culture) was a significant predictor of attitudes only for Mexicans. Moreover, Aberson (2015) found that

symbolic threat was stronger than realistic threat as a predictor of the attitudes of White participants toward African Americans, which contrasts with earlier findings from Stephan et al.'s (2002) study investigating intergroup attitudes between White and Black students in a more ethnically and culturally diverse context. Similarly, Berrenberg et al. (2007) found that, for cancer patients, negative stereotypes, realistic threat, and intergroup anxiety were the strongest predictors of attitudes (in order of significance), whereas symbolic threat was not a significant predictor. Attitudes towards AIDS patients, however, were best predicted by realistic threat, intergroup anxiety, and symbolic threat, whereas negative stereotypes did not emerge as a significant predictor. Given these findings, to address issues of prejudice toward a specific social group such as international students, it would be important to establish which types of threat inform prejudicial attitudes toward that group, ideally, in a specific social context.

The predictive power of various types of perceived threat clearly depends on the targeted social groups. Exploring the attitudes of Americans toward immigrants from different parts of the world, Stephan et al. (1999b) showed that various types of threat accounted for different proportions of attitudinal judgments toward Mexicans (68%), Cubans (64%), and Asians (47%). In a study focusing on patients, Berrenberg et al. (2007) found that while multiple types of threat explained variance in people's prejudice toward AIDS patients (70%), the predictive power of these threat types was limited for cancer patients (28%). In addition, studies exploring reciprocal attitudes between dominant and nondominant groups (e.g., White and Black Americans) demonstrated that various types of threat were more successful at explaining the attitudes by the dominant group rather than those by the nondominant group (e.g., Corenblum & Stephan, 2001; Stephan et al., 2002), a finding also supported by Riek et al. (2006) in their meta-analysis. Thus, to provide a comprehensive perspective on intergroup attitudes, this dissertation similarly

focuses on reciprocal attitudes between international students and members of their host community, examining the extent to which various types of threat—as conceptualized within the integrated threat theory—explain these two groups' attitudes toward each other.

The Role of Language in Prejudice

One commonality among previous studies carried out within the framework of the integrated threat theory is that language is not, at least explicitly, considered a potential source of prejudice. Indeed, in some studies (e.g., Berrenberg et al., 2007; Stephan et al., 2002), both targeted groups shared a common language, so language was not a topic of interest. However, research in applied linguistics and social psychology has shown that language, and especially various speech features contributing to one's accent, can cue social group membership (Dovidio & Gluszek, 2012; Rakić et al., 2011) and signal social otherness (Tomic, 2013), with language playing a key role in the formation and expression of prejudice (Collins & Clément, 2012). How one uses language may elicit prejudicial attitudes in the form of linguistic stereotyping and discriminatory behaviour in various contexts (Munro, 2003) such as employment, housing, and court hearings (Hansen et al., 2013, 2018; Hosoda & Stone-Romero, 2010; Lippi-Green, 2012; Romero-Rivas et al., 2021). In fact, language and prejudice are so intertwined that not only can language trigger prejudice, but prejudicial attitudes can also lead to linguistic stereotyping and discrimination. Put differently, while accent per se may or may not be a cause for discrimination, people's pre-existing prejudice toward a social group whose speech is marked by an accent may fuel discriminatory behaviour toward that group (de Souza et al., 2016). With respect to international students, there is clear evidence that language plays a pivotal role in granting them agency in both academic and social spheres such as carrying out routine tasks at administrative and financial institutions of universities and local governments as well as ensuring successful

communication with landlords and service personnel outside the campus and advocate for themselves when necessary (Sawir et al., 2012). Further, language-based prejudice has been shown to hinder students' acculturation and integration into their host communities (Gbadamosi, 2018), to result in underestimation of their academic skills (Jean-Francois, 2019), to decrease their classroom participation (Heng, 2018), and to limit their involvement in extracurricular activities (CBIE, 2015). Linguistic discrimination toward international students is prevalent, causing students to experience an inferiority complex, lack of belonging, and social anxiety, all of which jeopardize their mental health (Dovchin, 2020).

In light of the important role of language in the formation and expression of attitudes, a handful of previous studies have included a focus on language within the framework of the integrated threat theory. In one such study, Spencer-Rodgers and McGovern (2002) found that American students held negative language attitudes toward international students speaking English as a second language (L2) and expressed frustration and impatience with those students. In that study, language-related attitudes had a unique and strong contribution to prejudice, whereas realistic and symbolic threats did not emerge as important. In a similar vein, Mak et al. (2014) explored Australian-born domestic students' attitudes toward international students, with language-related attitudes emerging as a significant predictor of prejudice. Therefore, considering these findings, this dissertation extends measures of various types of threat—as conceptualized within the integrated threat theory—to include a measure of language attitudes (i.e., linguistic threat), given the salience of language as a social cue in the sociolinguistic context of this dissertation (Montréal, Québec), where French is the language of the dominant francophone group while English is the language of the anglophone minority.

The context of Montréal is particularly conducive to exploring the role of language in intergroup attitudes. Despite being the only official language of the province (since 1974), French has always been a contentious issue in Québec due to its minority status in the larger context of North America (Busque, 2022). Even though recent research suggests otherwise (Ballinger et al., 2022; Bourhis & Sioufi, 2017), the status of French has been generally regarded as precarious. Therefore, it is likely that language will play a role in intergroup attitudes between the demographic and cultural majority of francophones and the diverse group of international students, some of whom speak English but not French. From the perspective of local francophones for whom French is intimately linked to their social identity (Oakes & Warren, 2007), international students—English-speaking ones in particular—likely pose a threat to the ethnolinguistic vitality of the francophone majority. Whereas Québec francophones seem to be similar to Canadians in other provinces with respect to what makes an individual a true member of a nation (e.g., one who obeys the local laws and learns the local language); they attribute particular importance to the knowledge and use of French for one to be considered a true Quebecker (Bilodeau & Turgeon, 2021). From the perspective of international students, however, the provincial government's strong emphasis on language policy is likely perceived negatively, fuelling students' negative perceptions of francophones. To illustrate, the recent passing of *Bill 96: An act respecting French, the official and common language of Québec* (2021), which further limits English use in the public domain and bans government services in English for newcomers six months after their arrival in the province, may lead international students to develop negative attitudes toward francophones.

A more recent manifestation of the differential treatment of international students from non-francophone countries who are attending English-medium universities in Québec is the

tuition hike proposed and enacted by the provincial government. Initially set to double the tuition fees for international and out-of-province domestic students—in order to protect the status of French, particularly in Montréal, by limiting the numbers of non-French-speaking students—the proposal has since been revised to include a 33% increase in tuition. However, 80% of students (regardless of their background) will now need to acquire at least an intermediate level of French before graduation (Buongiorno, 2023; Greenfield, 2023; Lapierre, 2023; The Consortium of English-language CEGEPs, Colleges and Universities of Quebec, 2023). Perhaps even more critical for international students from non-francophone countries attending English-medium universities is that they are expected to pay upwards of CA$20,000 in tuition yearly as of Fall 2024 while their counterparts from francophone countries (e.g., France, Belgium) are treated as domestic or out-of-province Canadian students depending on the degree they pursue (Greenfield, 2023). It can be argued that the provincial government's stance in this regard may impact how English-speaking international students are perceived by the francophone majority (the population of interest in Study 1) as well as how francophone host community members are perceived by these international students (the population of interest in Study 2).

The Role of Contact in Prejudice

So far, it has been established that positive contact between international students and members of their host community plays a critical role in ensuring that both groups benefit from this cultural exchange in a symbiotic manner (Campbell, 2012; Harrison & Peacock, 2010; Hechanova-Alampay et al., 2002; Tran & Pham, 2016). Therefore, in addition to examining potential sources of prejudicial attitudes between these two groups, this dissertation also aims to explore the potential association between prejudice and its manifestation in behaviour in the form of intergroup contact, with the idea that attitudes may not always reflect behaviour. Thus,

one of the key points of interest for the present dissertation is whether attitudes are associated with the quality and quantity of contact between international students and their host community members since, in the end, it is individuals' actions (i.e., behaviour) rather than their attitudes that will have a more consequential value in their daily interactions. Indeed, intergroup contact between host community members and international students may facilitate the exchange of ideas and cultures and in turn improve intergroup attitudes (Campbell, 2012).

There is indeed evidence that certain types of contact can positively affect people's attitudes toward various outgroups. For instance, institutionally supported intergroup encounters, where individuals of equal social status interact in a cooperative manner toward a common goal, have been shown to reduce prejudice (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998). Typically, the more contact individuals have with a certain social group (e.g., Muslims, patients with cancer), the more positive attitudes they exhibit toward its members (Berrenberg et al., 2007; Gonzales et al., 2008), and this positivity may even extend to other social groups (Pettigrew, 2009; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). However, the relationship between contact and prejudice is likely complex. For example, Van Laar et al. (2005) examined intergroup relations between students from various ethnic backgrounds (i.e., African American, Asian American, Latino, White), where contact with outgroup members, measured as the number of roommates that students had from each ethnicity, generally decreased outgroup prejudice. In fact, the positive impact of contact with members of one ethnic group also had a spillover effect on attitudes toward other groups. Yet contact with Asian Americans had negatively impacted attitudes toward that student group, implying that the role of contact might depend on the specific ethnolinguistic group targeted. Therefore, given their diverse ethnic backgrounds, international students are an ideal population to investigate issues of contact and attitudes in this dissertation. Furthermore, research on attitudes toward

international students has revealed a relationship between prejudice and both contact quality and quantity. For instance, the more contact Australian domestic students had with international students, the less negative they felt toward them, but the quality of contact had a stronger positive relationship with attitudes than contact quantity (Mak et al., 2014). Thus, to contribute to this line of research on intergroup attitudes and contact among international students and members of a local community, this dissertation also captures both quantity and quality of intergroup contact.

The Present Dissertation

Despite multiple benefits of intergroup contact for both international students and their host community, establishing and maintaining contact seems to be challenging on account of various ethnic, linguistic, and cultural differences between these two social groups. These differences often mark international students as members of an outgroup in a given community and result in prejudicial attitudes toward them. The goal of this dissertation is to understand the main sources of potential negativity between the majority group, who in the context of this research is represented by members of the francophone community in Montréal, Québec (Statistics Canada, 2021), and international students, who are represented by L2-speaking international students at English-medium universities in Montréal. This dissertation research consists of two studies providing complementary perspectives. Study 1 examines the attitudes of francophones (both students and non-students) toward international students at English-medium universities, whereas Study 2 explores the attitudes of international students toward francophones. Both studies additionally investigate the quality and quantity of contact between these groups of francophones and international students. In doing so, this dissertation provides a comprehensive view of intergroup relations between international students and members of their

host community who constitute the linguistic and cultural majority. Considering the number of ethnoculturally and ethnolinguistically diverse students that Montréal attracts every year, the two studies of this dissertation are expected to contribute to the literature on intergroup relations and prejudice by focusing on the ever-growing population of international students and to extend prior work on intergroup threat by incorporating language attitudes as a potential unique predictor of intergroup attitudes and contact.

CHAPTER 2

Study 1: Francophone Residents' Attitudes Toward and Intergroup Contact With L2-Speaking International Students

Introduction

Contact among ethnolinguistically and culturally diverse social groups has become more prominent than ever, and the continuously growing population of international students around the world is but one manifestation and a reminder of this reality. In 2019 alone, 6.1 million students left their home countries to study abroad, and the majority chose English-speaking countries such as the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia (OECD, 2021). Considered a safe, stable, and tolerant country to study and live (CBIE, 2021), Canada ranked third among these countries regarding the number of international students in 2019 (El-Assal, 2020) and is currently hosting more than half a million international students (CBIE, n.d.; Jassi & Safdar, 2021). However, international students, with their diverse ethnic, social, and linguistic backgrounds, often find it difficult to adapt and socially integrate into many host communities (Paradowski et al., 2021; Volet & Ang, 2012). Establishing contact with local residents seems to be particularly challenging (CBIE, 2015; Gresham & Clayton, 2011; Rajapaksa & Dundes, 2002), which has been generally attributed to prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory behaviours by the host community. Yet comprehensive investigations of potential sources of such attitudes and behaviours are conspicuously missing. Therefore, the present study aims to address this gap by examining potential sources of negativity and discrimination toward international students from members of a local host community and by exploring the link between such negativity and intergroup contact between these two groups.

Background Literature

Prejudice Against International Students

International students have attracted much attention not only among researchers but also policymakers and institutions of higher education due to the socioeconomic benefits they bring to their host countries (Smith, 2016). Besides direct economic contributions to their host communities, for instance, in terms of considerable expenditure on food, accommodation, and transportation (Esses et al., 2018; Global Affairs Canada, 2020), international students also generate revenue for their host institutions paying three or four times more in tuition (Anderson, 2015), creating thousands of university jobs (El-Assal, 2020), and contributing billions of dollars in tax revenue (Global Affairs Canada, 2020). From a social perspective, international students bring a multitude of cultures, languages, and ways of thinking to their host countries and enable members of their respective host communities to connect with the outside world without having to travel (Anderson, 2015; CBIE, 2015). Given that only a small proportion of Canadian-born students (3.1%) opt to study abroad (Internationalization in Canadian Universities, 2014), international students also bring major benefits to their Canadian peers in terms of cultivating intercultural awareness and communication skills.

Yet despite what they offer to their host communities, international students frequently report feeling unwelcomed and experience discrimination based on their race, skin colour, ethnicity, and cultural practices (Briscoe et al., 2022; Gareis, 2012; Samuel & Burney, 2003; Tran, 2017), or due to language-related issues such as accented speech or low target-language proficiency (Gbadamosi, 2018; Lindemann, 2005; Maeda, 2017; Surtees, 2019). For instance, international students from Asia studying at a vocational school in Australia reported being singled out by the locals, who labeled them "PR hunters," or individuals who exploit the system

by arriving to study in Australia with the sole purpose of obtaining permanent residency (Tran, 2017). In the United States, international students reported being ridiculed for their language errors and accents, which caused them to feel embarrassed, socially isolated, and unwilling to participate in class activities (Maeda, 2017). Surprisingly, contrary to reports of international students' negative experiences with the host community, domestic students in various research contexts indicated at least moderately positive attitudes toward international students (Quinton, 2019; Mak et al., 2014; Spencer-Rodgers, 2001; Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002; Ward et al., 2005), which may imply a disconnect between domestic students' reported attitudes and behaviours toward international students.

Considering that persons of colour (e.g., students from India and China) constitute more than half of the international student population worldwide (OECD, 2013) and almost 75% of the students in Canada (CBIE, n.d.), prejudice can indeed be a major issue for most international students (Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007), leading to the perception of "otherness" or outright discrimination and ultimately causing adaptation problems and subpar educational experiences. For instance, studying a large group of international students in the United States, with students from China being the majority, Wadsworth et al. (2008) showed that perceived discrimination negatively impacted students' satisfaction with their study abroad. In another study, perceived discrimination also contributed to students' feelings of social isolation and homesickness (Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007). Indeed, international students tend to experience more social adjustment problems than their domestic peers (Hechanova-Alampay et al., 2002), and since they constitute a heterogeneous population with distinct experiences (Grayson, 2007), students of African, Asian, and Middle Eastern origin, in particular, find social and academic adjustment

more difficult than their White peers because of overt and covert discrimination (Jean-Francois, 2019; Lee & Rice, 2007; McDonough et al., 2022; Senyshyn et al., 2000; Yeh & Inose, 2003).

Most research thus far, however, has not directly examined potential sources that may trigger prejudicial attitudes from a host community toward international students. Some studies, for instance, have implied that negative attitudes can arise from differences in cultural values (Bonazzo & Wong, 2007; Lee & Rice, 2007; Pritchard & Skinner, 2002) and perceived competition over limited resources such as university admission, employment, course grading (e.g., when grading is done on a curve), and attention from instructors (Barron, 2006; Charles-Toussaint & Crowson, 2010; Hanassab, 2006; Myburgh et al., 2002). Other studies have pointed out that negative attitudes might be rooted in a majority group's cultural stereotypes about international students (Hanassab, 2006; Surtees, 2019), locals' apprehension over being misunderstood (Myburgh et al., 2002; Surtees, 2019), and a host community's bias against foreign accents and poor language proficiency (Kukatlapalli et al., 2020; Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007; Volet & Ang, 2012). Although most challenges faced by international students tend to be treated as issues to be dealt with by students themselves (Harryba et al., 2013), other challenges—particularly, prejudicial and discriminatory attitudes and behaviours—must be addressed with respect to each host community (Lee & Rice, 2007). Therefore, research on host community members' attitudes and behaviors toward international students is warranted to determine potential sources of negativity.

Integrated Threat Theory As a Framework to Understand Prejudice

With its multidimensional approach to prejudice, Stephan and Stephan's (2000) integrated threat theory offers a useful framework to determine potential sources of prejudice against international students in a host community. The framework is informed by Tajfel's

(1970) social identity theory which states that individuals create a positive self-image by emphasizing differences between members of the ingroup and outsiders belonging to various outgroups. Through the process of social differentiation, ingroup members perceive various types of threats from outgroup members (realistic threat, symbolic threat), experience intergroup anxiety, and express negative stereotypes, all of which can trigger prejudice.

While realistic threats concern the political or economic wellbeing of a group, symbolic threats encompass the group's worldview captured through morals, values, and beliefs (Stephan & Stephan, 1996). For example, domestic students' fear of receiving low grades when paired with international students in course projects or local residents' belief that international students take away limited job resources from them can be described as realistic threats. Symbolic threats involve disagreements between international and domestic students regarding cultural values such as the perception shared by some students in the United Kingdom that their drinking culture is judged negatively by students from Muslim backgrounds (Harrison & Peacock, 2010). Intergroup anxiety illustrates the affective domain of intercultural contact, composed of feelings of apprehension, embarrassment, or rejection. When individuals expect their interaction to be unpleasant, they may see it as a personal threat due to the risk of losing face (Stephan, 2014; Stephan & Stephan, 1985), such as when domestic students feel reticent to interact with international students for fear of sounding racist or offensive (Harrison & Peacock, 2010). Lastly, negative stereotypes encompass people's beliefs about outgroup members' personal qualities, where international students might be labeled as bad at speaking a language, shy, or unsociable (e.g., Harrison & Peacock, 2010; Ruble & Zhang, 2013). From this perspective, negative stereotypes include preconceived ideas reflecting various degrees of misunderstanding of international students or their places of origin.

Harrison and Peacock's (2010) qualitative investigation is among a handful of studies that have adopted the integrated threat theory to understand the treatment of international students (Mak et al., 2014; Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002). Through individual and focus group interviews with students in the United Kingdom, these researchers reported concrete examples of various sources of bias against international students. For example, domestic students' dissatisfaction with peer learning experiences and their concerns about receiving low grades were interpreted as realistic threats, whereas differences in behavioural norms (e.g., problems with punctuality, and over-diligence) were attributed to symbolic threats. Students' intergroup anxiety was linked to a lack of shared cultural reference points, language-related anxiety, and fear of committing social faux pas. Finally, negative stereotyping was evident in students' overgeneralization of racial and ethnic descriptors (e.g., collectivist, excluding, unfriendly, poor English skills) to entire ethnic groups, especially international students from China.

Although issues of language were subsumed in Harrison and Peacock's (2010) study—and in the integrated threat theory more generally—under the comments pertaining to intergroup anxiety, language in and of itself could be a separate dimension contributing to prejudice. Dovchin's (2020) interviews with international students in Australia, for instance, suggested that pronunciation mistakes lead to bullying and being "other-ed," which may then cause students to experience lack of belonging, depression, and even suicidal thoughts. Having moved to New Zealand with her family at the age of three, one participant, for instance, mentioned that her good English was questioned (i.e., "How come you speak English this well?") as she happens to be a Muslim woman wearing a hijab, which cued outgroup membership for some locals, revealing intricate links between social expectations and language attitudes. In a study focusing on

domestic students' willingness to interact with international students (Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002), responses to statements such as "I find it unpleasant to listen to foreign students who speak with a strong accent" and "I become impatient when listening to foreign students who speak English poorly" were among the strongest predictors of domestic students' attitudes toward their international peers. Elsewhere, low-proficiency, accented speech has been shown to elicit unfavourable evaluations from course instructors (Jean-Francois, 2019), to trigger negative bias in employment contexts (Kukatlapalli et al., 2020), and to contribute to international students' exclusion from group work (Haugh, 2016) and difficulty making friends with local students (CBIE, 2015). Thus, in addition to exploring various sources of prejudice against international students, this study also examines language-related attitudes (i.e., linguistic threat) as a separate dimension potentially contributing to prejudice.

Intergroup Contact

Intergroup contact has been studied extensively in the literature on international students, with most studies suggesting that contact with locals tends to be problematic. Locals seem to avoid contact with international students, which is reflected in the low numbers of local friends reported by international students in many host communities (Gareis, 2012; Gbadamosi, 2018; Gresham & Clayton, 2011; Rajapaksa & Dundes, 2002). Despite its emphasis on multiculturalism (Government of Canada, 2018), Canada does not seem to fare better. According to an earlier report (CBIE, 2015), the percentage of Canadian friends for Middle Eastern and Asian students was low (28–44%), compared to the number of Canadian friends reported by students from the United States (84%). In another Canadian study, only 10% of international students reported spending time with their local peers outside instruction, and the existing relationships between international and local students were superficial (Zhou & Zhang, 2014).

Even though intergroup contact involving international students is rare (e.g., Williams & Johnson, 2011), it provides a multitude of benefits for host communities and international students. For international students, apart from linguistic benefits such as improvement in sociolinguistic and pragmatic skills (Kennedy Terry, 2022; Taguchi, 2011) and interactional competence (Masuda, 2011), positive social contact can also facilitate social adjustment (Hechanova-Alampay et al., 2002; Jean-Francois, 2019), reduce perceived discrimination, and alleviate negative emotional states and personal problems (Chataway & Berry, 1989; Ye, 2006). In addition, positive contact not only provides opportunities for intercultural communication but also encourages qualified international students to remain in their host community and contribute to its socioeconomic vitality (Netierman et al., 2021), particularly in countries with a slow population growth such as Canada (The World Bank, 2020).

With respect to the role of intergroup contact in prejudice, there appears to be a complex reciprocal relationship between these constructs. For instance, institutionally supported intergroup contact, where individuals of equal social status interact in a cooperative manner toward a common goal, is more likely to reduce prejudice (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998). Similarly, frequency of contact mediates the relationship between perceived threat and attitudes (Corenblum & Stephan, 2001; Stephan et al., 2002) and sometimes predicts attitudes directly, where the more contact individuals have with a certain group (e.g., Muslims, cancer patients), the more positive attitudes they exhibit toward its members (Berrenberg et al., 2007; González et al., 2008). In other cases, prejudice can have either an equal or even stronger effect on the quantity of contact, where individuals with high levels of prejudice toward a group tend to avoid contact with its members (Binder et al., 2009). Finally, not only quantity but also quality of contact seems to play a role in prejudice (Allport, 1954), such that the quality of contact is often

a better and more significant predictor of attitudes than its quantity (Binder et al., 2009; Mak et al., 2014; Stephan et al., 2000a). Apart from attitudes, frequent and high quality (i.e., positive) contact may also reduce the level of perceived threat (Stephan & Stephan, 2000), which in turn reduces prejudice (Aberson, 2019). For instance, Stephan et al. (2000b) found that the more frequent contact Americans had with Mexicans, the lower they scored on all types of threat. Therefore, in the present study, intergroup contact is operationalized through both quality and quantity to explore its relationship with host community members' attitudes toward and perceived threat from international students.

The Current Study

As shown in prior research, international students often experience prejudice from members of the local community. However, apart from a few attempts (Harrison & Peacock, 2010; Mak et al., 2014; Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002), there is no comprehensive explanation as to potential sources of prejudice. While some studies allude to the critical role of stereotypes, others highlight the incompatibility of social and cultural values between the two groups. Given that the research reviewed so far points to a crucial role of language in attitudes and behaviours toward international students, this study aims to contribute to this literature by incorporating linguistic threat as an additional explanatory variable, to supplement those already included within the integrated threat theory (realistic and symbolic threats, intergroup anxiety, negative stereotypes).

As much as it is crucial to investigate sources of host community members' negative attitudes toward international students, it is perhaps even more important to determine whether these attitudes lead to prejudicial behaviours, as attitudes do not always reflect actions (Garrett, 2010). For example, local residents may harbour little prejudice against international students but

may show no interest in communicating with them. Similarly, some prejudiced locals may be obligated to maintain contact with students because circumstances require them to do so, for instance, through work on common projects. Thus, to move beyond the realm of attitudes and to include behaviours, this study also aims to contribute to the literature on international students by exploring the association between host community members' quantity and quality of contact with international students and their attitudes toward as well as perceived threat from these students. In the end, it is actions rather than attitudes that may have tangible consequences for students' daily experience.

Last but not least, in their qualitative study, Harrison and Peacock (2010) provided domestic students' perspectives regarding their challenges communicating with international students; however, they excluded members of the larger community residing off campus. Since prejudicial attitudes and discrimination likely extend beyond university campuses (Grayson, 2014; Lee & Rice, 2007), and in fact may be further amplified in those contexts (Hanassab, 2006), this study aims to provide a more comprehensive look at intergroup relations by recruiting participants—all representing members of the local community—from both student (i.e., domestic students) and non-student (i.e., local residents) populations.

The present study, which extends the work on prejudice within the integrated threat theory to include language as a potential source of bias against international students, was conducted in Montréal, Québec. This context appears particularly suitable for investigating language as an additional source of prejudice in light of the importance of French to the ethnolinguistic vitality of francophones, Québec's majority ethnolinguistic group. Issues of language are central to the francophone identity, as illustrated by research on francophones' attitudes toward French (Genesee & Holobow, 1989; Kircher, 2012; Lambert et al., 1960) and

the Québec government's recent controversial legislation strengthening the status of French (Bill 96: An Act respecting French, the official and common language of Québec, 2021). To elaborate, Bill 96 places the French language at the core of the Québécois identity and charges the province of Québec with the task of ensuring the survival of "la francophonie" in North America. In Bill 96, the use of French is a critical condition for the integration of newcomers into Québec society and a principal pathway for them to contribute to Québec's future (p. 7). Therefore, by virtue of their temporary, foreign-resident status, English-speaking international students might be perceived as unwilling to integrate and participate in Québec's society. Moreover, even though Bill 96 bans employers from requiring that their employees know any other language than French, English-speaking international students may often be unable to complete service transactions in French; this jeopardizes the expected outcomes of this bill.

Perhaps a more conspicuous manifestation of perceived linguistic threat from English-speaking students is the provincial government's recent move to double the tuition fees for out-of-province and international students in Québec's major English-medium institutions (McGill University, Concordia University, and Bishop's University) as of September 2024. Although the government eventually settled on a 33% increase, 80% of students attending English-medium universities are now obligated to achieve at least an intermediate level of French by graduation, with financial consequences imposed on the institutions unable to meet this requirement (Lapierre, 2023). According to government officials, these measures will discourage English-speaking students from coming to the province and as a result will increase funding to French-medium universities and will protect the French landscape of the province (Buongiorno, 2023; The Consortium of English-language CEGEPs, Colleges and Universities of Quebec, 2023; Greenfield, 2023). With regard to international students, while the provincial government treats

those from French-speaking countries such as France and Belgium as domestic, students from other non-francophone countries are expected to pay upwards of CA$20,000 annually for their education (Greenfield, 2023). Considering such strong sentiments and actions from the provincial government against English-speaking students, Québec francophones might have developed new or amplified existing perceptions of linguistic threat from English-speaking international students.

Given this background, if language issues contribute to prejudice against international students, these issues would most likely be salient in Québec, where local residents (and especially non-student members of the local community) who hold strong beliefs about the preservation of French may be more inclined to perceive international students as a threat to the ethnolinguistic vitality of the francophone majority due to these students' limited knowledge and use of French. Such concerns might be particularly relevant to international students enrolled in English-medium universities, given that Montréal hosts two such institutions (McGill University, Concordia University). Both universities attract large cohorts of out-of-province and especially international students (World University Rankings, 2023), whose numbers nearly doubled in the past decade (Morasse, 2023). Therefore, the present study focuses on student and non-student members of the Montréal francophone community, exploring their attitudes toward and contact with international students at English-medium universities. The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. Is there a difference between student and non-student members of the Montréal francophone community with respect to their attitudes toward, perceptions of threat from, and contact with international students?

2. Which variables (i.e., realistic threat, symbolic threat, intergroup anxiety, negative stereotypes, linguistic threat) account for the attitudes of the Montréal francophone community toward international students?

3. What is the association between Montréal francophone community members' quality and quantity of contact with international students and their attitudes toward and perception of threat from them?

Method

Participants

Participants included 59 individuals (29 students, 30 non-students) who self-identified as francophone and reported French as one of their first languages (Leimgruber & Fernández-Mallat, 2021). Participants self-reported their listening, speaking, reading, and writing proficiency in English and French by using 100-point scales, where 0 corresponded to "not competent at all" while 100 meant "very competent," and these scores were averaged to calculate the overall proficiency for each participant per language. Participants also reported the percentage (0–100%) of their daily language use (French, English, other) as well as their familiarity with L2-accented French and English, with 0 corresponding to "not at all" while 100 indicating "very much."

Student participants (23 females, 5 males, and 1 non-binary), who were on average 26.9 years old (*SD* = 6.3, range = 18–46), pursued various academic degrees, including BA (14), MA (6), PhD (6), and other professional certificates (3), at English-medium universities in Montréal. Fourteen participants worked part-time (12 off campus, 2 on campus) during their studies. The majority of student participants (17) self-reported their ethnic identity as White; however, other ethnic groups such as East Asian, Black, Arab, West Asian, and Southeast Asian were also

represented. Among the 25 Canada-born participants, the majority (24) were born in Québec and one was born in Ontario. The remaining participants hailed from various parts of the world such as Algeria, China, Colombia, and Turkey. Their length of residence in Montréal was 20.6 years on average ($SD = 8.5$, range $= 5.9$–36). Based on self-reports, they were similarly proficient in both English ($M = 95.2$, $SD = 6.07$) and French ($M = 95.2$, $SD = 7.4$). However, as francophone students studying at English-medium universities, they reported greater daily use of English ($M = 50.8$, $SD = 20.6$) than French ($M = 44.2$, $SD = 21.9$) and greater familiarity with L2-accented English ($M = 90.9$, $SD = 18.3$) than French ($M = 74.9$, $SD = 27.7$).

Non-student participants (17 females, 13 males) had a mean age of 34.8 ($SD = 7.5$, range $= 22$–54) and were recruited from outside the university context to represent local francophone residents who were not pursuing an academic degree at the time of data collection. They were engaged in various professions such as a pastry chef, dance teacher, professional writer, receptionist, mental health counsel, and architect. While most (23) were White, other ethnicities such as East Asian, Black, Métis, and Southeast Asian were also represented among non-student participants. The majority (25) were born in Québec, while four were born in France and one in Ontario, and all resided in Montréal for 21.5 years on average ($SD = 11.3$, range $= 4.5$–46.5). Non-student participants were more proficient in French ($M = 96.0$, $SD = 6.2$) than in English ($M = 86.2$, $SD = 12.5$), and they reported using considerably more French ($M = 76.8$, $SD = 19.8$) than English ($M = 20.5$, $SD = 18.0$) on a daily basis. Finally, they were similarly familiar with L2-accented French ($M = 80.8$, $SD = 29.3$) and English ($M = 82.3$, $SD = 19.1$).

Materials

To determine which potential variables account for francophone host community members' attitudes toward international students and to elicit the quality and quantity of

intergroup contact between these groups, several measures of prejudice and intergroup contact were adapted from previous research. To help student and non-student participants reflect on their attitudes toward international students, a brief contextualizing statement was provided prior to presenting relevant questionnaire items (e.g., *Lorsque vous répondez aux questions ci-dessous, veuillez penser aux étudiant.e.s internationaux.les qui étudient dans les universités anglophones de Montréal, qui ont peu ou n'ont pas de connaissances en français et qui utilisent généralement l'anglais dans leurs activités quotidiennes sur le campus et en dehors du campus*. [*As you respond to the items below, please think about international students enrolled in English-medium universities in Montréal with little or no French background and who generally use English in their day-to-day activities on and off campus*]). To allow for comparability across measures, all questionnaire statements, except those targeting negative stereotypes (see below), were presented through 100-point sliding scales (with no numerical markers), where the two relevant endpoints were labelled negatively on the left (e.g., "totally disagree," corresponding to 0) and positively on the right (e.g., "totally agree," corresponding to 100) and the initial slider position was set in the middle. All questionnaire items were translated and presented to participants in French.

Attitudes Toward International Students

Adopted from Corenblum and Stephan (2001), an evaluative/emotional reactions questionnaire was used to measure participants' attitudes toward international students. The questionnaire elicited the degree to which host community members experience the following six positive emotions (approval, admiration, acceptance, affection, sympathy, warmth) and six negative emotions (dislike, superiority, hostility, disdain, hatred, rejection) when thinking about international students (not at all–very much).

Sources of Prejudice Toward International Students

Based on the integrated threat theory (Stephan & Stephan, 2000), there were four

measures capturing various sources of prejudice (realistic threat, symbolic threat, intergroup

anxiety, and negative stereotypes), along with a separate measure of linguistic threat which was

specifically developed for this study. Realistic threat was assessed through seven agree–disagree

statements adapted from previous research investigating domestic students' attitudes toward

international students in the United States (Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002) and New

Zealand (Ward et al., 2005), with necessary adaptation to Québec (see Appendix A). For

example, the statement "American colleges and universities are paying too much to finance the

education of foreign students)" was modified to read: "The government and universities in

Montréal are paying too much to finance the education of these students." Similarly, the

statement "International students have a negative effect on the quality of New Zealand

education" was altered as follows: "They decrease the quality of education in colleges and

universities in Montréal." To create comparable statements for student and non-student

participants, minimal adaptations were introduced to reflect the lived reality of these two groups

(e.g., "They take jobs away from local francophone students in Montréal [e.g., part-time

employment as a barista off campus, teaching/research assistantships on campus]" for student

participants and "They take jobs away from local francophone residents in Montréal [e.g., part-

time employment as a shopping assistant, courier, food delivery person]" for non-student

participants). Across all statements, the pronoun "they" referred to international students in

English-medium universities, which was clear from the contextualizing statement.

Symbolic threat was captured through seven agree–disagree statements adopted from

previous work (Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002; Ward et al., 2005), with word-level

changes introduced to adapt each statement to the Québec context (e.g., "Montréal is losing its Québécois character because of the increasing number of these students"). All statements were identical for both student and non-student participants. Intergroup anxiety was measured following Corenblum and Stephan (2001), where participants were asked to indicate how they felt (not at all–very much) when interacting with international students by using 12 adjectives (apprehensive, friendly, uncertain, comfortable, worried, trusting, threatened, confident, awkward, safe, anxious, at ease). This measure was also identical for both student and non-student participants.

To measure negative stereotypes, a composite stereotype index was created following previous empirical work on prejudice and intergroup attitudes (Corenblum & Stephan, 2001; Esses et al., 1993) following Stephan and Stephan's (1996) recommendation that researchers should avoid carrying out and interpreting correlations between prejudice and raw stereotype scores. To achieve this, 12 traits (calm, close-minded, clean, boastful, lazy, loud, passive, sociable, reliable, opportunist, considerate, hardworking), all relevant to international students, were selected from previous work on attitudes toward international students (e.g., Harrison & Peacock, 2010). Participants were first asked to indicate the percentage of international students who they thought may possess these traits (0–100%) and then to rate the favourableness (i.e., valence) of each trait on a 10-point scale, where –5 corresponded to "very unfavourable" and +5 corresponded to "very favourable." These scores were then used to create a composite stereotype/evaluation index (see Data Analysis).

The dimension of linguistic threat was captured through six statements eliciting francophones' attitudes toward French in Québec (e.g., "They must respect and accept Québec government's French-only policy in the public domain"), adapted from previous research

(Gatbonton & Trofimovich, 2008) which targeted francophone individuals' ethnic group affiliation in the same research context, along with two additional items tapping into the affective dimension of linguistic threat (e.g., "I feel tolerant toward them when they have poor skills speaking French"), following prior work on the integrated threat theory (Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002), for a total of eight items (totally agree–totally disagree). Put differently, questionnaire items previously employed to target ethnic group affiliation and the affective reactions to individuals' linguistic traits were modified for the present study to elicit participants' perception of linguistic threat. All statements for student and non-student participants were identical, except for two items which inquired about language preference on and off campus for students and inside and outside the work context for non-students.

Intergroup Contact

Following Spencer-Rodgers and McGovern (2002) and Ward et al. (2005), student participants' frequency of contact with international students was assessed with respect to four different potential contexts of interaction (0 = *never*, 100 = *always*): working in a study group, sharing class notes, doing group assignments, and communicating during free time outside class (e.g., at coffee shops, restaurants, bars, etc.). These contexts were adapted for non-student participants, resulting in four different contexts of interaction: at work, in my neighbourhood, when using public transportation, and off-work in the social domain (e.g., at coffee shops, restaurants, bars, etc.). The measure of contact quality consisted of six 100-point semantic differential scales adopted from Ward et al. (2005) asking participants how they would describe their interaction with international students: unequal–equal, involuntary–voluntary, superficial–intimate, unpleasant–pleasant, competitive–cooperative, and negative–positive. The scales were identical for both student and non-student participants.

In addition to the quantitative data, the present study also collected qualitative data from participants via open-ended questions that inquired participants' particularly negative/positive interactions with international students attending English-medium universities as well as their views on how to ameliorate intergroup relations between the host community and international students. However, since this set of data fell outside the scope of the present study, it was not explored further.

Procedure

Because the study was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, which precluded easy access to participants, all data were collected through the online survey platform LimeSurvey (https://www.limesurvey.org), with several safeguards in place to ensure data quality (Nagle, 2019). For example, following prescreening, interested participants who met the eligibility criteria were assigned an individual, single-use token to access the survey. Moreover, participants were unable to skip any items or change their answers once submitted, and they were asked to advise the researcher of any problems they encountered while completing the survey. Participants were also encouraged to find a quiet space away from distractions to complete the survey. The time spent by participants on the survey was tracked, with the idea that responses from participants who completed the survey too fast (i.e., skipping through items) or too slowly (i.e., abandoning the survey for hours) would be eliminated if necessary.

First, participants were provided information about the purpose of the study and were asked to read and accept an online consent form. Next, if they chose to participate, they were informed about the structure of the survey and were given instructions about how to complete the questionnaires. Participants first completed the 12 items capturing their attitudes toward international students, which was followed by the statements targeting realistic threat (7 items),

symbolic threat (7 items), intergroup anxiety (12 items), negative stereotypes (12 items), language attitudes (8 items), and intergroup contact (10 items). Finally, participants filled out a background questionnaire that elicited their demographic information, length of residence in Montréal, and knowledge of languages (see Appendix B). Before the final submission of their responses, participants were provided with an open-ended textbox to note any issues they encountered in the survey or to leave any comments regarding the study. The entire survey was presented to and completed by participants in French, and participants received CA\$20 as compensation for their time.

Data Analysis

Before compiling the dataset, negatively coded items for language attitudes were reverse-scored so that, in all cases, higher scores corresponded to more positive attitudes. For realistic, symbolic, and linguistic threat as well as intergroup anxiety, positively coded items were also reverse-scored so that higher scores corresponded to greater threat or anxiety. All ratings (except negative stereotypes) were checked for item reliability by computing Cronbach's alpha for each variable, separately for non-student participants (.93 for attitudes, .77 for realistic threat, .81 for symbolic threat, .78 for linguistic threat, .93 for intergroup anxiety, .80 for negative stereotypes, .90 for contact quantity, and .83 for contact quality) and for student participants (.92 for attitudes, .90 for realistic threat, .89 for symbolic threat, .80 for linguistic threat, .90 for intergroup anxiety, .70 for negative stereotypes after removing one item with a particularly low item-total correlation, .90 for contact quantity, and .89 for contact quality). These values were sufficiently high ($\alpha \geq .70$) and either comparable or in fact superior to those reported previously in similar work, particularly for stereotypes (e.g., $\alpha = .41–.67$ in Corenblum & Stephan, 2001; $\alpha = .44$ in Stephan et al., 2000b). Therefore, composite scores were then computed for each

variable by averaging the relevant responses per participant. For negative stereotypes, following Corenblum and Stephan (2001), a composite stereotype index was derived for each participant by multiplying each attributed percentage value (0–100%) by the relevant valence score (from –5 to 5) per trait, then computing the mean across the 12 traits. The resulting stereotype index ranged between –500 and 500.

Out of 59 participants, four reported difficulty with the stereotype measure which elicited participants' subjective impression of the percentage of international students possessing a given character trait (e.g., hardworking, lazy). These participants found one of stereotype items somewhat abstract. However, upon further examination of the data, these participants did not appear to be outliers, and therefore, their data were retained in all analyses. Participants completed the survey within about 35 minutes which was deemed reasonable based on pilot testing; therefore, all data were included in the dataset.

Because normality checks revealed non-normal distributions for multiple variables, robust statistics were performed through comparison of bootstrapped BCa 95% confidence intervals (CIs) for differences between group means, on the assumption that bootstrapped CIs are largely unaffected by the distribution of scores (Field, 2018), which makes these analyses robust to violations of normality and thus more preferable to traditional nonparametric tests (Larson-Hall, 2016, p. 74). Effect sizes were interpreted based on previous literature (Plonsky & Oswald, 2014), using Cohen's *d* for between-group contrasts (0.40, 0.70, and 1.00) and *r* for correlation strength (.25, .40, and .60), where each value designates small, medium, and large effects, respectively.

Results

As summarized in Table 1, both student and non-student participants generally responded positively toward international students (with mean scores above 70), where the overlapping bootstrapped 95% CIs suggested that both groups were similar in their responses. With the exception of linguistic threat, which was perceived higher by non-students than students (as shown through non-overlapping bootstrapped 95% CIs), both participant groups reported relatively low perceptions of threat in general. With respect to stereotypes, both the mean values (around 100) and bootstrapped 95% CIs suggested rather neutral perceptions of international students by both participant groups, considering that these scores could be as low as –500 and as high as +500. As for contact, quality seemed to be rated higher than quantity for both groups. However, compared to non-students, student participants (predictably) reported higher frequency and greater quality of contact with international students, again as shown through non-overlapping bootstrapped 95% CIs.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Francophone Participants' Overall Attitudes and Feelings of Threat Toward and Contact with International Students

Measure	Students			Non-students		
	M	*SD*	95% CI	*M*	*SD*	95% CI
Attitudes	73.40	18.13	[67.15, 79.48]	74.33	17.08	[67.92, 80.34]
Realistic threat	14.46	18.28	[8.32, 21.59]	12.59	14.81	[8.32, 21.59]
Symbolic threat	20.31	20.86	[12.85, 28.21]	22.32	18.59	[16.11, 28.40]
Linguistic threat	35.12	19.24	[28.13, 42.34]	55.56	20.68	[48.20, 62.96]
Intergroup anxiety	21.11	15.30	[15.36, 26.85]	22.82	17.64	[17.55, 28.56]
Stereotype index	106.77	69.82	[83.82, 130.33]	99.23	73.34	[72.20, 125.83]
Contact quantity	66.37	25.34	[56.43, 75.71]	42.46	26.84	[33.13, 52.56]
Contact quality	74.00	19.63	[66.62, 81.00]	60.43	18.14	[53.86, 67.06]

Note. All values are based on composite scores, with a minimum of 0 and a maximum 100, except for stereotype index, which ranges between –500 and +500.

To answer the first research question which targeted potential differences between student and non-student members of the Montréal francophone community with respect to their attitudes toward, perceptions of threat from, and contact with international students, the two groups were compared via independent samples *t* tests, focusing on a bootstrapped 95% CI for the mean difference as a measure of between-group difference. As shown in Table 2, non-students reported a greater level of perceived linguistic threat than students, and this difference appeared to be statistically significant as the 95% CI for the bootstrapped between-group difference did not include 0 and the estimated effect size was large (Plonsky & Oswald, 2014).

The two participant groups were comparable with respect to other types of threat measures. However, in terms of the reported contact, non-students' contact with international students was significantly less extensive in quality and quantity than that reported by students, again as shown through the 95% CIs for between-group differences that excluded 0, with estimated medium-size effects (Plonsky & Oswald, 2014).

Table 2

Comparison of Student and Non-Student Local Francophones' Overall Attitudes, Perceived Threat Toward, and Contact with International Students

Measure	M_{diff}	95% CI	t	p	d
Attitudes	–0.93	[–9.67, 7.96]	–0.21	1.00	–0.05
Realistic threat	1.87	[–6.91, 10.79]	0.46	1.00	0.11
Symbolic threat	–2.01	[–12.37, 8.71]	–0.40	1.00	–0.10
Linguistic threat	–20.45	[–30.87, –10.20]	–3.99	< .001	–1.02
Intergroup anxiety	–1.70	[–10.49, 7.05]	0.41	1.00	–0.10
Stereotype index	7.54	[–26.96, 41.37]	0.42	1.00	0.11
Contact quantity	23.91	[10.19, 36.13]	3.62	< .001	0.92
Contact quality	13.57	[3.88, 22.37]	2.85	.06	0.72

Note. Although bootstrapped 95% CIs are used to infer significance, Bonferroni-corrected *p* values for independent-samples *t* tests, along with effect size estimates (Cohen's *d*), are provided for completeness.

To answer the second research question focusing on which variables predict francophone host community members' attitudes toward international students, two separate hierarchical regression analyses were conducted for student and non-student participants. The outcome variable was attitudes toward international students, whereas measures of realistic threat, symbolic threat, intergroup anxiety, negative stereotypes, and linguistic threat were entered as predictors. All predictor variables, except linguistic threat, were entered in Step 1 simultaneously (i.e., forced entry) following previous work (e.g., Berrenberg et al., 2002; Stephan et al., 1999a); linguistic threat was added in Step 2 to assess its unique contribution to attitudes. As can be seen in Table 3, initial checks revealed multicollinearity issues within each group. In particular, in the non-student group, there was a strong association between realistic and symbolic threat ($r = .77$); in the student group, realistic threat was highly correlated with both symbolic threat ($r = .83$) and intergroup anxiety ($r = .78$). Considering that similarly strong associations were observed in previous research (e.g., Berrenberg et al., 2002; Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002; Stephan et al., 2000a; Stephan et al., 2002), suggesting a large overlap between these measures, realistic threat was excluded from all further analyses, which allowed for maintaining the largest set of distinct predictors in each regression model.

Table 3

Pearson Correlations Among All Variables for Non-Student Participants (Above the Diagonal)

and for Student Participants (Below the Diagonal)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 Attitudes	—	−.80	−.69	−.40	−.51	.68
		[−.92, −.54]	[−.83, −.49]	[−.67, .02]	[−.73, −.28]	[.47, .86]
2 Realistic threat	−.61	—	.77	.52	.36	−.58
	[−.73, −.52]		[.59, .92]	[.24, .71]	[.03, .71]	[−.77, −.39]
3 Symbolic threat	−.79	.83	—	.62	.52	−.70
	[−.90, −.67]	[.69, .92]		[.36, .78]	[.23, .74]	[−.85, −.43]
4 Linguistic threat	−.59	.70	.69	—	.36	−.43
	[−.84, −.27]	[.49, .88]	[.40, .85]		[−.11, .62]	[−.70, −.03]
5 Intergroup anxiety	−.76	.70	.70	.68	—	−.66
	[−.86, −.64]	[.60, .89]	[.45, .84]	[.42, .84]		[−.85, −.30]
6 Stereotypes	.58	−.56	−.57	−.59	−.68	—
	[.26, .83]	[−.73, −.40]	[−.75, −.38]	[−.76, −.38]	[−.83, −.45]	

Note. Bootstrapped 95% CIs provided in square brackets.

After the removal of realistic threat, no correlations among the remaining predictors surpassed the benchmark of |.70| (Field, 2018). For student participants, tests of multicollinearity revealed no tolerance values below 0.20 (0.37–0.52) and no VIF values above 10 (1.92–2.74). No residual values fell outside the ±2 benchmark, suggesting little bias, and no standardized residual value exceeded the ±3 value (−1.65–1.97), with Cook's distance values all falling below 1.00 (0.00–0.55). For non-student participants, tests of multicollinearity revealed no tolerance

values below 0.20 (0.36–0.62) and no VIF values above 10 (1.62–2.56). According to casewise

diagnostics, there was only one case below –2 (–3.06), suggesting no significant issues (Field,

2018), and one standardized residual value below the ±3 threshold (–3.06); however, no Cook's

distance value exceeded 1.00 (0.00–0.56).

As shown in Table 4, the regression model for students demonstrated a good fit to the

data in Step 1, $F(3, 25) = 20.13$, $p < .001$, with a total of 71% of variance explained (adjusted R^2

= .67), suggesting good cross-validity of the model. Adding linguistic threat in Step 2 resulted

only in a 2% change in model prediction and did not improve the model significantly (ΔR^2

= .004, p = .589); therefore, the best-fitting model included symbolic threat, intergroup anxiety,

and stereotypes, but only symbolic threat, $t(25) = -3.30$, $p = .003$, and intergroup anxiety, $t(25) =$

–2.23, p = .035, significantly predicted attitudes.

Table 4

Results of Multiple Regression Analysis Using Threat Variables as Predictors of Student

Francophones' Attitudes Toward International Students (n = 29)

Predictors	R	ΔR^2	B	95% CI	SE B	β	t	p
Step 1								
Constant	.84	.71	91.25	[72.92, 108.43]	7.49		12.18	< .001
Symbolic threat			–0.44	[–0.78, –0.13]	0.13	–.51	–3.30	.003
Intergroup anxiety			–0.46	[–0.80, –0.12]	0.21	–.39	–2.23	.035
Stereotypes			0.01	[–0.07, 0.11]	0.04	.03	0.17	.863
Step 2								
Linguistic threat	.84	.004	0.09	[–0.28, 0.41]	0.16	.09	0.55	.589

As summarized in Table 5, the regression model for non-students also demonstrated a good fit to the data in Step 1, $F(3, 26) = 10.54$, $p < .001$, with a total of 55% of variance in attitudes explained (adjusted $R^2 = .50$), again suggesting good cross-validity of the model. Adding linguistic threat in Step 2 did not improve the model significantly ($\Delta R^2 = .001$, $p = .791$); therefore, the best-fitting model included symbolic threat, intergroup anxiety, and stereotypes as predictors, but only symbolic threat significantly predicted attitudes, $t(25) = –2.23$, $p = .03$, $\beta = –.41$.

Table 5

Results of Multiple Regression Analysis Using Threat Variables as Predictors of Non-Student Francophones' Attitudes Toward International Students (n = 30)

Predictors	R	ΔR^2	B	95% CI	SE B	β	t	p
Step 1								
Constant	.74	.55	76.19	[55.83, 94.14]	9.69		7.87	< .001
Symbolic threat			–0.38	[–0.73, –0.06]	0.17	–.41	–2.23	.034
Intergroup anxiety			–0.06	[–0.53, 0.31]	0.17	–.06	–0.36	.722
Stereotypes			0.08	[–0.01, 0.19]	0.05	.35	1.64	.112
Step 2								
Linguistic threat	.74	.001	0.04	[–0.31, 0.33]	0.14	.05	0.27	.791

Finally, the third research question targeted the association between francophone participants' quality and quantity of contact with international students and their attitudes toward them and their perceptions of threat from them. To address this question, Pearson correlation tests were run separately for student and non-student participants (see Table 6). With respect to

attitudes, contact quantity showed no meaningful associations for either students ($r = .20$, $p = .294$) or non-students ($r = .02$, $p = .931$), with bootstrapped 95% CIs for each association crossing zero in each case. Contact quality, however, was significantly positively linked to attitudes both for students ($r = .74$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.45, .94]) and non-students ($r = .54$, $p = .002$, 95% CI [.20, .79]), with medium-to-strong effects (Plonsky & Oswald, 2014). In all cases, greater contact quality with international students was associated with more positive attitudes toward them. In terms of the associations between contact measures and various threat variables, contact quality showed negative relationships with all threat variables in both groups, as shown through bootstrapped 95% CIs that exclude zero, with effect sizes ranging from medium to large. Contact quantity, on the other hand, yielded only one association with a reliable 95% CI, and only for student participants, namely, between contact quantity and intergroup anxiety ($r = –.30$). Put differently, while greater contact quality was associated with reduced perception of threat from international students in all cases, greater contact quantity was associated with less intergroup anxiety for student participants only.

Table 6

Pearson Correlations Between Contact Quantity and Quality and Rated Variables of Attitudes

and Perceived Threat

Variable	Students (*n* = 29)		Non-students (*n* = 30)	
	Quantity	Quality	Quantity	Quality
Attitudes	.20 [–.16, .56]	.74 [.42, .94]	.02 [–.28, .30]	.54 [.21, .78]
Realistic threat	–.10 [–.42, .14]	–.48 [–.70, –.32]	–.14 [–.46, .20]	–.43 [–.64, –.21]
Symbolic threat	–.23 [–.51, .07]	–.68 [–.81, –.55]	–.20 [–.51, .17]	–.69 [–.85, –.41]
Linguistic threat	–.17 [–.44, .07]	–.57 [–.81, –.31]	–.28 [–.58, .07]	–.55 [–.81, –.13]
Intergroup anxiety	–.30 [–.61, –.03]	–.57 [–.79, –.33]	–.19 [–.46, .18]	–.64 [–.84, –.34]
Stereotype index	.37 [–.03, .64]	.59 [.37, .80]	.10 [–.35, .44]	.70 [.45, .85]

Discussion

The present study investigated francophone host community members' attitudes toward, perceptions of threat from, and contact with international students attending English-medium universities in Montréal. To provide a comprehensive picture of intergroup relations and contact, the study targeted francophone participants representing both student (on campus) and non-student (off campus) resident communities. Although participants were similar in their attitudes toward and perceptions of all but one type of threat from international students (i.e., linguistic threat), their attitudes toward international students were predicted by a somewhat different combination of variables. Whereas symbolic threat was the sole significant predictor of attitudes for non-students, students' attitudes were predicted by both symbolic threat and intergroup anxiety. Finally, compared to non-students, students reported higher frequency and greater quality of interaction with international students. Contact quality was associated positively with

attitudes and negatively with all types of threat (except for stereotypes) for both participant groups. Contact quantity, on the other hand, was negatively linked to intergroup anxiety, and only for student participants.

Student Versus Non-Student Participants

In the present dataset, there were no significant differences between student and non-student participants in their attitudes toward international students, insofar as both groups of local francophones generally expressed positive views of international students. For student participants, this finding is in agreement with previous work, where domestic students generally expressed favourable attitudes toward international students on campus in various research contexts, including the United States, Australia, and New Zealand despite reporting negative stereotypes about and perceived threat from international students (Quinton, 2019; Mak et al., 2014; Spencer-Rodgers, 2001; Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002; Ward et al., 2005). For non-student participants, this finding offers a positive perspective, considering that members of local communities often express only moderate approval of international students, for example, as documented in New Zealand (Ward et al., 2009), or in fact report negative sentiments toward international students (particularly from Asia and the Middle East), as documented in the United States (Hanassab, 2006). At least one reason for participants' overall favourable attitudes likely stems from the sociolinguistic context of this study (Montréal), a multilingual and multicultural city with approximately 25% of its population representing individuals from over 100 different ethnic and cultural origins (Statistics Canada, 2021). Such diversity may have contributed to creating an atmosphere of open-mindedness in the city, which has been linked to less prejudicial attitudes (Williams & Johnson, 2011). Moreover, with four large public research universities (McGill University, Concordia University, UQÀM, Université de Montréal) and several other

well-known institutions of higher education (e.g., HEC Montréal), Montréal is home to more than 175,000 students, around 18% of whom are international (La Chambre de commerce du Montréal métropolitain, 2016), rendering the population of students (international or otherwise) highly visible and therefore a common (i.e., "normal") sight in the city. To sum up, the positive attitudes expressed by both student and non-student participants suggested a potentially welcoming environment for international students on and off campus.

In line with positive attitudes, both student and non-student francophone participants reported notably low levels of realistic and symbolic threat and intergroup anxiety as well as relatively neutral stereotypical beliefs, with no significant between-group differences. For realistic and symbolic threat, these findings are consistent with the idea that social groups which possess considerable political and socioeconomic power and stability are less likely to perceive realistic and symbolic threat from outgroup members or be overly impacted by intergroup anxiety (Stephan et al., 1999b). Indeed, there is strong evidence that the francophone community of Québec feels secure in its socioeconomic status which has steadily risen over the past few decades based on variables such as mean income, the value of French in the job market, and the percentage of business ownership in the province (Albouy, 2008; Dean & Geloso, 2022; Gagnon et al., 2023; Vaillancourt et al., 2007). From a political standpoint, low levels of realistic and symbolic threat can also be attributed to the recently adopted legislation whose goal is to solidify the socioeconomic and cultural vitality of the francophone majority (Bourhis & Sioufi, 2017). For instance, passed in 2019, Bill 9 (An act to increase Québec's socioeconomic prosperity and adequately meet labour market needs through successful immigration integration) ensured that all newcomers to the province go through an extensive francization process with a strong emphasis on Québécois values. Moreover, a steady decrease in anglophones in the province,

coupled with an increase in francophone-owned businesses and in francophones' purchasing

power, may have also reinforced the socioeconomic status of Québec's French-speaking majority

(Vaillancourt et al., 2007). Against this backdrop, it is not altogether surprising that

francophones perceived little intergroup anxiety toward international students and engaged in

little stereotyping about them (Mak et al., 2012; Ward et al., 2005), despite the steady increase in

the number of international students (La Chambre de commerce du Montréal métropolitain,

2016). In essence, as members of the local francophone majority with considerable economic

and sociopolitical power, both student and non-student participants in this study appeared to

exhibit positive attitudes toward international students, to feel reasonably comfortable about

interacting with them, and to have little reason to engage in stereotyping about them.

Compared to other types of threat, perceived linguistic threat from English-speaking

international students was relatively high, especially for non-students for whom linguistic threat

was greater than for students. Despite their strong socioeconomic status, the francophone

majority appears to persist in experiencing linguistic vulnerability, likely due to the minority

status of French against the backdrop of "anglonormativity" in the broader context of North

America (Levesque, 2022), which can be described as "a system of structures, institutions, and

beliefs that marks English as the norm" (Baril, 2017, p. 127). Therefore, despite the preventive

measures put forth by the Québec government *inside* the province such as Bill 96 (An Act

respecting French, the official and common language of Québec in 2021), francophone

participants likely expected international students—as members of the anglonormative

community from *outside* the province—to undervalue French. Indeed, among other linguistic

threat items, the statement that concerned respecting and accepting the Québec government's

French-only policy in the public domain elicited the strongest responses from both student ($M =$

59.0, $SD = 33.0$) and non-student ($M = 77.1$, $SD = 23.1$) participants. Put differently,

francophone participants may have felt threatened by the assumption that international students

would disregard Québec's French-only language policy.

Even though all participants perceived a fair degree of linguistic threat from international

students, non-students expressed a stronger degree of linguistic concern than students. These

between-participant differences can be interpreted in several ways. First, positive interpersonal

contact tends to reduce prejudice (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998) and to diminish perceived

threat, which, in turn, attenuates prejudice (Aberson, 2019). For instance, Stephan et al. (2000b)

showed that, for their Mexican and American participants, greater quantity and quality of

intercultural contact were associated with reduced symbolic and realist threat, and greater contact

quantity was also linked to decreased intergroup anxiety (see also Mak et al., 2014). It is

therefore unsurprising that student francophones, who reported having considerable contact (both

in terms of its quantity and quality) with international students, perceived less linguistic threat

from them. Second, student and non-student participants differed in their daily use of French and

English, which may have played a role in their perception of linguistic threat. Students reported a

fairly balanced use of English (50.8%) and French (44.2%), and there were correlations between

their perceived linguistic threat and their English ($r = -.38$, $p = .04$) and French ($r = .33$, $p = .08$)

use, where greater perceived threat was associated with less daily use of English and more daily

use of French. Unlike students, non-students reported considerably greater daily use of French

(76.8%) than English (20.5%), yet the correlations between daily language use and perceived

linguistic threat followed a similar pattern and were in fact stronger in magnitude, where greater

linguistic threat corresponded to less frequent use of English ($r = -.50$, $p = .005$) and more

frequent use of French ($r = .45$, $p = .01$). In essence, non-student francophones used French more

frequently than student francophones; as a result, non-students may have had ample opportunity to observe the French skills of international students and other recent immigrants, even if these interactions were infrequent, which may have contributed to non-students' greater perception of linguistic threat from international students. Third, student participants, who were generally younger than non-students ($d = 1.14$, 95% CI [.58, 1.68]), may have also perceived less linguistic threat because younger generations of language speakers in Québec appear to be less concerned about the sociolinguistic tension between English and French (Leimgruber & Fernández-Mallat, 2021). Finally, having chosen to study at an English-medium university, student participants may have held especially favourable attitudes toward English, for example, appreciating its value as a shared lingua franca, so they likely expected less threat from English compared to non-student members of the francophone community whose daily encounters with international students were not as frequent.

With regard to the quantity and quality of contact (see Table 2), non-students (as individuals who presumably only interact with international students off campus) predictably reported significantly lower frequency and quality of intergroup contact than students, who often have more opportunities for intergroup contact on campus, whose interactions with international students are frequently institutionally supported such as through intercultural activities (Allport, 1954), and whose status is more likely to be equal due to the shared student identity (Quinton, 2019). Nevertheless, non-student participants' average value of contact quality was considerable (60.43 on a 100-point scale), and clearly above the scalar midpoint, which contrasts with previous reports of infrequent and most importantly superficial communication between members of the host community and international students in Canada (CBIE, 2015; Zhou & Zhang, 2014) and elsewhere (Harrison & Peacock, 2010). Similarly, for both participant groups,

contact quality was always higher than quantity (see Table 2), and contact quality (rather than quantity) was always associated with diminished perceived threats and intergroup anxiety and with less negative stereotypical beliefs (see Table 6). This is a promising result, considering that it is the quality of contact rather than its quantity that enhances intergroup attitudes (Binder et al., 2009; Mak et al., 2014; Stephan et al., 2000a). Overall, compared to non-student members of the local francophone community, francophone students attending English-medium universities have greater quantity and quality of contact with international students and therefore experience less linguistic threat from international students. However, irrespective of participant status, it was greater contact quality that corresponded to more favourable perceptions of international students.

Predictors of Attitudes Toward International Students

The second research question examined various predictors of francophone participants' attitudes toward international students, and the regression models accounted for more variance in the attitudes from students (71%) than non-students (55%). In previous research comparing the predictive power of various aspects of the integrated threat theory, more variance in participants' attitudes was predicted for members of a majority (dominant) group such as White people in North America than for members of a minority group such as Indigenous people in Canada or African Americans in the United States (Corenblum & Stephan, 2001; Stephan et al., 2002). Considering that both participant groups represented the francophone majority in the context of Montréal (Québec), the reported differences in model prediction are most likely attributable to the nature of each group's contact with international students. To illustrate, having greater frequency and quality of contact with international students, student participants may have formed richer and more refined opinions and beliefs about them, leading to more homogenous

group-level attitudes. By contrast, non-student participants may have expressed variable perceptions of international students, based on their person-specific and often infrequent patterns of contact. To take another example, in a study of attitudes toward cancer and AIDS patients (Berrenberg et al., 2007), various subcomponents of the integrated threat theory accounted for more variance in participants' attitudes toward AIDS patients (70%) than cancer patients (28%). Whereas AIDS has historically been stigmatized and narrowly associated with certain marginalized social groups and their lifestyles, cancer has been attributed to various causes, including hereditary and genetic reasons and life choices. In essence, perceptions are driven by people's specific experiences, where more homogenous exposure experiences (and associated beliefs) result in stronger, more consistent group responses.

Even though both student and non-student participants reported rather low levels of threat in general, zero-order correlations demonstrated considerable associations between all threat variables and attitudes (see Table 3), ranging between –.59 and –.79 for students and between –.40 and –.80 for non-students, and symbolic threat was the only common significant predictor of attitudes for both participant groups (cf. Tables 4 and 5). Thus, even in the absence of a strong perception of threat, participants who believed that Montréal is losing its Québécois character due to the growing number of international students or that international students' academic, social, and religious values are incompatible with those of Québec harboured more negativity (e.g., disdain, superiority, rejection) toward international students. This finding likely reflects the awareness of many Québec francophones that they are a cultural and linguistic minority in the broader Canadian context dominated by anglophones, which results in more concerns for francophones with respect to losing their distinct culture and language (Bouchard & Taylor, 2008). Between 2016 and 2021, the percentage of Canadians who reported English as their first

official language increased from 74.8% to 75.5%, whereas the percentage for French decreased from 22.2% to 21.4% (Statistics Canada, 2022b), which may feed into francophones' desire to protect their values regarding religion and social life. In another context, for Mexican-born residents in the United States, symbolic threat similarly emerged as the only significant predictor of their attitudes toward local-born residents (Stephan et al., 2000), likely because their culture and social values were perceived to be compromised in the dominant American culture around them.

The predictive power of symbolic threat in the present research context can also be attributed to Québec's long-standing emphasis on developing a distinct identity from the rest of Canada, particularly regarding such central issues as language, culture, education, politics, religion, and institutional organization (Secrétariat du Québec aux relations canadiennes, 2017; Warren & Langlois, 2020). These initiatives may have amplified francophones' need to protect Québec's unique character as a nation via shared values among its French-speaking residents, resulting in a heightened perception of symbolic threat from outgroups. For example, the importance of symbolic threat as a predictor of attitudes may stem from the juxtaposition of Québec's *laïcité* (secularism), which can be traced back to the Quiet Revolution in the 1960s and 1970s (Warren, 2020), with the religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity represented by international students. Indeed, across Canada, Québec is among the least religious provinces (Angus Reid Institute, 2022), and its distinct political stance on religious accommodation such as the passing of Bill 21 (An Act Respecting the Laicity of the State, 2019) highlights religion as a key marker of non-francophone identity, rendering it a prominent issue in the public's eye. Last but not least, there was a strong intercorrelation between symbolic and realistic threat, which implies that the role of symbolic threat in francophone participants' attitudes toward international

students must be interpreted in conjunction with the role of realistic threat. Even though francophones constitute the demographic majority (around 90%) in most regions of Québec (Statistics Canada, 2022b) and the provincial government systematically safeguards their rights and freedoms, francophones' minority status outside Québec may still render them susceptible to various forms of perceived realistic threat from international students, for instance, as individuals who compete with local residents for university admission, student bursaries, or post-graduation employment.

In addition to symbolic threat, intergroup anxiety emerged as a negative predictor of attitudes for francophone students but not non-students. This difference potentially stems from contextual factors, in the sense that intergroup contact with international students may seem less likely and therefore less anxiety-inducing for non-student than for student francophones. Indeed, local students are predictably more likely to interact with international students, which may trigger anxiety in them, and when people feel anxious, their behaviours are more likely to be informed by perceived norms and stereotypes about outgroups. For instance, investigating intergroup attitudes and perceived threat between White and Indigenous Canadians, Corenblum and Stephan (2001) reported a significant negative correlation between intergroup attitudes and anxiety for both groups. In a study of Black and White American students' attitudes toward one another (Stephan et al., 2002), intergroup anxiety again emerged as a strong negative predictor of attitudes. Similarly, in an interview study (Harrison & Peacock, 2010), local-born students in the United Kingdom felt that intergroup contact generated misunderstandings and embarrassment stemming from cultural and linguistic differences between them and international students. Against this backdrop, intergroup anxiety appears to be associated not only with attitudes but also with behaviour. Just as international students who feel particularly anxious not only express

negative attitudes toward local students but also actively avoid interaction with them (Fritz et al., 2008; Harrison & Peacock, 2010; Kormos et al., 2014; Williams & Johnson, 2011), as the present findings suggest, local students similarly experience intercultural anxiety and associate it with negative views about international students. More importantly, for local residents and students in particular, increased intercultural anxiety is associated with decreased quantity and quality of contact with international students (see Table 6), which is a novel finding in the Canadian context.

Stereotypes failed to emerge as a significant predictor of both student and non-student francophones' attitudes toward international students. With regard to student francophones, as younger individuals, they might be more concerned about self-relevant threats than group-level issues, including stereotypes, compared to non-student francophones, who are relatively older working professionals (Aberson & Gaffney, 2008). As for non-student francophones, less reliance on stereotypes in terms of intergroup attitudes can be attributed to their reported contact patterns with international students. Despite reporting lower frequency and quality of contact with international students compared to student francophones, non-student francophones still reported close to average contact quantity as well as above-average contact quality with international students. Thus, positive contact may have helped non-student francophones question common stereotypes about international students and view them as a heterogenous group of individuals instead of a social group with identical traits.

Last but not least, one of the goals of this study was to examine the predictive validity of linguistic threat for francophone participants' attitudes toward international students. In fact, linguistic threat was expected to have a unique contribution to attitudes, in light of recent legislation aiming to strengthen the status of French such as Bill 96 (An Act respecting French,

the official and common language of Québec, 2021) and increased support for French inside and

outside Québec (Bouchard, 2023; Kircher, 2012, 2014; Leimgruber & Fernández-Mallat, 2021).

Although linguistic threat was negatively associated with attitudes for both students and non-

students (see Table 3), this variable failed to account for unique variance in their attitudes after

accounting for other threat variables. Instead of suggesting that language does not play a role in

francophones' attitudes toward international students, this finding most likely reflects how

language has been intertwined with the values and beliefs systems of francophone Québécers and

how language cannot be easily separated from other types of threat (e.g., symbolic threat). That

is, for local francophones, French has both a linguistic and a symbolic value, as it lies at the heart

of Québec francophone identity (Secrétariat du Québec aux relations canadiennes, 2017, p. 14;

Warren & Langlois, 2020) and critically functions as a common, unifying element across

Québec's population (Warren & Oakes, 2011). The current findings likely reflect this reality, as

shown by strong associations between linguistic and symbolic threats for both students ($r = .69$)

and non-students ($r = .62$). Thus, in certain contexts such as Québec where language is a key

aspect of social identity, linguistic and symbolic threats are inherently intertwined.

The Contact–Attitudes Link

With respect to the third research question, which explored the link between participants'

contact with international students and their attitudes toward them, contact quality rather than

quantity showed a significant positive relationship for both student and non-student participants.

Participants who reported greater contact quality with international students (e.g., evaluating it

through such descriptors as intimate, positive, and cooperative) expressed more favourable

attitudes toward them, demonstrating more acceptance, affection, and approval of international

students. This result is consistent with the idea that high-quality (i.e., positive) contact enhances

attitudes between members of different groups (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006) and that the link between attitudes and contact is stronger for contact quality than quantity (Berrenberg et al., 2007; Binder et al., 2009; Mak et al., 2014; Stephan et al., 2000b). For instance, in a study of attitudes and contact between Australian-born and international students, contact quality was the strongest predictor of intergroup attitudes, whereas contact quantity did not produce any significant relationship (Mak et al., 2014). Therefore, the present findings yet again emphasize the importance of quality over quantity with respect to the contact–attitudes link between host community members and international students in the Canadian context.

Contact quality was also significantly associated with all perceived threats, which is in line with previous research in Canada. For instance, greater contact quality was associated with reduced realistic threat and intergroup anxiety for Indigenous Canadians, whereas greater contact quality was similarly linked to less realistic and symbolic threat, decreased intergroup anxiety, and less negative stereotyping for White Canadians (Corenblum & Stephan, 2001). Investigating attitudes and contact between two religious groups in Northern Ireland, Tausch et al. (2007) similarly found a significant negative association, where greater perceived threat (in the form of symbolic and realistic threat and intergroup anxiety) was associated with less contact quality. Therefore, the present study not only confirms the link between contact quality and various perceived threat variables (Islam & Hewstone, 1993; Mak et al., 2014; Stephan et al., 2000b) but also extends this work by demonstrating a similar association between contact quality and linguistic threat (Mak et al., 2014). Considering the central role that language plays in distorting one's perception of others as well as in expressing, perpetuating, or revealing prejudicial attitudes (Collins & Clement, 2012), this finding is unsurprising. For both student and non-student francophones, low quality contact with international students was linked with heightened

linguistic threat. To elaborate, when contact with international students was perceived as less favourable (e.g., superficial, competitive), these students were considered to pose greater threat to the status of French in Québec and to be less willing to accommodate to French during intergroup encounters. A major takeaway from this finding is that attempts to reduce perceived threat from international students, particularly linguistic threat, should include efforts to enhance the quality of contact between international students and francophone host community members.

Even though a recent meta-analysis of the contact–prejudice relationship suggests that contact quantity alone, such as more frequent interactions between ingroup and outgroup members, may have the power to reduce intergroup prejudice (Aberson, 2019), in the present study, contact quantity revealed no association with participants' attitudes. A diminished role of contact quantity in attitudes can be attributed to Montréal's sociocultural and sociolinguistic diversity, where it might be difficult to differentiate international students from similarly diverse local residents, given that the saliency of a person's group identity plays a major role in the contact–prejudice link (Hewstone, 2000). In other words, francophone participants may not have been fully aware of the frequency of their interactions with international students because the city's local population is highly diverse. Unless a speaker discloses their status, distinguishing international students from recent immigrants or members of local-born minority communities might be a difficult if not impossible task. In fact, the only association involving contact quantity was a weak negative correlation with intergroup anxiety for student participants, implying that international students have a salient group identity on campus. International students are also likely to disclose their status to their classmates, with whom they presumably interact regularly, and in North American academic contexts, international students' status is clearly demarcated institutionally, such as through tuition differentials, availability of funding, and required

coursework, all of which makes international students recognizable to their peers. For francophone students, then, increased quantity of communication with international students was associated with decreased interpersonal anxiety rather than improved attitudes (Stephan et al., 1999b), which were already quite positive. Just as for Muslims and Hindus, who both represent identifiable and large groups in India (Tausch et al., 2009), for francophone and international students in English-medium universities in Montréal, greater quantity of contact was associated with decreased intergroup anxiety, irrespective of the attitudes they might hold. Thus, whereas the quality of interpersonal contact might have strongest links to attitudes, contact quantity is additionally implicated in reduced intergroup anxiety, which is a positive finding.

Limitations and Future Research

The present study is not without its limitations. First, one key limitation is the relatively small sample size which limits the generalizability of the findings. Participant recruitment was particularly challenging during and immediately after the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, future research should aim to recruit a larger number of participants when and if possible. A further concern regarding participants is that, to avoid the impact of generational differences on intergroup attitudes, non-students were recruited to match students in age, so off-campus participants represented a relatively young cohort of francophones, with a mean age of about 35. Moreover, both participant groups had above-average English skills, which may have led to more acceptance (with regard to linguistic threat, in particular) of English-speaking international students. Therefore, in future work, it would be important to target older individuals with less proficiency in English, to achieve a better representation of Québéc's society. Second, despite reaching high levels in both participant groups, linguistic threat did not emerge as a significant predictor of attitudes toward international students. While this can be attributed to the

intrinsically complex relationship between linguistic and symbolic threat in Québéc, it is also possible that the operationalization of linguistic threat in the present study may have failed to capture the more nuanced aspects of language in terms of attitudes, particularly those that are separate from its symbolic elements. Thus, future research could further enhance this construct through more refined measurements.

Third, due to a strong association between realistic and symbolic threat (see also Berrenberg et al., 2002; Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002; Stephan et al., 2000a; Stephan et al., 2002), which led to initial multicollinearity issues in both participant groups, realistic threat was excluded from the regression analyses, thus allowing for the largest set of distinct predictors to be included in each model. Therefore, the importance of symbolic threat and its association with realistic threat in predicting attitudes should be interpreted cautiously. One way in which future research could sidestep this limitation would be by recruiting more participants to attain more robust regression models and by developing (rather than adapting) measures of threat variables that are specific to the Québéc context. Finally, unlike symbolic threat, which was a significant predictor of attitudes for both student and non-student francophones, linguistic threat did not emerge as a significant predictor, despite initial expectations. Considering the sociolinguistic context of Québéc, this finding was attributed to the complex role language plays in the francophone identity. To further confirm this interpretation, further research is warranted in similarly complex sociolinguistic contexts such as Barcelona (i.e., Spanish vs. Catalan) or Wales (i.e., English vs. Welsh), where language is a distinct marker of one's social identity and a subject of sociopolitical debate.

Implications

Considering that only 36–40% of international students in Canada remain in their host provinces after graduation (Choi et al., 2021), these findings can guide institutional and governmental efforts in facilitating intergroup relations and contact between host community members and international students both on and off campus, with the goal of retaining international talent after graduation. The present findings that highlight the significance of symbolic threat to the host community's attitudes are of particular importance, because it is largely sociocultural variables, including issues of culture and values, that appear to impact international students' decision to leave or stay upon graduation (Esses et al., 2018). In this regard, institutions of higher education could collaborate with such local organizations as municipal administrations, borough councils, and non-governmental entities to create promotional billboards, videos, and flyers, or organize practical workshops, panels, and Q&A sessions which directly involve both international students and host community members and dispel potential myths (e.g., various forms of perceived symbolic and realistic threats) through guided and supported interactions.

Given a negative association between contact quality and symbolic threat, any such interaction should ensure cooperation and equality between the host community and international students and should be conducive to deeper-level intergroup communication. For instance, the above-mentioned local organizations could directly involve international student voices and encourage collaborative practices between the two groups. Opportunities such as these will help host community members to better understand the lived realities of international students and will encourage international students to forge stronger social and professional bonds with host

community members, leading to healthy, symbiotic relationships between international students and the host community.

Conclusion

This study extended prior research on intergroup attitudes and contact between host community members and international students in the sociolinguistically vibrant context of Montréal. Even though both participant groups expressed similarly positive attitudes toward and little perceived threat from international students (except for linguistic threat), symbolic threat significantly accounted for both groups' attitudes, and intergroup anxiety additionally accounted for student participants' attitudes. Contrary to expectations, linguistic threat did not emerge as a significant predictor of francophones' attitudes toward international students, which was attributed to the key symbolic role that French plays in Québéc's social identity and values. Compared to non-student francophones, student francophones also reported more frequency and greater quality of contact with international students. Last but not least, for both participant groups, contact quality appeared to have a stronger relationship with perceptions about international students than contact quantity, where greater quality of contact was associated with reduced perception of threat, more favourable attitudes, decreased interpersonal anxiety, and less negative stereotyping.

Connecting Studies 1 and 2

In Study 1, both student and non-student locals demonstrated similarly positive attitudes and low levels of perceived threat. Linguistic threat, however, was relatively high among locals, particularly non-students, who also had significantly less frequent and lower-quality contact with international students compared to student locals. Symbolic threat emerged as the only significant predictor of non-students' attitudes; however, students' attitudes were predicted by both symbolic threat and intergroup anxiety. Finally, contact quality showed significant relationships with attitudes and perceived threat for both student and non-student locals, where greater quality of contact implied more positive attitudes and reduced threat. For student locals, contact quantity produced a significant relationship with stereotypes; however, this finding needs to be interpreted cautiously as the confidence interval values pass through zero.

Even though Study 1 allowed for a comprehensive exploration of host community members' attitudes toward, perceptions of threat from, and contact with international students attending English-medium universities, this study omitted international students' perspectives. With the overarching goal of providing a holistic, comprehensive view of intergroup relations between host community members and international students, Study 2 replicated Study 1 by eliciting international students' attitudes toward, perceptions of threat from, and contact with host community members, with the idea that any interaction (at a personal or group level) requires the involvement of more than one party. Indeed, it is highly likely that the success of any attempt to improve intergroup relations between host community members and international students necessitates an active involvement of both groups.

CHAPTER 3

Study 2: L2-Speaking International Students' Attitudes Toward and Intergroup Contact with Québec Francophones

Introduction

International students have become a population of growing interest among researchers, and most studies focusing on students' study-abroad experiences point out various challenges that students face with respect to social integration into their host communities. However, the sources of these challenges remain generally unclear. While some researchers highlight the role of host community members' prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory practices toward international students based on students' ethnic, linguistic, or cultural backgrounds (Boafo-Arthur, 2014; Briscoe et al., 2022; Liu, 2017; Samuel & Burney, 2003), others point out various individual student characteristics such as language proficiency (Constantine et al., 2004; Senyshyn et al., 2000), previous academic experience and family background (Heng, 2018; Munro, 1981; Tinto, 1975), and personality traits (e.g., being anxious, extroverted, optimistic) as reasons for students' challenges (Brisset et al., 2010; Yakunina et al., 2013; Ying & Han, 2006). Yet another and largely underexplored variable which might be responsible for international students' challenges with social integration might stem from students' attitudes toward members of their host communities. Although research focusing on host community members' attitudes toward international students is rather plentiful (e.g., Harrison & Peacock, 2010), there has been little work investigating international students' attitudes toward host community members— formed pre-arrival or shaped by first-hand experiences while studying abroad—as a potential barrier to intergroup contact (for notable exceptions, see Latif et al., 2012; Yakaboski et al.,

2018). Given that intergroup contact tends to require an active involvement of members of both groups (Berry, 1997, 2005), the present study aims to complement existing research by examining international students' attitudes toward host community members, both on and off campus, and by exploring whether there is an association between those attitudes and intergroup contact, in terms of both quality and quantity.

Background Literature

Students' Attitudes Toward Host Community Members

Studying abroad offers a myriad of benefits for international students. From a linguistic perspective, the time spent abroad while pursuing an academic degree can be a great opportunity for students to improve their language skills through authentic interaction in academic contexts, such as when giving in-class presentations, participating in groupwork, or writing essays, and in non-academic settings, such as when socializing with peers outside coursework, pursuing sports or hobbies, or doing grocery shopping (Yang, 2016). Broadly speaking, study abroad enables international students to hone their sociolinguistic and intercultural communication skills (Kennedy Terry, 2022; Kitsantas, 2004; Regan, 1998) and develop interactional competence (Masuda, 2011) and pragmatic skills (Taguchi, 2011). Indeed, many international students cite practicing their language skills as a major reason to study abroad, particularly in English-speaking countries, because this experience helps students increase their job prospects and communicate more efficiently with people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Kormos et al., 2014). Clearly, high-quality and high-frequency interaction with host community members is key to enjoying these benefits. However, despite international students' satisfaction with their overall study abroad experience (Arkoudis et al., 2019), positive interaction with

locals—particularly, one that facilitates students' social integration—is not always guaranteed (Kusek, 2015; Pho & Schartner, 2021).

One reason for international students' difficulty with social integration into a host community stems from host community members' prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory behaviour toward international students based on students' race, skin colour, ethnicity, and cultural practices. For example, domestic students have been reported to mock international students' English skills (Dovchin, 2020; Tas, 2013) and traditional hairstyles (Bonazzo & Wong, 2007) and to exclude them from groupwork (Haugh, 2016), creating feelings of humiliation, alienation, and depression. Similarly, university faculty also appear to engage in discriminatory behaviours, in some cases by relying on stereotypes in their academic evaluation of international students (Jean-Francois, 2019) or by being dismissive or impatient toward them (Haugh, 2016; Lee & Rice, 2007). Moreover, some international students experience discrimination outside university campuses overtly, in the form of verbal or physical attacks (Lee & Rice, 2007), and more subtly, in the form of unequal treatment in securing employment (Arkoudis et al., 2019; Kukatlapalli et al., 2020) and housing (Cena et al., 2021; Gbadamosi, 2018; Hanassab, 2006).

Although international students may at times choose to remain indifferent when faced with discrimination (Bonazzo & Wong, 2007; Yakaboski et al., 2018), they likely develop feelings of resentment toward locals who engage in discriminatory behaviours, and this resentment might generate negative attitudes toward all host community members. For example, one Chinese international student interviewed by Heng (2017) expressed annoyance as he criticized members of the local American host community for their heavy reliance on stereotypes about Chinese people. Additionally, because most international students report difficulty with creating a sense of belonging in a host community (Mwangi, 2016; Quinton, 2019; Rivas et al.,

2019), they might develop prejudicial attitudes toward domestic peers or members of the larger community, who as local residents possess a stable legal status, have access to various services and opportunities, and enjoy established social and professional support networks (Marginson, 2012; Paige, 1990).

Stereotypes appear to be a major cause for international students' prejudicial attitudes toward host community members, leading them to avoid intergroup contact (Latif et al., 2012). In their qualitative study spanning over a year at an American university, Briscoe et al. (2022) found that international students of colour deliberately excluded their White American peers from their social circles based on the stereotype that White Americans are racist and unwelcoming. According to other studies in the United States and Australia, most international students blame host community members for their dissatisfaction with intergroup contact, attributing their frustrations to various characteristics of local residents, including their monolingualism, where locals do not speak any language but English, as well as their superficiality, lack of interest in other cultures, unreliability, and self-orientedness (Gareis, 2012; Pham & Tran, 2015). Similar stereotypes have been attested elsewhere, with Americans perceived to be apathetic toward other cultures (Lee & Rice, 2007) and ignorant of the rest of the world (Hanassab, 2006; Senyshyn et al., 2000) and with the British considered arrogant (UKCISA, 2004). Finally, in the Australian context, because domestic students were generally perceived as "fooling around" and "expressing great ideas but not taking any action," international students from Asian countries preferred to work on course projects with co-nationals instead of domestic students (Volet & Ang, 2012, p. 29). International students may also exhibit prejudicial attitudes toward locals who are people of colour based on ethnoracial stereotypes. For example, East Asian international students in the United States thought that

Black, Latinx, and South Asian people were less hardworking than and thus inferior to White or East Asian people, or that dating White locals is more prestigious than dating people of colour (Ritter, 2016).

Besides various stereotypical judgments, differences in social and cultural values and ways of thinking have been reported as potential factors that hinder international students' engagement with members of a local community (Arkoudis et al., 2019; Kusek, 2015; Pritchard & Skinner, 2002; Rowan et al., 2021; Yakaboski et al., 2018), a notion corroborated by the accounts of domestic students (McKenzie & Baldassar, 2017). For example, international students in Australia believed that locals were individualistic, in the sense that they lacked close-knit social bonds with friends and family, which clashed with the collectivistic values that international students had grown up with in their home cultures (Myburgh et al., 2002). Incompatibilities in beliefs and preferred lifestyles are also evident in cases where, for instance, Sri Lankan international students in the United Kingdom expressed negative judgments about local residents who show intimacy in public spaces and who consume alcohol excessively (Pritchard & Skinner, 2002), echoing similar sentiments by international students in the United States (Briscoe et al., 2022). In Canada, international students reported cultural gaps with local students as reasons discouraging them from intergroup interaction and pushing them to socialize with other international students and fellow nationals in particular (Gopal, 2016).

Furthermore, international students tend to compete with members of their host communities over limited resources, such as university admission, grades, scholarships, internships, housing, and part-time employment (Paige, 1990), which may also trigger negativity between the two groups. Investigating potential causes of American domestic students' prejudice toward international students, Charles-Toussaint and Crowson (2010) found that realistic threat,

whereby international students are blamed for high tuition fees, fierce competition for good grades, and diminished feeling of personal security, was one of the strongest predictors of prejudice toward international students. Unsurprisingly, international students appear to be well aware of these sentiments as shown, for instance, by Myburgh et al. (2012), where they attributed their Australian peers' negativity to competition over limited university admission (see also Hanassab, 2006). Consequently, such negative feelings, whether or not they are explained through realistic threat, may be mutual for the two groups.

Finally, on the affective level, international students' social interaction with host community members can trigger feelings of anxiety and nervousness, such that students might experience uncertainty as to how they might be perceived by members of a local community, leading to avoidance of contact with locals and turning to co-nationals or other international students for social support and reassurance (Heng, 2017; Pho & Schartner, 2021; Ward & Masgoret, 2004). For example, despite their initial willingness to interact with host community members, international students in the United Kingdom reported decreased contact over time due to apprehension fueled by negative attitudes and behaviours from local residents, who often mocked students' language errors, which in turn caused students to seek friendships in other social circles (Kormos et al., 2014). In a similar vein, Maeda (2017) showed that international students demonstrate less participation in classroom discussions to avoid feeling embarrassed by local students' negative judgements of their pronunciation. The impact of such negative reactions might in fact transcend the classroom and lead international students to avoid participating in extracurricular activities altogether (CBIE, 2015). Consequently, various forms of anxiety arising from anticipated or actual unpleasantness during communication with host community members

may drive international students to further distance themselves from their local community and develop negative perceptions about it.

Integrated Threat Theory As a Framework to Understand Prejudice

In light of a wide range of potential origins of prejudicial attitudes, including negative stereotypes, social and cultural differences, competition over limited resources, and anxiety about intergroup contact, the present study adopts Stephan and Stephan's (2000) integrated threat theory as a descriptive framework to provide a comprehensive perspective on various potential sources of international students' attitudes toward host community members. Largely informed by Tajfel's (1970) social identity theory which pivots around the notions of ingroup and outgroup membership to account for attitudes in intergroup relations, where individuals belonging to the same social group are favoured over outsiders, the integrated threat theory proposes four major variables leading to prejudice (Stephan, 2014; Stephan & Stephan, 1985, 1996). These variables include realistic threats (i.e., threats to a group's economic and political wellbeing), symbolic threats (i.e., threats to a group's cultural values, beliefs, and morals), intergroup anxiety (i.e., apprehension over potential negative outcomes of intergroup contact such as losing face), and negative stereotypes (i.e., sweeping and mostly negative generalizations about members of another group). Whereas international students' competition over limited resources and opportunities such as university admission, part-time employment, and housing can be understood as realistic threats, various cultural differences between local residents and international students such as those pertaining to religious practices, interpersonal relationships, dress, and appearance are considered symbolic threats. Negative stereotypes encompass international students' preconceived notions about host community members such as that they

are racist, arrogant, or superficial. Finally, intergroup anxiety involves students' apprehension about establishing or maintaining contact with members of a local community.

Conspicuously absent from this framework is, however, the role of language in prejudicial attitudes, since previous work on prejudice has mostly investigated relations between groups who share a common language such as intergroup attitudes of Black and White Americans (Stephan et al., 2002). In other cases, language has generally been subsumed under intergroup anxiety, as described previously (e.g., Harrison & Peacock, 2010). However, given the importance of international students' second language (L2) skills for communication with a local community (Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002; Surtees, 2019; Zhou & Zhang, 2014), language and especially language-related attitudes warrant a separate focus. For example, international students' language might elicit distinct reactions (i.e., both positive and negative) from members of a local community, and these attitudes might have an impact on intergroup relations. In support of this, Kormos et al. (2014) showed that international students' low language proficiency elicited negativity from locals outside a university campus (e.g., during encounters with salespersons), resulting in students' feeling dismissed or ignored. There is also evidence that individuals who do not have a strong sense of ethnic identity are more accepting of L2 accents (Bresnahan et al., 2002), suggesting that the sociocultural and political climate may be instrumental in how language attitudes are created and maintained and, by extension, in how international students are treated. For instance, negative encounters might be specific to particular members of a local community, such as those with a strong sense of ethnic identity, and these encounters might lead to international students feeling embarrassed and intimidated (Haugh, 2016; Heng, 2018), which would preclude further communication. From the perspective of international students, some attribute their communication difficulties with locals not

necessarily to their own language skills but to locals' lack of desire to engage with them (Marginson, 2012). More relevant to the context of the present study, there is evidence of language-based negativity toward the francophone population from both anglophones (i.e., first-language English speakers) and allophones (i.e., speakers of first languages other than English or French), who are linguistic minorities in the province, whereby the francophone population is considered close-minded and excessively patriotic and protective of French (Groff et al., 2016). Accordingly, international students may internalize at least some of these negative perspectives, which can in turn influence their attitudes toward local francophones. Therefore, an important goal of this study is to extend the integrated threat theory by examining international students' language-based attitudes (i.e., linguistic threat) with respect to the host community as a separate variable.

Contact with Host Community Members and Prejudice

Research on the quantity and quality of intergroup contact between international students and local host community members portrays a dismal picture. In the United States, Gareis (2012) found that a considerable number of international students (38.1%) had zero local friends. Similar challenges with building friendships with locals have also been reported by international students elsewhere in the United States (Rajapaksa & Dundes, 2002), the United Kingdom (Gbadamosi, 2018; UKCISA, 2004), Australia (Gresham & Clayton, 2011), New Zealand (Ward & Masgoret, 2004), and Canada (CBIE, 2015; Grayson, 2008). With respect to the quality of friendships, reported relationships tend to be superficial and short-lived (Gresham & Clayton, 2011; Zhang & Zhou, 2010). In support of these findings, Gareis (2012) showed that the majority of international students (66.3%) were either dissatisfied or only somewhat satisfied with the quality of their friendships with locals.

Despite the early suggestion that contact between individuals who share equal social status and common goals may decrease prejudice (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998), findings of more recent empirical work suggest a more nuanced, context-sensitive relationship. For instance, González et al. (2008) found a direct association between the frequency of intergroup contact and prejudice toward Muslims in the Netherlands, where less contact was associated with increased prejudice. Berrenberg et al. (2002) showed a similar link between contact and prejudice toward cancer patients but not AIDS patients, again with reduced contact linked to stronger prejudicial attitudes. However, contact also seems to have an indirect effect on prejudice via intergroup anxiety, stereotypes, and symbolic and realistic threats, such that the frequency of positive contact leads to less reliance on stereotypes (González et al., 2008) and decreased intergroup anxiety (Voci & Hewstone, 2003), both of which minimize prejudice. Moreover, negative contact experiences often amplify perceived threat, which exacerbates prejudicial attitudes (Corenblum & Stephan, 2001).

With respect to contact quality versus quantity, the quality of interaction might be a better predictor of attitudes toward ethnic minorities than its frequency (Binder et al., 2009). For instance, Australian-born domestic students' quality of contact with international students (e.g., in terms of pleasantness, superficiality, and competitiveness) was a stronger predictor of their attitudes, measured via reactions to statements such as "I like having international students in my class," than the quantity of their contact with international students. Moreover, contact and prejudice have reciprocal links, meaning that prejudice also seems to affect intergroup contact quantity and quality (Binder et al., 2009), which corresponds to the experiences reported by international students of colour, who avoided contact with White domestic peers on the assumption that White students are racist (Briscoe et al., 2022). Therefore, in the present study,

both the quantity and quality of international students' contact with local residents are examined

in relation to students' attitudes toward and their perceived threat from host community

members.

The Current Study

Prior research investigating various barriers to international students' social adjustment in

a local community has mostly relied on the accounts of host community members, eliciting their

attitudes toward and expectations from international students. Although some studies have

targeted international students' perspectives (e.g., Heng, 2017), their primary focus has been on

students' expectations from the host community (e.g., "I wish they were more understanding")

but not their attitudes toward and their perceptions of its members (e.g., "Because they are

impatient, I don't want to interact with them"), except for a few previous attempts (e.g., Latif et

al., 2012). Further, even though previous research on international students' intergroup contact in

a university context has included academic faculty and staff, in addition to domestic students

(e.g., Harryba et al., 2013; Trice, 2003), this work has neglected members of the larger

community (i.e., locals working and residing off campus), whose behaviours impact international

students' experiences in their host communities. For this reason, the present study targeted both

on- and off-campus contexts to elicit international students' attitudes toward not only local

students but also local residents of the larger community (i.e., non-students) where international

students may be more susceptible to prejudice and discrimination (Cena et al., 2021; Hanassab,

2006).

Even though it is important to understand attitudes, behavioural manifestation of these

attitudes—especially in the form of intergroup contact—might be even more crucial, given that

interaction with local community members provides international students with opportunities to

use language in an authentic manner and to develop intercultural communication skills (Kennedy Terry, 2022; Kitsantas, 2004; Regan, 1998). Besides facilitating international students' social adjustment in a host community (Hechanova-Alampay et al., 2002), intercultural contact can also contribute to students' professional development, in the form of professional networks useful for them as they seek employment after graduation. Therefore, in addition to documenting international students' attitudes toward members of a local community, this study also captured students' contact with those members. With respect to behavioural manifestations of prejudice, previous research has explored how threats (realistic and symbolic) affect language use, such that people who feel threatened by members of another social group tend to use more derogatory language to describe them (Albarello & Rubini, 2018). To contribute to this line of research, the present study explored whether and how prejudice manifests in intergroup contact behaviours. Given that contact quality and quantity might differ in their association with attitudes and behaviours (Binder et al., 2009), this study investigated both the quality and the quantity of international students' contact with their host community.

Lastly, given the potentially unique role of language in intergroup attitudes, the present study also extended the integrated threat theory by incorporating language as an additional variable explaining international students' attitudes toward host community members. The study was conducted in Montréal, Québec, which is a particularly fitting environment to explore language-related attitudes, for example, in terms of international students' reactions to language policy or to language ideology in the host community. First, the precarious state of French in relation to English has dominated Québec's social and political life for decades (Fraser, 2006), illustrated by the formation of the French Language Office in 1961 and the passing of Bill 22 (Official Language Act) in 1974, Bill 101 (Charter of the French Language) in 1977, and more

recently Bill 96 (An Act respecting French, the official and common language of Québec) in 2022 (Busque, 2022). In this context, the local francophone community's increased focus on French may translate to their heightened expectation for international students to speak and understand French, even if those students are studying at English-medium universities, which may create tensions for students and may elicit negative reactions from them if they are unable to conform to this expectation. Moreover, the recently adopted Bill 96 further limits the number of students allowed in English-medium educational institutions, restricts the use of English in public and professional domains, and prohibits government services in a language other than French beyond the initial 6-month time limit, all of which may create apprehension for international students with little or no background in French.

Furthermore, in an effort to protect the status of French, the Québec government recently suggested nearly doubling the tuition fee for out-of-province students attending English-medium universities in Québec (McGill University, Concordia University, and Bishop's University) as of September 2024 (Buongiorno, 2023; The Consortium of English-language CEGEPs, Colleges and Universities of Quebec, 2023; Greenfield, 2023). Although the tuition hike was later revised to a 33% increase, the government mandated that 80% of out-of-province students must achieve at least an intermediate level of French by graduation and that a failure to do so would have negative financial consequences for these English-medium educational institutions (Lapierre, 2023). As for international students, the provincial government treats students from French-speaking countries such as France and Belgium as domestic or out-of-province Canadian students depending on the degree they pursue, while the remaining students are expected to pay upwards of CA$20,000 annually for their education (Greenfield, 2023). This differential treatment of international students based on language background, along with the message that

they are not as welcome as French-speaking students, may result in English-speaking international students' developing feelings of resentment and negativity toward the local community.

Against this sociolinguistic backdrop, the present study targeted international students in English-medium universities to explore this population's attitudes toward francophone host community members. Indeed, international students, with their attitudes toward local residents, have been a neglected segment of Québec's population, given that previous research on language attitudes in this context has traditionally focused on the perspectives of Canada-born English or French speakers (Bourhis, 1983; Leimgruber & Fernández-Mallat, 2021; Sioufi & Bourhis, 2018), with only a handful of exceptions involving individuals whose first language is neither English nor French (Kircher, 2014, 2016). Considering these gaps in prior literature, this study was guided by the following research questions:

1. Is there a difference between international students' attitudes toward, perceptions of threat from, and contact with student and non-student members of the Montréal francophone community?

2. Which variables (i.e., realistic threat, symbolic threat, intergroup anxiety, negative stereotypes, linguistic threat) account for international students' attitudes toward student and non-student members of the Montréal francophone community?

3. What is the association between international students' quality and quantity of contact with student and non-student members of the Montréal francophone community and their attitudes toward and perceptions of threat from them?

Method

Participants

Following Phakiti et al. (2013), international students were defined as individuals pursuing tertiary-level education in a country of which they do not hold citizenship or permanent residency at the time of the study. For the present study, 60 L2 English-speaking international students (33 females, 26 males, 1 non-binary) with a mean age of 26.5 years ($SD = 5.0$, range = 19–43) were recruited from English-medium universities in Montréal. A focus on international students enrolled in English-medium studies was particularly fitting, considering that over half of all international students in Canada are from countries where English is spoken as a second or additional language (e.g., China, India) (CBIE, n.d.). Focusing on English-speaking international students was also timely in light of the recently proposed tuition hike for out-of-province applicants, which disproportionately impacts L2 English-speaking international students. The participating students pursued various academic degrees, including BA (22), MA (28), PhD (9), and other professional certificates (1), and they represented a wide range of ethnicities, the majority being East Asian (14), South Asian (9), Arab (7), West Asian (7), Southeast Asian (6), and Latin American (5). Their length of residence in Montréal was 2.9 years on average, with considerable variability among participants ($SD = 2.2$, range = 2 months–10 years), which ensured that the findings would not be directly attributable to international students' initial culture shock or acculturative stress (Berry, 2005) and that their impressions of their host community might reflect not only their preconceived ideas but also their first-hand experience in the community. More than half of participants (36) worked part-time during their studies.

Participants self-reported their listening, speaking, reading, and writing proficiency in English and French by using 100-point scales where 0 corresponded to "not competent at all"

while 100 meant "very competent," and these scores were averaged to calculate the overall proficiency for each participant per language. Their overall proficiency in English ($M = 92.3$, $SD = 8.3$) was markedly higher than in French ($M = 33.2$, $SD = 29.9$). Participants also reported their daily language use allocating percentage values to English, French, and Other, totalling up to 100%. They mostly used English ($M = 62.1\%$, $SD = 20.8$) and other languages ($M = 30.7\%$, $SD = 20.3$), with very limited use of French ($M = 7.2\%$, $SD = 8.6$). They also reported little familiarity with Québec French ($M = 34.5$, $SD = 32.6$), using a 100-point scale, where 0 corresponded to "not at all" and 100 indicated "very much."

Materials

To examine international students' attitudes toward local community members, determine which variables account for those attitudes, and understand the role of intergroup contact in this relationship, the same measures used in Study 1 were adapted for this study, which facilitated direct comparisons between the two datasets (see Appendix C for the full list of measures). To help international students reflect on their attitudes toward student and non-student host community members, the following brief statements were provided to contextualize the relevant questionnaire items targeting student and non-student francophones, respectively:

As you respond to the items below, please think about local francophone students you may encounter on campus (e.g., classmates, residence assistants) with little or some English background and who mostly use French in their day-to-day activities on and off campus.

As you respond to the items below, please think about local francophone professionals you may encounter off campus (e.g., salesperson, bus driver, hairdresser, police officer) in Montréal with little or some English background and who mostly use French in their day-to-day activities.

Following Study 1, all questionnaire items, except for those measuring stereotypes (see below), were presented through 100-point sliding scales (with no numerical markers), with the two relevant endpoints labelled negatively on the left (e.g., "totally disagree," corresponding to 0) and positively on the right (e.g., "totally agree," corresponding to 100) and the initial slider position set in the middle.

Attitudes Toward Host Community Members

Similar to Study 1, an evaluative/emotional reactions questionnaire, adopted from Corenblum and Stephan (2001), was used to measure international students' attitudes toward francophone host community members. Participants reacted to six positive and six negative emotions, rating the degree to which they experience these affective states (e.g., affection, hatred, rejection), once in relation to student francophones and another time in relation to non-student francophones (i.e., members of the larger off-campus francophone community in Montréal who did not pursue an academic degree at the time of data collection).

Sources of Prejudice Toward Host Community Members

As in Study 1, based on the integrated threat theory (Stephan & Stephan, 2000), there were measures of four types of threat (realistic threat, symbolic threat, intergroup anxiety, negative stereotypes), along with a separate measure of linguistic threat (i.e., language-based attitudes), which was specifically developed for this study, with all measures targeting

international students' reactions toward members of the local francophone community. There were equivalent items eliciting participants' separate reactions to local student and non-student francophones.

Realistic threat was captured through six statements adapted from early research on international students' experiences in their host communities (e.g., Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002; Ward et al., 2005), with necessary adjustments for all target statements to reflect international students' experience with members of the local francophone community. For instance, the statement from Study 1 "They [international students] take jobs away from local students in Montréal (e.g., part-time employment as a barista off campus, teaching/research assistantships on campus)" was modified to read: "They [local francophone students] take jobs away from international students in Montréal (e.g., part-time employment as a barista off campus, teaching/research assistantships on campus." To take another example, the statement "Being paired with an international student for a group project in class can cause me to receive a lower grade than I otherwise would get when paired with a local classmate" was replaced with the following statement: "Being paired with a local francophone student for a group project in class can cause me to receive a lower grade than I otherwise would get when paired with another international student or someone from my own country." To create equivalent items targeting members of off-campus community, all statements were adjusted to reflect a different reference group. For instance, the statement concerning student francophones "They decrease the quality of international students' overall study abroad experience by being unwelcoming on campus" was altered to target non-student francophones off campus: "They decrease the quality of international students' overall study abroad experience by being unwelcoming off campus."

Across all statements, the pronoun "they" referred to either student or non-student members of the local francophone community, which was clear from the relevant contextualizing statement.

Symbolic threat was captured through seven statements adopted from Study 1 in line with previous research that employed similar measures (Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002; Ward et al., 2005), with word-level changes introduced to focus on local francophones (e.g., "They [international students] do not respect Québécois values and ways of living during their time at school" was modified as "They [local francophone students] do not respect international students' social and cultural values and ways of being"). The items targeting local student and non-student francophone community members were identical. Intergroup anxiety was measured following Corenblum and Stephan (2001), and participants were asked to express their feelings when interacting with host community members by reacting to 12 adjectives, using a 100-point scale with endpoints labeled "not at all" (corresponding to 0) and "very much" (corresponding to 100): apprehensive, friendly, uncertain, comfortable, worried, trusting, threatened, confident, awkward, safe, anxious, at ease. This measure was also identical with respect to participants' reactions to student and non-student francophone locals.

Finally, as in Study 1, negative stereotypes were captured via a composite stereotype index, following Stephan and Stephan's (1996) suggestion. On the basis of previous work (Corenblum & Stephan, 2001; Gareis, 2012; Hanassab, 2006; Pham & Tran, 2015; Senyshyn et al., 2000), 12 traits were selected, with half designating positive and half reflecting negative attributes and all relevant to host community members from the perspective of international students (welcoming, close-minded, clean, arrogant, cultured, ignorant, disinterested, sociable, reliable, superficial, considerate, aggressive). Participants first indicated the percentage of local community members (separately for student and non-student locals) who they thought may

possess these traits (0–100%) and then rated the favourableness (i.e., valence) of each trait on a 10-point scale where –5 corresponded to "very unfavourable" and +5 corresponded to "very favourable." These scores were then used to create a composite stereotype/evaluation index (see Data Analysis).

The dimension of linguistic threat was measured through seven statements (out of the eight) adapted from Study 1 to elicit international students' attitudes toward Québec's language policy and the prevalent language ideology in the province. Similar to Study 1, these items were informed by previous work on attitudes toward French in Québec that targeted francophones' ethnic group affiliation (Gatbonton & Trofimovich, 2008; Kircher, 2012) and were updated to reflect recent language-related legislation (i.e., Bill 96). Items regarding Québec's language policy involved such statements as: "They [local francophones] must accept that, when necessary, I [as an international student] should be offered services in a language other than French (such as English)" and "They [local francophones] must understand that English is a major global language and be more flexible about French." Reactions about language use in the community were elicited through statements such as "I don't mind if they expect all signs and announcements to be only in French in the public domain in Montréal" (reverse-scored).

Intergroup Contact

For intergroup contact, the same measures from Study 1 were used in this study to elicit participants' frequency of contact with local francophone students in four different contexts of interaction: working in a study group, sharing class notes, doing group assignments, and communicating during free time outside class (at coffee shops, restaurants, bars, etc.). Comparable contexts were created to capture participants' interaction with non-student francophone locals: at work, in my neighbourhood, when using public transportation, and outside

the university in the social domain (at coffee shops, restaurants, bars, etc.). The measure of contact quality consisted of six 100-point semantic differential scales adopted from Ward et al. (2005) asking participants how they would describe their interaction with student and non-student francophone locals: unequal–equal, involuntary–voluntary, superficial–intimate, unpleasant–pleasant, competitive–cooperative, and negative–positive. The scales targeting student and non-student francophones were identical.

In addition to the quantitative data, the present study also collected qualitative data from participants via open-ended questions that elicited international students' particularly negative/positive interactions with the host community as well as their views on how to ameliorate intergroup relations between international students and the host community. However, this set of data fell outside the scope of the present study and thus was not explored further.

Procedure

The data collection procedure was identical to that of Study 1. After providing their consent and receiving information about the purpose of the study, participants completed all questionnaires using the online survey platform LimeSurvey (https://limesurvey.org), which provided a convenient and reliable means of data collection, as described in Study 1. Each questionnaire was presented in the same order as in Study 1 and included a comparable number of items. Half of participants completed the questionnaires focusing on student francophones first, followed by their reactions to non-student francophones. This order was reversed for the other half of participants to minimize potential task order effects. Participants finally filled out a background questionnaire similar to the one used in Study 1 to collect information about their demographic, language, and educational backgrounds (see Appendix D). Before the final

submission of their responses, participants were provided with an open-ended textbox to note any technical issues they encountered in the survey or to leave any comments regarding the study. The entire survey was presented to and completed by participants in English, and they received CA$20 as compensation for their time.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was identical to that in Study 1. Negatively worded items for attitudes were reverse-scored so that higher scores corresponded to more positive attitudes. For realistic, symbolic, and linguistic threat as well as intergroup anxiety, positively worded items were also reverse-scored so that higher scores meant greater threat and anxiety. All ratings (except negative stereotypes) were checked for item reliability by computing Cronbach's alpha for each variable, separately for questionnaire items targeting student francophones (.84 for attitudes, .75 for realistic threat, .88 for symbolic threat, .68 for linguistic threat after removing one item with low item–total correlation, .89 for intergroup anxiety, .79 for negative stereotypes, .81 for contact quantity, and .85 for contact quality) and for questionnaire items targeting non-student francophones (.86 for attitudes, .83 for realistic threat, .87 for symbolic threat, .65 for linguistic threat after removing one item with low item–total correlation, .90 for intergroup anxiety, .81 for negative stereotypes, .90 for contact quality, .66 for contact quantity after removing one item with low item–total correlation). While the low reliability of contact quantity can be explained by participants' distinct patterns of contact with locals, the low reliability of linguistic threat may stem from the heterogeneity in participants' reactions to the present sociolinguistic context of Montréal. These two values notwithstanding, item reliability was deemed sufficient; therefore, composite scores were obtained for each variable targeting student and non-student francophones separately.

For negative stereotypes, a composite stereotype index was derived by multiplying each attributed percentage value (0–100%) by the relevant valence score (from –5 to 5) per trait, then computing the mean across the 12 traits. Thus, depending on the valence score attributed, stereotype index scores ranged between –500 and 500, which corresponded to the negative and positive attitudinal scalar endpoints, respectively. Apart from four individuals who raised an issue with the clarity of a handful of questionnaire items without specifically pointing out a section or an item (e.g., some questionnaire items are not clear, some adjectives used were ambiguous), the remaining participants reported no difficulty with the online survey or the items. After a close inspection of the data, these four participants were not found to be outliers in any measure; therefore, their data were retained in all analyses. Participants completed the survey within about 32 minutes, which was deemed reasonable based on pilot testing.

Similar to Study 1, given the lack of normality observed across multiple variables, robust statistics were performed through comparisons of bootstrapped BCa 95% confidence intervals (CIs) for differences between group means. Because bootstrapped CIs are not impacted by score distributions (Field, 2018), these analyses are robust to violations of normality and are therefore more preferable to traditional nonparametric tests (Larson-Hall, 2016). Effect sizes were interpreted based on previous literature (Plonsky & Oswald, 2014), using Cohen's *d* for within-group contrasts (0.60, 1.00, and 1.40) and *r* for correlation strength (.25, .40, and .60), where each value designates small, medium, and large effects, respectively.

Results

As illustrated in Table 7, international students attending English-medium universities in Montréal had somewhat positive attitudes toward francophone locals, with non-student francophones eliciting more favourable attitudes than student francophones. International

students also reported similarly low levels of perceived threat (below 50 on a 100-point scale) from both student and non-student francophones across all threat variables, with the exception of linguistic threat, which was above average (around 60 on a 100-point scale). With respect to stereotypes, both the mean values (around 40) and the bootstrapped 95% CIs suggest rather neutral stereotypical perceptions of locals, considering that these scores could range from –500 to +500. With respect to contact, international students reported a noticeably higher frequency and slightly better quality of contact with non-student francophones than with student francophones.

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics for International Students' Overall Attitudes and Feelings of Threat Toward and Contact with Local Francophones

Measure	Student francophones			Non-student francophones		
	M	*SD*	95% CI	*M*	*SD*	95% CI
Attitudes	62.30	14.66	[58.51, 66.08]	67.43	15.54	[63.42, 71.45]
Realistic threat	44.16	18.28	[38.93, 49.38]	42.26	22.46	[36.45, 48.06]
Symbolic threat	37.60	20.86	[32.14, 43.06]	38.99	22.17	[33.26, 44.72]
Linguistic threat	61.16	12.77	[57.86, 64.46]	62.45	17.87	[57.84, 67.07]
Intergroup anxiety	44.03	16.27	[39.82, 48.23]	46.00	17.64	[41.44, 50.56]
Stereotype index	41.79	88.88	[18.83, 64.75]	39.45	95.42	[14.80, 69.10]
Contact quantity	45.37	23.25	[39.36, 51.37]	64.17	21.14	[58.71, 69.63]
Contact quality	55.90	17.97	[51.26, 60.54]	56.37	18.22	[51.66, 61.08]

Note. All values are based on composite scores, with a minimum of 0 and a maximum 100, except for stereotype index, which ranges between –500 and +500.

To answer the first research question, which asked whether there is a difference between international students' attitudes toward, perceptions of threat from, and contact with student and non-student francophone host community members, paired-samples t tests were run, focusing on the bootstrapped BCa 95% CI for each mean difference as a measure of between-group difference. As can be seen in Table 8, international students' attitudes toward student and non-student francophones were statistically significantly different (in favour of non-student locals), with an estimated small effect (Plonsky & Oswald, 2014), because the 95% CI for the bootstrapped between-group difference did not include 0. Moreover, international students' quantity of contact with student and non-student locals was also statistically significantly different (again in favour of non-student locals), as shown through the 95% CIs for the between-group difference that excluded 0, with an estimated small effect (Plonsky & Oswald, 2014). There were no other statistically significant differences between international students' reactions toward student and non-student francophones.

Table 8

Comparison of International Students' Overall Attitudes, Perceived Threat Toward, and Contact

with Student and Non-Student Francophones

Measure	M_{diff}	95% CI	t	p	d
Attitudes	−5.13	[−8.90, −1.37]	−2.73	.01	−0.35
Realistic threat	1.90	[−1.20, 5.00]	1.23	.23	0.16
Symbolic threat	−1.39	[−4.09, 1.31]	−1.03	.31	−0.13
Linguistic threat	−1.29	[−4.95, 2.36]	−0.71	.48	−0.09
Intergroup anxiety	−1.97	[−4.92, 0.97]	−1.34	.19	−0.17
Stereotype index	2.34	[−9.83, 14.52]	0.39	.70	0.05
Contact quantity	−18.80	[−25.84, −11.76]	−5.34	< .001	−0.69
Contact quality	−0.47	[−3.78, 2.85]	−0.28	.39	−0.04

Note. Although bootstrapped BCa 95% CIs are used to infer significance, two-tailed *p* values for

paired-samples *t* tests, along with effect size estimates (Cohen's *d*), are provided for

completeness.

      To answer the second research question investigating which potential variables predict

L2-speaking international students' attitudes toward francophone host community members,

hierarchical multiple regression analyses were conducted, separately for the responses targeting

student and non-student francophones. International students' attitudes toward francophone host

community members was the outcome variable, while measures of realistic threat, symbolic

threat, intergroup anxiety, negative stereotypes, and linguistic threat were entered as predictors.

All predictors, except linguistic threat, were entered in Step 1 simultaneously (i.e., forced entry)

following previous work (e.g., Berrenberg et al., 2002; Stephan et al., 1999a); in keeping with this study's focus on linguistic threat as a separate dimension within the framework of integrated threat theory, this measure was added as a predictor in Step 2 to assess its unique contribution to explaining attitudes.

As can be seen in Table 9, the regression model for student francophones did not yield any correlations above the threshold of |.70| (Field, 2018), with the maximum value being .69, and tests of multicollinearity revealed no tolerance values below 0.20 (0.38–0.70) and no VIF values above 10 (1.43–2.76). Casewise diagnostics revealed only two cases outside the ±2 benchmark (2.35 and 2.18), suggesting little to no bias in the model. Moreover, no standardized residual value exceeded the ±3 value (–1.97–2.35), with Cook's distance values all falling below 1.00 (0.00–0.31). The regression model for non-student francophones similarly did not yield any correlation coefficients among predictors above the benchmark of |.70|, with the maximum value being –.65, and tests of multicollinearity revealed no tolerance values below 0.20 (0.50–0.72) and no VIF values above 10 (1.39–2.02). Casewise diagnostics revealed only one case outside the ±2 benchmark (–2.46), suggesting little to no bias in the model. Moreover, analysis of the residuals indicated a good model fit, with no standardized residual value exceeding the ±3 benchmark (–2.44–1.96) and Cook's distance values all falling below 1.00 (0.00–0.23).

Table 9

Pearson Correlations (with Bootstrapped 95% CIs in Brackets) for All Variables Targeting Non-Student Francophones (Above the Diagonal) and Student Francophones (Below the Diagonal)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 Attitudes	—	−.32	−.28	−.21	−.50	.61
		[−.55, −.07]	[−.48, −.08]	[−.46, −.08]	[−.68, −.28]	[.38, .79]
2 Realistic threat	−.46	—	.55	.30	.38	−.45
	[−.65, −.23]		[.35, .72]	[.05, .51]	[.14, .57]	[−.64, −.25]
3 Symbolic threat	−.49	.69	—	.47	.41	−.51
	[−.68, −.25]	[.53, .81]		[.23, .66]	[.18, .60]	[−.66, −.34]
4 Linguistic threat	−.48	.33	.46	—	.40	−.39
	[−.67, −.27]	[.10, .53]	[.22, .64]		[.14, .61]	[−.59, −.14]
5 Intergroup anxiety	−.56	.53	.54	.50	—	−.65
	[−.72, −.36]	[.37, .67]	[.34, .69]	[.29, .66]		[−.78, −.46]
6 Stereotypes	.50	−.42	−.64	−.43	−.59	—
	[.24, .69]	[−.58, −.24]	[−.76, −.49]	[−.63, −.16]	[−.75, −.38]	

As shown in Table 10, the regression model for attitudes toward student francophones demonstrated a good fit to the data in Step 1, $F(4, 55) = 8.73$, $p < .001$, with a total of 39% of variance in attitudes explained (adjusted $R^2 = .34$), suggesting good cross-validity of the model. In Step 2, the addition of linguistic threat resulted only in a 3% change in the total variance explained, which did not improve the model significantly ($p < .08$); therefore, the best-fitting model included realistic threat, symbolic threat, intergroup anxiety, and stereotypes, but only

intergroup anxiety significantly and negatively predicted international students' attitudes toward local student francophones, $t(55) = -2.32$, $p = .024$.

Table 10

Results of Multiple Regression Analyses Using Threat Variables as Predictors of International Students' Attitudes Toward Student Francophones (n = 60)

Predictors	R	ΔR^2	B	95% CI	SE B	β	t	p
Step 1								
Constant	.62	.39	81.18	[69.09, 92.64]	6.60		12.29	< .001
Realistic threat			−0.11	[−0.37, 0.20]	0.11	−.15	−0.96	.34
Symbolic threat			−0.07	[−0.29, 0.17]	0.12	−.09	−0.55	.59
Intergroup anxiety			−0.30	[−0.56, −0.04]	0.13	−.33	−2.32	.02
Stereotypes			0.03	[−0.03, 0.09]	0.03	.03	0.18	.23
Step 2								
Linguistic threat	.65	.03	−0.25	[−0.53, 0.03]	0.14	−.22	−1.77	.08

As illustrated in Table 11, the regression model for attitudes toward non-student francophones also demonstrated a good fit to the data in Step 1, $F(4, 55) = 9.24$, $p < .001$, with a total of 40% of variance in attitudes explained (adjusted $R^2 = .36$), again suggesting good cross-validity of the model. Including linguistic threat in Step 2 resulted only in a 2% change to the total variance explained, again with no significant improvement to the model ($p = .68$); therefore, the best-fitting model included realistic threat, symbolic threat, intergroup anxiety, and stereotypes, but only stereotypes significantly predicted international students' attitudes toward local non-student francophones, $t(55) = 3.46$, $p = .001$.

Table 11

Results of Multiple Regression Analyses Using Threat Variables as Predictors of International Students' Attitudes Toward Non-Student Francophones (n = 60)

Predictors	*R*	*ΔR²*	*B*	*95% CI*	*SE B*	*β*	*t*	*p*
Step 1								
Constant	.63	.40	71.04	[55.72, 84.89]	7.30		9.74	< .001
Realistic threat			−0.05	[−0.22, 0.12]	0.09	−.07	−0.57	.57
Symbolic threat			0.07	[−0.10, 0.25]	0.09	.09	0.70	.49
Intergroup anxiety			−0.16	[−0.44, 0.14]	0.12	−.18	−1.30	.20
Stereotypes			0.08	[0.03, 0.14]	0.02	.51	3.46	.001
Step 2								
Linguistic threat	.64	.002	0.04	[−0.13, 0.29]	0.11	.05	0.41	.68

To address the third research question, which examined the link between international students' quantity and quality of contact and their attitudes toward as well as perceptions of threat from francophone host community members, Pearson correlations were computed targeting student and non-student francophones separately (see Table 12). With regard to attitudes, contact quantity showed no meaningful associations for either student francophones (*r* = −.12, *p* = .38) or non-student francophones (*r* = .11, *p* = .42), with bootstrapped 95% CIs for each association crossing zero in each case. Contact quality, however, was significantly and positively linked to international students' attitudes toward both student francophones (*r* = .44, *p* < .001, 95% CI [.21, .62]) and non-student francophones (*r* = .61, *p* < .001, 95% CI [.42, .76]), with medium-to-large effects (Plonsky & Oswald, 2014). In terms of the threat variables, as

shown in Table 12, contact quality yielded significant associations with all threat variables for both francophone groups, with effect sizes ranging from small to large. Contact quantity, on the other hand, revealed only significant associations with reliable CIs for intergroup anxiety, linguistic threat, and stereotypes, and only for non-student francophones. Put differently, for international students enrolled in English-medium instruction, contact quality was associated with more favourable attitudes toward and reduced perceived threat from both student and non-student francophones; by contrast, contact quantity was linked with less intergroup anxiety, reduced linguistic threat, and more positive stereotypes, but only in relation to non-student francophones.

Table 12

Pearson Correlations Between Contact Quantity and Quality and Rated Variables of Attitudes and Perceived Threat (n = 60)

Ratings	Student francophones		Non-student francophones	
	Quantity	Quality	Quantity	Quality
Attitudes	−.12 [−.33, .10]	.44 [.21, .62]	.11 [−.20, .38]	.61 [.42, .76]
Realistic threat	−.10 [−.37, .19]	−.43 [−.61, −.21]	−.01 [−.31, .32]	−.50 [−.67, −.27]
Symbolic threat	.15 [−.11, .43]	−.35 [−.55, −.12]	−.12 [−.35, .14]	−.37 [−.56, −.15]
Linguistic threat	−.14 [−.37, .11]	−.53 [−.71, −.31]	−.29 [−.51, −.02]	−.37 [−.58, −.12]
Intergroup anxiety	−.19 [−.45, .10]	−.66 [−.79, −.46]	−.35 [−.58, −.06]	−.69 [−.81, −.49]
Stereotype index	.02 [−.27, .28]	.57 [.35, .73]	.41 [.14, .60]	.65 [.44, .80]

Discussion

The present study examined L2 English-speaking international students' attitudes toward, perceptions of threat from, and contact with student and non-student francophones in Montréal. Although international students generally demonstrated positive attitudes toward both groups, these attitudes favoured non-student over student francophones. International students also perceived low levels of threat, except for linguistic threat, from all francophones. However, students' attitudes toward the two francophone groups were predicted by different variables. While intergroup anxiety was the sole predictor of attitudes toward student francophones, the measure of stereotypes was the only variable predicting attitudes toward non-student francophones. Finally, international students reported lower quantity and quality of interaction with student than non-student francophones. On the one hand, international students' contact quality was associated positively with attitudes and negatively with all types of threat (except for stereotypes) in relation to both francophone groups. On the other hand, international students' contact quantity was not associated with attitudes toward either group; however, it was associated with intergroup anxiety and linguistic threat (both negatively) and with stereotypes (positively), but only in relation to non-student francophones.

International Students' Perceptions of Student and Non-Student Francophones

Even though international students are usually satisfied with their study abroad experiences (CBIE, 2018, 2021; Ward et al., 2005; UKCISA, 2004), they do not necessarily hold positive attitudes toward host community members. For example, in the United Kingdom, as high as 91% of undergraduate international students reported feeling content with their academic experience, yet many found host community members arrogant or prejudiced, which was reflected in the lack of intergroup contact between domestic and international students

(UKCISA, 2004). In response to the first research question, which focused on international students' attitudes, the present findings showed that Montréal-based, English-speaking international students generally hold favourable, above-average attitudes toward local francophone residents, expressing such positive emotions as affection, warmth, and admiration. On the one hand, this finding aligns with previous work in Canada, where most international students perceive Canadians as welcoming, tolerant, and friendly (CBIE, 2021), despite reporting various discriminatory behaviours from the host community (CBIE, 2021), especially off campus (e.g., on public transit). On the other hand, this finding is unexpected, in the sense that international students felt significantly more favourably about non-student than student francophones. In fact, it was expected that a shared university identity would be associated with positivity toward fellow students (Quinton, 2019) while perceived negativity in off-campus settings would contribute to less favourable attitudes toward non-students (Hanassab, 2006). In this study, this divergence from previous work could be attributed to international students' significantly more frequent contact with non-student than student francophones in various off-campus contexts such as in coffee shops or in their neighbourhood as well as while using public transportation. Such frequent contact, likely with different host community members, may help international students challenge common (potentially negative) stereotypes about francophone locals and perceive them as diverse individuals, resulting in more favourable attitudes.

The generally positive disposition of international students toward francophones in Montréal, as in the rest of Canada (CBIE, 2015), broadly reflects Canada's official policy of multiculturalism, adopted in 1971, which promotes support for ethnic and linguistic minorities (Jedwab, 2020). Even though Québec officially subscribes to the notion of interculturalism, where the French language and culture are prioritized, interculturalism (at least in principle) also

accepts and encourages cultural diversity and pluralism (Brosseau & Dewing, 2018). It is possible that international students acknowledged the value attached to French by Québec's francophone population and consequently developed and maintained positive intergroup attitudes despite potential linguistic challenges that learning and using French might bring, as attested by the high scores of linguistic threat in this study. It could also be that international students, who study and live in some of the city's most ethnically diverse neighbourhoods and tend to socialize with other international students, perceived little threat from the francophone community—apart from experiencing linguistic challenges—and therefore maintained positive attitudes toward the locals. Indeed, apart from linguistic threat, international students reported low levels of perceived threat, exhibited below-average levels of intergroup anxiety, and expressed largely neutral stereotypes about host community members. With respect to intergroup anxiety, which is considered a major obstacle to intercultural communication (Gudykunst, 1998; Islam & Hewstone, 1993; Stephan et al., 2000b), this is a particularly promising finding. For instance, Chinese students in the United States felt apprehensive about conversations with their domestic peers due to fear of rejection (Heng, 2017), while international students from East and Southeast Asia felt intimidated to interact with their local British peers (Pho & Schartner, 2021). Thus, the current sample of Montréal-based international students generally not only felt positive about members of the francophone majority but also showed openness to communicate with them.

In terms of realistic and symbolic threat variables, although international students usually compete with locals over limited resources, such as university admission, funding, part-time employment, and housing (Paige, 1990), and are often blamed for increased tuition fees and competition over good grades (Charles-Toussaint & Crowson, 2010), these concerns were generally rated as below-average. The highest-rated value of realistic threat involved competition

over employment after graduation (rated on average around 65 on a 100-point scale), whereas the lowest-rated value pertained to feeling unsafe on and off campus (with an average value around 20). Put differently, while physical safety was not an issue, international students felt somewhat threatened by the locals with respect to finding employment. Perceived symbolic threat was similarly low, meaning that international students did not believe that their social, cultural, and religious values were threatened or that the social and cultural values of Montréal's francophones clashed with theirs. This finding departs from previous work in other contexts, where international students voiced concerns over intergroup differences with respect to culture and social life, such as individualism versus collectivism, religious beliefs, show of intimacy in public spaces, and alcohol consumption (Briscoe et al., 2022; Myburgh et al., 2002; Pritchard & Skinner, 2002; Yakaboski et al., 2018). It might well be that international students enrolled in English-medium instruction indeed experienced little realistic and symbolic threat from local residents. Alternatively, this finding might reflect the current participant sample, which excluded specific groups who reported particularly high levels of threat in prior work, such as international students from Central Africa (Briscoe et al, 2022) and Sri Lanka (Pritchard & Skinner, 2002).

It was expected that international students would express negative stereotypes about local francophones, influenced by some of the recent political decisions adopted by Québec's government (e.g., Bill 96, 2021) and drawing on the general media portrayal of Québec as being unwelcoming to non-francophones and overly protective of the French language and culture (Bilefsky, 2021; Whichelo, 2021). Moreover, Québec is one the least religious provinces in Canada (Angus Reid Institute, 2022), and through recent legislation, including Bill 62 (2017) and Bill 21 (2019), it has been actively promoting religious neutrality and secularism. In its totality, this sociopolitical landscape was expected to contribute to international students' negative

perception of the francophone host community as close-minded or unwelcoming (A Minority Within a Minority, 2018; Marchand, 2022; Yakabuski, 2016). However, international students appeared to feel rather neutral about local francophones, in terms of the traits they ascribed to both student and non-student members of the francophone majority. Assuming that international students were aware of the social, political, and media landscape of Québec, any negativity that they may have perceived did not seem to translate into unfavourable attitudes about or stereotypical perceptions of local francophones. This is a promising finding, in the sense that any ongoing or future activities aimed at maintaining and improving intergroup relations need not focus on undoing or mitigating negative attitudes and stereotyping about francophone locals.

Even though international students perceived low levels of threat and anxiety from the local francophone community, linguistic threat was rated as particularly high. Such high awareness of linguistic differences is unsurprising, given the context of Montréal, where the linguistic divide between English and French is deeply rooted in the sociopolitical dichotomy of francophone Québec positioned against the rest of (largely anglophone) Canada (Groff et al., 2016). Montréal is a multilingual and multicultural hub, with over 100 different ethnic and cultural groups represented among its residents (Statistics Canada, 2021), and is home to two large English-medium public research institutions (i.e., McGill University, Concordia University). Nevertheless, the city's linguistic landscape is predominantly francophone, with French used in most public spaces (Bourhis & Sioufi, 2017). As mentioned previously, over the past decades, the Québec government has adopted multiple legislative measures to safeguard and promote the status of French, starting from the establishment of the French Language Office in 1961 and the passing of Bill 22 (Official Language Act) in 1974, to the introduction of Bill 101

(Charter of the French Language) in 1977, and more recently Bill 96 (An Act respecting French, the official and common language of Québec) in 2022 (Busque, 2022).

Immersed in this sociolinguistic context, international students were therefore likely highly aware of various issues surrounding French, which may have contributed to the linguistic threat they perceived from the local francophone majority. In fact, the most recent tuition increases for students at Montréal's English-medium universities, featuring dramatic fee differences in favour of international students from francophone countries (e.g., France, Belgium) over those from the rest of the world (Greenfield, 2023), illustrate the kinds of beliefs and actions from the host community which international students likely interpret as threat. Whereas international students' perception of linguistic threat from student and non-student francophones was similarly high, implying that language issues permeated both academic and personal lives of students, linguistic threat was rated the highest (approximately 80 on a 100-point scale) with respect to the lack of English in dealing with government services such as receiving healthcare and obtaining study permits. Thus, international students' perceived linguistic threat seemed greatest precisely in the domain most targeted through various measures that focus on re-affirming the importance of French.

Predictors of Attitudes Toward Host Community Members

The second research question examined various predictors of international students' attitudes toward host community members. In light of prior work focusing on the integrated threat theory, the low predictive power of regression models (around 40%) was expected, especially for attitudes of various minority groups (Corenblum & Stephan, 2001; Stephan et al., 2002; Tausch et al., 2009). For instance, in Stephan et al. (2002), regression models accounted for 65% of White participants' attitudes toward Black people (a minority group in that context),

whereas similar models targeting Black participants' attitudes accounted for only 41% of shared variance. In Corenblum and Stephan (2001), for White Canadians, regressions accounted for 70% of their attitudes toward Indigenous people (a minority group); by contrast, comparable models explained only 46% of Indigenous participants' attitudes. In the present study, regression models accounted for 39–40% variance in the attitudes that international students (a minority group in Montréal) expressed toward the local francophone majority.

However, despite being generally favourable, international students' attitudes toward local student and non-student francophones were predicted through different variables. Intergroup anxiety was the only significant predictor of international students' attitudes toward student francophones, with greater anxiety corresponding to more negative attitudes. International students who felt worried, awkward, or anxious about interactions with their French-speaking local peers were more likely to harbour negative attitudes toward them. Broadly speaking, this finding replicates prior research, where intergroup anxiety emerged as a significant predictor of attitudes for other minority groups such as Indigenous and Black people (Corenblum & Stephan, 2001; Stephan et al., 2002; Tausch et al., 2009). For international students, social and academic adjustment is more challenging than for their local peers (Andrade, 2006), so international students may have felt apprehensive about speaking with domestic French-speaking students who have the advantage of having strong social support from local family and friend networks. Communication difficulties stemming from language proficiency, common to most international students (Surtees, 2019), also seem to be a major source of anxiety because language issues (e.g., grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation errors) often lead to negative perceptions of interaction (Kormos et al., 2014). For international students in English-medium universities in particular, low or insufficient proficiency in French might not only translate to

significant communication anxiety but might also colour these students' perceptions of and reactions to local francophone students. Similarly, considering that prior contact experiences, and especially negative ones, usually determine a speaker's anxiety level (Stephan, 2014; Stephan & Stephan, 1985), the significant role of intergroup anxiety in international students' attitudes may stem from their previous negative experiences interacting with fellow students. For example, international students are sometimes ridiculed by their local peers for their language errors and accents, which results in feelings of embarrassment about and avoidance of future intergroup contact (Kormos et al., 2014; Maeda, 2017). Moreover, exclusion from groupwork inside classrooms and from social activities outside instruction (Haugh, 2016; Lee & Rice, 2007) can also lead international students to anticipate negative outcomes in future interactions and can result in unfavourable attitudes toward student francophones. This interpretation, which is generally reflected in international students' having lower quantity and quality of interaction with student than non-student francophones, must nevertheless be revisited in future work eliciting qualitative, in-depth reports of international students' actual past interaction experiences with student francophones.

Unlike international students' attitudes toward student francophones, which were predicted in the university context by self-relevant threats such as anxiety, international students' attitudes toward non-student francophones in the broader off-campus context were predicted by a group-relevant threat such as stereotypes (e.g., Aberson & Gaffney, 2008). International students who tended to ascribe positive qualities to non-student francophones (e.g., describing them as welcoming, sociable, and reliable) were those who also expressed favourable attitudes toward them. The association between stereotypes and attitudes is unsurprising, considering that international students tend to form beliefs about their prospective host community members prior

to their arrival. For instance, according to Latif et al. (2012), many Asian students had been aware of media reports about anti-Asian hate crimes in Australia prior to their arrival in the country, and this information may have contributed to the formation of negative stereotypes and unfavourable attitudes about local residents. In fact, prior literature is replete with reports of international students expressing negative stereotypes, for example, targeting the superficiality, unreliability, ignorance, and arrogance of local residents (Gareis, 2012; Hanassab, 2006; Lee & Rice, 2007; Pham & Tran, 2015; Senyshyn et al., 2000; UKCISA, 2004). Unlike this literature, the present findings showed that international students generally hold neutral or relatively positive stereotypes about the local community. This result aligns with reports from Australia, where international students expected Australians to be open and positive (Pekerti et al., 2020), and from Canada, where international students believed Canadians to be tolerant, non-discriminatory, welcoming, and friendly (CBIE, 2018, 2021). These generally favourable perceptions of Canadians seem to extend to Montréal francophones, especially those encountered in non-academic settings. An interim conclusion emerging from these data, therefore, is that international students' attitudes toward local francophone residents correspond to their stereotypical beliefs about them, inasmuch as more neutral or positive beliefs about francophones were associated with more favourable perceptions of them.

Realistic and symbolic threats failed to emerge as significant predictors of international students' attitudes toward both student and non-student francophones. As for realistic threat, for instance, international students did not seem to be particularly concerned that francophone host community members limit their employment opportunities on or off campus. With their low proficiency in and infrequent use of French, international students generally do not compete with francophones for jobs requiring high-level French. Instead, international students compete with

other newcomers (including other international students) for limited on- and off-campus

employment that does not require much knowledge of French, so this clear language-based

differentiation in job prospects may have attenuated the significance of realistic threat in

international students' attitudes toward the host community. With respect to symbolic threat,

international students share their identity as university students with francophone peers, which

might minimize the role of symbolic threat in on-campus, academic interaction (Quinton, 2019).

Furthermore, international students usually build their social networks around co-nationals and

other international students (Heng, 2017; Pho & Schartner, 2021; Ward & Masgoret, 2004), so

they may be able to uphold their values and beliefs without perceiving much symbolic threat

from local residents. Similarly, international students often reside in ethnic neighbourhoods or

share living arrangements with members of the same ethnic group, so their values, cultural

practices, and beliefs might not be particularly threatened by members of the local community.

A key goal of this study was to explore the predictive power of linguistic threat with

regard to international students' attitudes toward Montréal's francophones. A focus on linguistic

threat was motivated through prior research within the integrated threat theory, which to date has

not explored language issues (e.g., Berrenberg et al., 2007; Stephan et al., 2002), and through

previous work on language as an important cue to social group membership (e.g., Dovidio &

Gluszek, 2012; Rakić et al., 2011; Tomic, 2013). Linguistic threat was considered of particular

significance in Québec, in light of the recent legislation such as Bill 96 (2021) which limits the

number of students in English-medium universities, restricts English use in the public and

professional domain, and reduces English services for newcomers after 6 months of residence.

Even though linguistic threat was negatively associated with international students' attitudes

toward both student and non-student francophones (see Table 9), it failed to predict attitudes

after accounting for other variables. At first glance, linguistic threat might not play a critical role in international students' attitudes. However, considering the significance of language attitudes in international students' communication with their host communities (Mak et al., 2014; Kormos et al., 2014), it is possible that international students not only acknowledged the important role of French in Québec (inasmuch as linguistic threat showed one of the strongest associations with international students' attitudes) but also accepted this important role (inasmuch as linguistic threat failed to inform their attitudes). Put differently, despite the potential challenges that linguistic threat may present to international students, they do not necessarily draw on this threat in expressing their attitudes toward the local francophone majority.

Even though they may have chosen to study at an English-medium university, international students seem to be aware of the key value of French to Québec's francophones (Bourhis, 2019) and the legitimacy of French in Québec's linguistic marketplace (Bourdieu, 1991). This awareness in fact reflects a similar social outlook of Québec francophones, who tend to hold positive attitudes toward French (Bouchard, 2023; Kircher, 2012) and perceive international students favourably in various social and professional roles such as a friend, neighbour, and colleague, especially when students speak French (Tekin & Trofimovich, 2023). If the present findings indeed reflect international students' heightened awareness of the importance of French in Québec, this perspective not only would be beneficial for students in their academic, social, and professional lives but also would align with the government's efforts to protect French. Nevertheless, this rather speculative interpretation requires confirmation in future work. Lastly, the present data were collected prior to recent provincial decisions (in December 2024) to increase tuition fees for out-of-province students attending English-medium universities, where international students from non-francophone countries are required to pay up

to three times more than students from such French-speaking nations as Belgium and France (Buongiorno, 2023; The Consortium of English-language CEGEPs, Colleges and Universities of Quebec, 2023; Greenfield, 2023). It is therefore possible that international students' perception of linguistic threat and its role in their attitudes may have gained considerable prominence in the recent months as a result of these events.

The Contact–Attitudes Link from International Students' Perspective

The final research question investigated the association between international students' contact with host community members and their attitudes toward and perceived threat from them. As for attitudes, it was contact quality rather than quantity that showed significant positive relationships for both student and non-student francophones. International students who reported greater contact quality with local francophones (e.g., evaluating their contact as more intimate, equal, and pleasant) expressed significantly more favourable attitudes toward their French-speaking interlocutors, describing them through positive attributes such as admiration, warmth, and acceptance. This finding supports previous work, where favourable contact had a positive effect on intergroup attitudes (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006) and where contact quality (rather than quantity) had stronger links with attitudes (Berrenberg et al., 2007; Binder et al., 2009; Stephan et al., 2000b). For instance, Mak et al. (2014) investigated the contact–attitudes relationship for Australian domestic and international students, showing that contact quality was a more powerful predictor of students' attitudes than contact quantity. The important role of contact quality in attitudes is expected, considering that positive or negative contact experiences tend to improve or impair intergroup attitudes and make or break intergroup relations (Aberson & Gaffney, 2008; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Indeed, even a single negative contact experience—such as an outgroup member's prejudicial behaviour—can damage attitudes

(Tropp, 2003). The present findings therefore complement prior work by confirming the value of contact quality over quantity in intergroup attitudes from the perspective of international students in Québec.

Contact quality was also significantly associated with all types of threat that international students perceived from both student and non-student francophones. In prior research, for instance, greater contact quality between the Hindu minority and the Muslim majority in Bangladesh was found to be associated with reduced intergroup anxiety for the Hindu group (Islam & Hewstone, 1993). For Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland, there were significant negative associations between their contact quality and the degree of realistic and symbolic threat that these groups perceived from each other (Tausch et al., 2007). And for Indigenous people in Canada, greater contact quality was similarly linked to less realistic and symbolic threat, decreased intergroup anxiety, and fewer negative stereotypes about White Canadians (Corenblum & Stephan, 2001). According to the present findings, the more deeply international students engaged with their host community, the less likely they perceived that this community deprives them of important resources, disrespects their values and beliefs, and behaves arrogantly or ignorantly, causing apprehension about future interactions. However, given the associational nature of this relationship, it is equally plausible to imagine an alternative scenario, for instance, where international students who felt little threat from their host community chose to engage in deeper, more meaningful communication experiences with its members. Regardless of its directionality, the obtained relationship between contact quality and perceived threat is good news for international students and their host communities, as this relationship emerged irrespective of whether members of the dominant social group were students or non-students.

This study also appears to be among the first to establish a link between quality and quantity of contact and linguistic threat, as perceived by international students. Given the critical role of language in human interactions, a relationship between contact quality and perceived linguistic threat was expected. On the one hand, positive contact experiences with the local francophone community (e.g., where interaction is described as pleasant, equal, and intimate) might decrease international students' perception of linguistic threat and might encourage them to acknowledge and accept the important role of French in Québec. On the other hand, increased linguistic threat perceived by international students, such as feeling unwelcome because of the lack of services provided in English, might deter international students from pursuing quality contact with the local francophone community, resulting in superficial interactive experiences labeled as unequal, negative, and unpleasant. As for contact quantity, the more contact international students reported with non-student francophones, the more they agreed with statements such as "French is the official language in Québec, so I should speak only French when interacting with locals in the public domain" and "Regardless of my country of origin, I should learn basic French prior to coming to Montréal." Thus, the more frequently international students encountered francophones off campus (regardless of contact quality), the more they become aware and accepting of the predominantly French-language landscape of the province, where French is the principal language of communication.

In addition to linguistic threat, contact quantity also yielded associations with international students' intergroup anxiety and stereotypes but only in their communication with non-student francophones, where more frequent contact off campus was associated with less intergroup anxiety and more positive stereotypes about the francophone group. Considering that the contact–prejudice link appears to be strongest when people can clearly identify their

interlocutors as members of a certain social group, such as immigrants or religious minorities (Brown et al., 1999; Hewstone, 2000; Voci & Hewstone, 2003), it might well be that non-student francophones, whom international students were more likely to encounter off campus, were more salient to them than student francophones, who were difficult to distinguish among the diverse student body of English-medium universities. Put differently, international students may not have been fully aware of their interactions with student francophones unless those speakers clearly disclosed their francophone identity, which may have effectively downplayed the frequency of these intergroup encounters for international students.

With regard to intergroup anxiety, more frequent contact with members of a social group decreases speakers' level of uncertainty and reduces their anxiety (Gudykunst, 1998); therefore, the more frequently international students interacted with francophones off campus, the less anxious they likely felt about future interactions with them. In contrast, considering that international students who feel particularly anxious about their communication with the host community tend to avoid contact (Kormos et al., 2014; Maeda, 2017; Samochowiec & Florack, 2010), anxiety may also contribute to internationals students' desire to interact with non-student francophones, decreasing the frequency of their contact. Regardless of the directionality of this relationship, the anxiety–contact link emerged in this study in off-campus communication with local francophones, which is precisely the context where they reported the majority of their communication in French.

Finally, increased contact quantity between international students and non-student francophones was also positively associated with international students' stereotypes about this group, where international students who interacted with non-student francophones more frequently tended to attribute more favourable personality traits to them (e.g., welcoming,

sociable, and considerate). When international students have more opportunities to interact with the local community, they meet, communicate with, and learn about individual people representing this community, thus perceiving them as individuals rather than undifferentiated members of a social group for which they may have developed and maintained broad (and largely negative) stereotypes (Islam & Hewstone, 1993; Pettigrew, 1998). Supporting the idea that increased contact quantity reduces negative stereotyping, for instance, González et al. (2008) showed that Dutch residents who reported greater daily contact with the Muslim community in the Netherlands held fewer negative stereotypes about this community. Considering that international students reported more frequent contact with francophones in off-campus than in on-campus interaction, it is not altogether surprising that they reported significantly more favourable attitudes toward non-student than student francophones. Put simply, contact frequency, along with degree of stereotyping, emerge as key variables which might determine international students' attitudes toward local residents.

Limitations and Future Research

The present study is not without limitations. One set of limitations concerns this study's participants. The present sample of international students included individuals from six different ethnic backgrounds but it was effectively treated as a single homogenous group. Although the sample was generally representative of the multicultural and multilingual student body enrolled in Montréal's English-medium universities, international students from different social, cultural, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds do not constitute a homogeneous entity and demonstrate a wide range of needs and expectations (Grayson, 2007; Fritz et al., 2008; Hanassab, 2006). Therefore, in future research, it would be important to focus on and compare the attitudes of international students from specific language backgrounds to obtain a nuanced picture of their

experiences in the host community. Moreover, to provide a general perspective across individuals belonging to different generations, the present student sample included a broad range of ages (19–43). Considering that younger international students tend to perceive more discrimination (Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007) whereas older students report fewer mental health issues (de Moissac et al., 2020), future studies should control participants' age. Similarly, a further limitation pertains to international students' length of residence in the host community which varied greatly among them. As shown in previous research, the more time newcomers spend in their host community, the more discrimination they perceive (Vang & Chang, 2019); therefore, it would be worthwhile to explore the role of length of residence in international students' intergroup attitudes, perceived threat, and contact.

Because this study only focused on international students attending English-medium universities, future research could also focus on international students in educational institutions with French as the medium of instruction. Provided that students would need to demonstrate a high level of proficiency in French to pursue studies in these institutions, a different set of variables could account for their attitudes toward the host community. Furthermore, the present study was conducted in the multicultural and multilingual city of Montréal, so the findings may not be relevant to less diverse contexts. For example, future work could focus on intergroup relations between international students and their host community in contexts that are less multilingual and multicultural or in settings that are less urban and metropolitan.

In addition, even though international students considered linguistic threat as especially salient among other types of threat, the dimension of language did not emerge as a significant predictor of their attitudes toward local francophones. While this might mean that international students acknowledge, but do not respond negatively to, the prominent role of French in Québec,

it is also possible that the linguistic threat measure may have failed to account for the more sophisticated, nuanced dimension of language. For instance, all of the items contributing to this measure encompassed various provincial legislative decisions and their consequences rather than actions or reactions of individual people. In other words, the present research instrument may have captured international students' views of policymakers, who do not necessarily represent all host community members, rather than international students' opinions of the general francophone community. Therefore, in future work, researchers should employ a more nuanced measure of linguistic threat sensitive to both individual- and societal-level linguistic factors.

Implications

Given various academic and social adaptation challenges faced by international students (Andrade, 2006; Essess et al., 2018; Kukatlapalli et al., 2020; Misra et al., 2003; Tas, 2013; Zhou & Zhang, 2014), particularly those from non-European backgrounds (Senyshyn et al., 2000; Yeh & Inose, 2003), the present findings can inform efforts to ensure retention and integration of international students into their host communities. To elaborate, on campus, institutions of higher education could organize cooperative, voluntary activities involving both international and domestic students to promote deeper-level connections and decrease communication anxiety, which in turn can enhance intergroup attitudes. For instance, universities can organize peer-matching wellness programs for students to pursue stress management or fitness classes acting as each other's accountability partners (Yan, 2020). Similarly, domestic and international students could be engaged in informal cross-cultural activities, such as doing grocery shopping or attending a music event together, as these activities have been shown to result in friendships that transcend students' academic lives (Pritchard & Skinner, 2002). All these initiatives would not

only promote students' healthy habits and enhance their wellbeing but would also afford

opportunities for cultural and linguistic exchange.

Off campus, local organizations and municipal administrations could co-host workshops

with universities to inform local residents about the contributions of international students to the

community and to familiarize international students with the community's cultural and linguistic

history. Similarly, to challenge negative intergroup stereotypes, it might be useful to set up panel

sessions involving international students from diverse backgrounds and locals from different

walks of life. Additionally, it would be helpful to create volunteer opportunities for international

students to meet with non-student locals regularly, for example, as part of community service

projects where international students and non-student locals address community issues through

joint problem-solving and action. For international students, such volunteer activities could help

cultivate their cultural awareness and appreciation of the host community, generate interest in its

language, and foster solidarity with its members, as well as create opportunities for language

practice (Feng et al., 2023; Finn & Green, 2015). For members of the local community, volunteer

activities could help them better understand the lived realities of international students and

increase their willingness to engage in cross-cultural communication. As shown in recent

Québec-based research, cultivating positive intergroup attitudes is instrumental for the

development of a person's sense of belonging, and intergroup solidarity encourages families

from non-francophone backgrounds to pass on the knowledge of French to the next generation

(Kircher, 2022). Therefore, in the long run, any activity that fosters favourable attitudes toward

the francophone community would align with the Québec government's measures aiming to

protect and solidify the status of French, because those who have better attitudes toward French

and French speakers would be more likely to remain in Québec after graduation and to contribute to its economic and social growth.

Conclusion

Conducted in a multiculturally and multilingually diverse Canadian city which attracts international students with similarly diverse backgrounds, this study contributes to ongoing work on intergroup attitudes between international students and their host communities. The study is timely as it was conducted at a critical time when current approaches to international student recruitment and retention are being questioned (Macdonald, 2024), when international students appear to be blamed for Canada's longstanding problems such as the housing crisis and insufficient funding for higher education (Friesen, 2023), and when Canada's previously positive attitudinal stance on immigration is gradually shifting toward negativity and concern (The Environics Institute for Survey Research, 2023). Against this background, the study's findings are largely promising. International students not only showed positive attitudes toward Montréal's francophone community but also demonstrated below-average levels of various types of threat (except for linguistic threat) from this community. International students' attitudes toward non-student francophones were especially favourable, and these attitudes were predicted through the stereotype measure, such that more favourable attitudes were associated with more positive traits ascribed to members of the francophone community. Contrary to expectation, linguistic threat did not emerge as a significant predictor of international students' attitudes. More importantly, the quality of international students' contact with Montréal's francophones was positively associated with students' attitudes and negatively linked with all types of threat perceived from these local residents, suggesting that any future attempt to improve intergroup relations should concentrate on increasing the quality of intergroup contact.

CHAPTER 4

General Discussion and Conclusion

Overview of Studies

The goal of this dissertation was to explore intergroup attitudes, perceived threats, and contact between the culturally and linguistically dominant francophone residents of Montréal and the non-dominant group of L2-speaking international students pursuing studies at English-medium universities. This dissertation's ultimate objective was to inform future work aimed at cultivating mutually beneficial intergroup relations between host communities and international students. Of particular interest was the role of linguistic threat in intergroup attitudes and intergroup contact, given the historical tension between French and English speakers—or the *Two Solitudes*—as the Canadian writer and professor of English, Hugh MacLennan, aptly coined it decades ago in 1945.

Key Findings

Together, the two studies that comprise the present dissertation contribute to our understanding of intergroup relations and contact between international students and host communities at a prominent time and place, where the historical tension between English and French as well as the more recent efforts to safeguard *la francophonie* have resulted in profound consequences for the future of international students in Québec, particularly those attending English-medium universities. The first key finding is that both student and non-student members of the local francophone community demonstrated positive attitudes toward and low levels of perceived threat from international students, except for linguistic threat (Study 1). In turn, international students reciprocated this positivity toward the francophone host community both

on and off campus with largely favourable attitudes and below-average levels of perceived threat, again, except for linguistic threat (Study 2). Although student and non-student francophones were similar in their attitudes toward international students (Study 1), international students reported more favourable attitudes toward non-student francophones (Study 2).

The second key finding is that, compared to other types of threat, the two studies revealed considerable levels of linguistic threat, as perceived by both the host community and international students; however, linguistic threat did not emerge as a significant predictor of intergroup attitudes for either group, likely due to its intricate and complex relationships with other types of perceived threat. While symbolic threat was a common predictor of attitudes toward international students for both student and non-student francophones, student francophones' attitudes were also accounted for by intergroup anxiety (Study 1). Similarly, international students' attitudes toward student francophones were also predicted by intergroup anxiety; however, international students' attitudes toward non-student francophones were informed by the stereotypes they held about this group.

The third key finding is that various predictor variables adapted from the integrated threat theory accounted for more variance in the dominant group's attitudes than in the non-dominant group's attitudes. The fourth key finding is that, unlike non-student francophones, student francophones reported significantly more frequent and more positive contact with international students (Study 1); in contrast, international students noted significantly more frequent contact with non-student than student francophones (Study 2). This implies a potential gap in these groups' perception of the frequency (and potentially also the quality) of their mutual contact. The fifth and last key finding is that contact quality consistently yielded strong associations with intergroup attitudes (positive in directionality) and perceived threat (negative in directionality)

across both studies. Contact quantity, on the other hand, failed to produce any considerable relationships with attitudes in either study. Nonetheless, student francophones' contact quantity was negatively linked with their intergroup anxiety over interactions with international students. For international students, contact quantity was negatively associated with linguistic threat from and intergroup anxiety and stereotypes about non-student francophones only. Taken together, these findings regarding intergroup contact imply that contact quality is a major force in intergroup perceptions and attitudes whereas contact quantity's relationship with these variables is likely tenuous and nuanced.

Overall Implications

Although traditional definitions of international students often focus on their temporary and transitory status and largely overlook their potential transition into permanent residents (e.g., Andrade, 2006; Phakiti et al., 2013), a substantial number of international students opt for permanent residency in their host community upon graduation (Choi et al., 2021). Consequently, embodying globalization and diversity, international students have become the focus of global competition among countries pursuing their academic and socioeconomic contributions. Indeed, international students play a crucial role in the vitality of a host nation as they contribute billions of dollars by creating jobs and paying taxes (El-Assal, 2020; Essess et al., 2018; Hegarty, 2014), enrich local communities with diverse cultures and global perspectives (Anderson, 2015; CBIE, 2015), and address demographic challenges by supporting population growth (McDonald, 2018; Spinks & Koleth, 2010; Statistics Canada, 2020; The World Bank, 2020). Considering Canada's recent decision to decrease the number of new international study permits by 35–50% (depending on the province) during the next two years (Wherry, 2024), shifting the focus from student recruitment to student retention is more essential than ever. Thus, given the potential role

of positive intergroup attitudes and contact in retention, this dissertation's findings offer several

theoretical and societal implications which could inform future efforts by provincial

governments and universities as key stakeholders.

Theoretical Implications

Considering the default positioning of international students in their host communities as

outgroup members and thus the potential threat that they may perceive as "outsiders," the present

research adopted Stephan and Stephan's (2000) integrated threat model inspired by Tajfel's

(1970, 1974) social identity theory. The main premise of the social identity theory is that, even in

the absence of previous negative interactions, the social categorization of individuals as members

of an outgroup is sufficient to trigger bias against them (Tajfel & Turner, 2001). Given the role

of race, ethnicity, culture, religion, and sexual orientation (among many other facets of identity)

in people's social categorization, integrated threat theory suggests that prejudicial attitudes

toward outgroups and their members are predicted by four interconnected yet distinct types of

threat: realistic threat, symbolic threat, intergroup anxiety, and stereotypes.

In this regard, the first theoretical implication of the present dissertation is that the

distinctiveness of these threats is not always warranted. Even though earlier work in North

America suggested a clear distinction, particularly between realistic and symbolic threats (e.g.,

Stephan & Stephan, 2000; Wilson, 2001), there was clear evidence of multicollinearity issues

among all threat variables in Study 1 of this dissertation, which is unsurprising considering

moderate-to-strong intercorrelations reported previously for all four major threat variables (Riek

et al., 2006). Of particular importance, though, was a considerably strong link between realistic

and symbolic threat, which required the exclusion of the former to enable robust statistical

analyses. Indeed, Berrenberg et al. (2007) found strong correlations between the realistic and

symbolic threat measures in their two studies (r = .61 and .73). More recently, Croucher (2013) also reported correlation coefficients as high as .82 between these two threat variables. Accordingly, for future research, it would be useful to conduct preliminary work to further tease apart the constructs of realistic and symbolic threat. Researchers, for instance, could hold focus group interviews with participants to understand what constitutes symbolic or realistic threat for individual people in a given research context.

The second theoretical implication from the present dissertation concerns the predictive power of the integrated threat theory with regard to dominant versus non-dominant group attitudes. In support of previous empirical work (Corenblum & Stephan, 2001; Riek et al., 2006; Stephan et al., 2002), the regression models in the present studies accounted for more variance in the attitudes of the dominant group (i.e., francophones, with 55–71% of shared variance explained) than the non-dominant group (i.e., international students, with 39–40% of shared variance explained). One plausible explanation for this imbalance is that the dominant group might have more to lose than the non-dominant group with respect to various forms of threat, and especially realistic and symbolic threat, so these variables take on particular significance in predicting the dominant group's attitudes. Put differently, as the linguistic and cultural majority, francophones are more likely to feel that international students, as newcomers, may threaten their already established social and cultural values and may exhaust the resources such as employment and housing opportunities that would otherwise be available to them only. Moreover, whereas international students have more experience with intergroup encounters as residents of a multilingual and multicultural city and students in a diverse educational setting, not all francophones interact with international students, which may increase the role of intergroup anxiety in their attitudes toward international students.

Going beyond the dominant versus non-dominant group dichotomy, Study 1 investigated the attitudes of two different groups of francophones (i.e., students and non-students) and demonstrated that different social and professional roles such as being a student versus a working professional can influence which predictors play a role in attitudes. In Study 1, there was in fact a 16% difference between student and non-student francophones in the amount of variance in attitudes explained through various threat variables. In contrast, Study 2 explored international students' attitudes toward these two francophone groups (i.e., students and non-students) and showed that there was little difference (1%) in the amount of variance in attitudes explained through various threat variables. Thus, when the social positioning of a group is constant (dominant vs. non-dominant), additional variables might be required to better account for attitudes of individuals assuming different roles within that social group. For example, in addition to group-level threat variables (e.g., realistic threat, symbolic threat), various inter-individual variables such as those capturing a person's empathy, apathy, openness, agreeableness, and sociopolitical views may be needed to better account for their attitudes (Esses, 2021). Moreover, in line with Tajfel's (1970) social identity theory, which suggests that stronger identification with one's social group results in ingroup favouritism, future work would benefit from exploring the relationship between the ingroup identification of majority group's members and their perceived threat from and attitudes toward various minority groups. In this regard, non-student francophones' stronger identification with their ingroup may lead to more pronounced relationships between perceived threat and attitudes (Corenblum & Stephan, 2001; Riek et al., 2006), whereas the impact of ingroup identification may be reduced for student francophones, for whom at least some aspects of their identity (i.e., being a university student) are shared with international students (Quinton, 2019).

The third theoretical implication pertains to the role of language attitudes in intergroup relations in the form of linguistic threat. Given that a speaker's choice to use one language over another can signal group membership (Dovidio & Gluszek, 2012; Rakić et al., 2011; Tomic, 2013) and can elicit stereotyping and discrimination in various contexts (Hansen et al., 2013, 2018; Hosoda & Stone-Romero, 2010; Lippi-Green, 2012; Munro, 2003), the present dissertation aimed to extend the integrated threat theory by incorporating a linguistic dimension into the model. However, contrary to initial expectations, linguistic threat failed to make any notable contribution to explaining intergroup attitudes in either study, despite eliciting the highest scores among other threat variables and showing strong associations with intergroup attitudes. Considering the central role that language-related issues play in Québec (Busque, 2022; Greenfield, 2023; Lapierre, 2023), this finding is surprising. In Study 1, this outcome was attributed to the complex, and largely symbolic, role that the French language plays in shaping the identity of Québec's francophone majority (Secrétariat du Québec aux relations canadiennes, 2017, p. 14; Warren & Langlois, 2020). In Study 2, this outcome was attributed to conceptual and methodological issues. Conceptually speaking, international students may have acknowledged (and potentially accepted) the value of French to Québec's francophone majority. Methodologically speaking, the present measure of linguistic threat may have been overly focused on provincial legislative decisions and may not have captured language-related actions or reactions of individual people. Therefore, in research contexts such as Québec, where language is deeply rooted in social identity, more nuanced measures of linguistic threat may be needed. This is a promising area of future interdisciplinary research between applied linguistics and social psychology.

The final theoretical implication concerns the critical role of contact quality in shaping intergroup attitudes and perceived threats. Contact quality consistently showed significant associations with both perceived threat and intergroup attitudes for both the francophone host community (Study 1) and L2-speaking international students (Study 2), with moderate to strong effect sizes (Plonsky & Oswald, 2014). This dissertation also extends prior work on intergroup contact and prejudice (Allport, 1954; Berrenberg et al., 2007; Binder et al., 2009; Mak et al., 2014; Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Stephan et al., 2000b; Tawagi & Mak, 2015) by establishing consistent negative associations between contact quality and perceived linguistic threat. To elaborate, when intergroup contact was perceived to be high in quality, members of the francophone host community were less likely to consider L2-speaking international students a threat to the survival of French in Québec, whereas international students were more likely to acknowledge the importance of French to Québec's francophone majority. And because contact quantity revealed largely inconsistent or weak links with attitudes and perceived threats across the two studies, a possible implication for future work is that contact quality is a major force in intergroup perceptions and attitudes. In contrast, contact quantity's relationship with these variables is likely tenuous and nuanced, so in order to unravel potential benefits of contact quantity for intergroup attitudes, future work might require a more controlled approach in research design.

Societal Implications

With its focus on the increasingly popular issue of intergroup relations between international students and host community members, the present dissertation provides several timely findings that carry societal implications for stakeholders within and beyond academia. First, both studies in this dissertation demonstrated above-average positive intergroup attitudes

and an overall low perceived threat by both francophone host community members and international students, which reflects a promising foundation for social harmony and cohesion between the two groups. If the present studies had been conducted in any other province, this finding could be attributed to Canada's long-established policy of multiculturalism which does not prioritize any language or culture over others and values ethnolinguistic diversity (Jedwab, 2020). However, even though Montréal is a multicultural and multilingual city and home to individuals from over 100 different ethnic and cultural origins (Statistics Canada, 2021), the province of Québec officially supports the policy of interculturalism, as defined in the 1990 Policy Statement on Integration and Adaptation, in order to safeguard and promote *la francophonie* within and beyond Québec (Safdar et al., 2023). As such, Québec's interculturalism prioritizes the French language and culture over others while encouraging cultural pluralism and diversity (Taylor & Bouchard, 2008). French occupies the highest rank in the sociolinguistic and cultural hierarchy in Québec's interpretation of interculturalism, which might jeopardize intergroup relations and social harmony between majority and minority groups (Safdar et al., 2023). However, mutually positive intergroup attitudes that emerged from this dissertation suggest otherwise, at least with respect to the specific groups of Québec's francophones and international students tested here. This is a positive finding, inasmuch as it implies that Québec's interculturalism *can* promote intercultural dialogue to challenge stereotypes and to underscore shared group values for smoother integration of newcomers into the francophone society (Brosseau & Dewing, 2018; Taylor & Bouchard, 2008).

As much as the findings from this dissertation paint a relatively positive picture of intergroup relations between host community members and international students, especially in comparison to research in other contexts (Hanassab, 2006; Pham & Tran, 2015; Webb, 2013;

Williams & Johnson, 2011), favourable intergroup attitudes and low levels of perceived threat should not be taken for granted. On the federal level, the Canadian government recently announced a two-year cap on the number of study permits issued to international students (Scherer & Lone, 2024), with international students blamed for some of Canada's longstanding structural problems such as the housing crisis and insufficient funding for higher education (Friesen, 2023). Moreover, despite welcoming record numbers of newcomers in recent years (Statistics Canada, 2023) and owing a large proportion of its population growth to immigration, Canada is gradually shifting its previously positive stance on immigration toward negativity and concern (The Environics Institute for Survey Research, 2023). And due to their minority status within the larger anglophone context of North America, francophones are susceptible to feeling cultural and linguistic insecurity (Bouchard, 2011), which can turn into heightened levels of threat from and unfavourable attitudes toward social outgroups. One telling manifestation of this reality is the recently proposed tuition hike for out-of-province and international students attending Québec's English-medium universities, essentially with the goal of reducing the number of English speakers in the province. The provincial government, without much consultation with critical stakeholders (Berrada, 2024), proposed an increase in tuition for out-of-province (i.e., mostly anglophone) and international students from non-francophone countries to discourage these students from pursuing their studies in Québec's English-medium institutions; and 80% of the students who do choose to pursue their education in English in Québec are now required to graduate with a minimum of intermediate level of French (Buongiorno, 2023; Greenfield, 2023; Lapierre, 2023; The Consortium of English-language CEGEPs, Colleges and Universities of Quebec, 2023). While the protection of the French-language landscape of the province is cited as a justification for this large-scale change, it is

important to note potential repercussions this might have on international students as individuals and on intergroup relations. The kind of ideological climate that permeates Canada both on the federal and provincial level could augment perceived threats (Esses, 2021), which in turn may generate negativity between the host community and international students. Similarly, differential treatment of international students from francophone and non-francophone countries may result in further segregation within society, whereby international students could become the "third solitude." This kind of segregation can further amplify perceived symbolic threat from international students (Esses, 2021), which emerged here as a significant predictor for francophones' attitudes toward international students. Therefore, the onus is on the media and the federal and provincial policymakers to portray international students in a positive light and to stop scapegoating them for the country's longstanding systemic, structural problems.

Another societal implication concerns future intervention efforts to improve intergroup relations between host community members and international students. Study 1 showed that the attitudes of francophone host community members toward international students were best predicted by perceived symbolic threat. However, for student francophones in particular, intergroup anxiety also played a significant role in their attitudes toward international students. In Study 2, international students' attitudes toward student francophones were predicted by intergroup anxiety; however, their attitudes toward non-student francophones were predicted only by stereotypes about the francophone majority. These findings imply that, for members of majority groups, distinct social/professional roles (e.g., being a student vs. a working professional) may influence which types of threat better predict their attitudes toward outgroup members. Furthermore, for members of minority groups, their attitudes and perceived threats

might depend on the distinct social/professional roles of the majority group members that they come in contact with.

The results of this dissertation broadly suggest a nuanced approach for future interventions focusing on intergroup contact between English-speaking international students and members of Québec's francophone majority. To elaborate, while it might initially suffice to address only symbolic threat through interventions targeting non-student francophones, a more comprehensive approach that also addresses intergroup anxiety would be necessary to consider the specific challenges of student francophones. To this end, educational institutions could benefit from holding mindfulness workshops to help various student groups (as well as members of the local community) raise awareness of and be more receptive to cultural and linguistic issues in intergroup contact (Stephan et al., 1999b). On a more practical level, regular long-term training sessions based on anxiety/uncertainty management theory, such as the one proposed by Gudykunst (1998), may facilitate the intercultural adjustment of various student groups not only by them with the necessary tools to navigate intercultural and interlingual contact but also by increasing the frequency of this contact. Such efforts involving both host community members and newcomers are in line with a bidimensional view of acculturation which requires an active participation of both parties (Berry et al., 1987). Higher education institutions could also benefit from short-term, tried-and-tested intervention methods such as Excellence in Experiential Learning and Leadership, as outlined in Smith and Khawaja (2011), which appear to reduce intergroup avoidance and enhance intergroup communication skills. Such interventions would not only contribute to positive intergroup relationships but also encourage international students to adopt an integrationist strategy for a smoother acculturation process into their host community (Berry, 1997, 2005, 2006), which ultimately leads to greater life satisfaction and better mental

health for students (Berry & Hou, 2017). Regardless of the method of intervention, there is definitely merit in involving all pertinent stakeholders such as educational institutions, municipalities, and community organizations, in addition to international students and members of the local host community, to create a warm and welcoming environment for all newcomers (Guo & Guo, 2016).

Finally, from the perspective of the psychology of language learning, improved intergroup relations may in turn create a more harmonious sociopolitical context that encourages international students, particularly those attending Montréal's English-medium universities, to learn French and further develop interest in the francophone culture. Indeed, people's motivation for and investment in language learning is shaped through contextual variables (Norton, 2000; Norton & Toohey, 2011; Thompson, 2022). Whereas a contentious sociolinguistic climate can discourage people from learning and using languages, positive intergroup attitudes can increase speakers' desire for language learning and use (Thompson, 2021). Fostering community cohesion though intergroup contact is therefore fully compatible with Québec's emphasis on newcomers' appreciating and embracing the French language and culture.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Despite offering a comprehensive perspective on intergroup relations and contact between francophone host community members and L2-speaking international students attending Montréal's English-medium universities, the present dissertation has several limitations. The first limitation concerns the sociolinguistically diverse research context of Montréal, Québec, which makes it difficult to generalize the findings to less diverse or less metropolitan areas in Canada, where international students have been shown to experience various challenges adjusting to the host community and establishing a sense of belonging (Chira, 2017). Therefore,

future research could investigate intergroup attitudes, perceived threat, and contact in these other contexts. Second, both studies focused only on Montréal's francophone majority. Considering differences in the sociolinguistic and ethnic diversity across the province, including Montréal (Statistics Canada, 2021), future research could investigate intergroup relations between international students and francophones in other areas of Québec or between international students and anglophones or allophones in Montréal, to obtain a more comprehensive view of intergroup relations. A further concern regarding participants pertains to the sample size in both studies. While the small sample size reflects the fact that data collection took place during the pandemic, future studies should nevertheless aim to recruit more participants when possible. On a slightly tangential yet important note, it is also noteworthy that, as an outgroup member, the researcher found it particularly challenging to recruit francophone participants, especially non-student francophones, despite having resided in Montréal for two years prior to data collection. Thus, the link between a researcher's own social positionality, participant recruitment, and data interpretation in specific sociolinguistic contexts can be a promising avenue for future research.

The third major limitation pertains to the operationalization of attitudes. Because intergroup threat theory is a model focusing on attitudes that are explicitly voiced or responded to by participants (Aberson & Gaffney, 2008), both studies in this dissertation explored the link between explicit attitudes and perceived intergroup threat and contact. However, there is evidence that implicit attitudes—or attitudes that are internalized by individuals but that are not easily accessible to awareness or introspection—may yield a more realistic picture of intergroup relations and behaviours (Greenwald et al., 2009). Therefore, in future work, it would be worthwhile to explore perceived threat and contact in conjunction with implicit attitudes, using such instruments as implicit association tests, particularly because people's explicit and implicit

attitudes usually do not align (e.g., Mauchand & Pell, 2022; Pantos & Perkins, 2012). This future work is promising as it can discover a stronger link between implicit attitudes and linguistic threat, which failed to significantly predict explicit attitudes here. Another potential limitation concerns the operationalization of realistic and symbolic dimensions which were comprised of only negatively-keyed items in line with previous work. Although this was intended to maintain the integrity (and reliability) of these extensively researched constructs, one could argue that these items could have negatively influenced participants' attitudes toward outgroup members. However, positive intergroup attitudes emerging from both studies likely discount this speculation. Yet, researchers are encouraged to diminish this possibility by utilizing both positively- and negatively-keyed statements.

Since participants' individual interpretation of immigration and immigrants impacts their overall attitudes toward representatives of immigrant, settler, refugee, or newcomer groups (Blinder, 2015), the fourth limitation is that it is unclear who exactly participants in both studies imagined as members of the target group, for instance, in terms of its ethnic, racial, or religious composition, as they responded to the survey despite having been provided with contextualizing statements to inform their responses. This limitation particularly affects Study 1, considering the heterogeneity of international students (Grayson, 2007) and prior evidence that students from different ethnic, racial, and linguistic backgrounds experience different levels of discrimination (Jean-Francois, 2019; Lee & Rice, 2007; McDonough et al., 2022; Senyshyn et al., 2000; Yeh & Inose, 2003). Similarly, in Study 2, it is impossible to guess the precise ethnic, cultural, or religious makeup of francophones (e.g., Québec-born, first- or second-generation immigrant) that international students had in mind as they completed the survey.

Furthermore, although Stephan and Stephan (2000) have argued for the existence of a causal link between threat to attitudes, most research on prejudice and threat is correlational (Rios et al., 2018), with a handful of longitudinal or interventionist exceptions (e.g., Makashvili et al., 2018), and the present dissertation is no exception. Thus, future research where certain types of perceived threat are manipulated before and after participants respond to attitudinal questionnaire items is warranted. In this regard, manipulations of realistic threat can induce feelings of danger or competition, whereas manipulations of symbolic threat can generate perceptions of a clash between different values or beliefs systems (Rios et al., 2018). To give a concrete example, a news article which induces feelings of competition by blaming international students for the housing crisis could be employed as a manipulation to investigate the impact of realistic threats on attitudes, relative to participants' pre-manipulation attitudinal baseline. Finally, as the current findings are informed by quantitative analyses only, future qualitative work could also provide an in-depth, complementary view of intergroup attitudes and contact between international students and the host community, for instance, through focus group interviews with students from different sociocultural and linguistic backgrounds, considering the heterogeneity of the student experience.

Conclusion

Acknowledging the reciprocal nature of social interaction at the individual and group level and the shared responsibility between newcomers and host communities for social cohesion and harmony, the overarching goal of this dissertation was to explore intergroup attitudes, perceived threat, and contact patterns from the perspective of both the host community and international students in Montréal. Encouragingly, findings from both studies suggest positive intergroup attitudes, low perceived threat (except for linguistic threat), and promising contact

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quantity and quality. Despite the prominent role of language in Québec's social and political discourse, linguistic threat did not emerge as a significant predictor of attitudes toward either group despite above-average levels of reported linguistic threat and its strong associations with attitudes, which is likely a consequence of the intricate relationship between the communicative and symbolic conceptions of language in Québec. Lastly, findings also demonstrated that the sources of potentially negative attitudes toward outgroup members as well as the predictive power of the integrated threat theory vary according to different social/professional roles occupied by ingroup members within their community (e.g., being primarily a student vs. a working professional). This dissertation's findings offer several practical implications for improving intergroup relations and promoting intergroup cohesion and harmony.

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Appendix A

Context statement targeting international students in English-medium universities

As you respond to the items below, please think about international students enrolled in English-medium universities in Montréal with little or no French background and who generally use English in their day-to-day activities on and off campus.

Note: In the measures that follow, the pronouns 'they' and 'them' are used to refer to international students attending English-medium universities in Study 1 and local francophones in Study 2 to avoid repetition and to achieve parallelism across the two studies as much as possible. A context statement such as the one above was provided to participants in both studies before each measure to suggest what pronouns 'they' and 'them' refer to in each case.

Measurements for variables

Attitudes (the same for both groups of participants) (Outcome Variable)

Using the scales below, please indicate to what degree the following words describe your attitudes toward them:

0 = Not at all, 100 = Very much

1. hostility   **7.** admiration

2. disdain   **8.** approval

3. disliking   **9.** acceptance

4. hatred   **10.** sympathy

5. superiority   **11.** affection

6. rejection   **12.** warmth

Realistic Threat (Predictor Variable 1)

Student local francophones   **Non-student local francophones**

1. They take jobs away from local francophone students in Montréal (e.g., part-time employment as a barista off campus, teaching/research assistantships on campus).

2. They take valuable educational resources away from local francophone students in Montréal (e.g., financial aid, university housing, scholarships).

3. They decrease the quality of education in colleges and universities in Montréal.

4. The government and universities in Montréal are paying too much to finance the education of these students.

5. They bring new diseases to Montréal that would not otherwise be here.

6. They bring crime to Montréal.

7. Being paired with an international student for a group project in class can cause me to receive a lower grade than I otherwise would get when paired with a local classmate.

1. They take jobs away from local francophone residents in Montréal (e.g., part-time employment as a shopping assistant, courier, food delivery person).

2. They take valuable social resources away from local francophone residents in Montréal (e.g., burdening the healthcare system, crowding public spaces, increasing rental prices, etc.).

3. They decrease the overall quality of life in Montréal.

4. The government and universities in Montréal are paying too much to finance the education of these students.

5. They bring new diseases to Montréal that would not otherwise be here.

6. They bring crime to Montréal.

7. As opposed to collaborating with a fellow francophone individual, working with an international student can jeopardize my performance at work.

Symbolic Threat (Predictor Variable 2)

Student local francophones   **Non-student local francophones**

1. They impact the academic and social life of colleges and universities in Montréal negatively.

2. Montréal is losing its Québécois character because of the increasing number of these students.

3. They **do not** respect Québécois values and ways of living during their time at school.

4. Their values and beliefs regarding moral and religious issues which **are not** compatible with those of local francophones in Montréal.

5. Their academic culture **is not** compatible with that of local francophone students.

6. The way they socialize/interact in the community is in direct contrast to local norms.

7. When they hold strong religious beliefs and openly practice them, it may jeopardize the value of secularism in Québec.

Linguistic Threat (Predictor Variable 3)

Student local francophones   **Non-student local francophones**

1. They must respect and accept Quebec governments' policy of French-only use in the public domain.

2. They don't threaten the status of French in Québec because French is already well established. (reverse-scored)

3. They may jeopardize the status of French if they use English to communicate in their daily interactions in Montréal.

4. It is not necessary for them to learn any French prior to coming to Montréal. (reverse-scored)

5. When communicating with them **on campus**, I would prefer to respond in French first regardless of the language they choose to initiate the conversation.

6. When communicating with them **off campus**, I would prefer to respond in French first regardless of the language they choose to initiate the conversation.

7. I don't mind if they expect everyone to understand and speak English in Montréal. (reverse-scored)

1. They must respect and accept Quebec governments' policy of French-only use in the public domain.

2. They don't threaten the status of French in Québec because French is already well established. (reverse-scored)

3. They may jeopardize the status of French if they use English to communicate in their daily interactions in Montréal.

4. It is not necessary for them to learn any French prior to coming to Montréal. (reverse-scored)

5. When communicating with them **at work**, I would prefer to respond in French first regardless of the language they choose to initiate the conversation.

6. When communicating with them **outside the work context**, I would prefer to respond in French first regardless of the language they choose to initiate the conversation.

7. I don't mind if they expect everyone to understand and speak English in Montréal. (reverse-scored)

8. I feel tolerant towards them when they have poor skills speaking French. (reverse-scored)

8. I feel tolerant towards them when they have poor skills speaking French. (reverse-scored)

Intergroup Anxiety (Student & Non-Student local francophones) (Predictor Variable 4)

How would you feel when interacting with them? *0 = Not at all, 100 = Very much*

1. Apprehensive

2. uncertain

3. worried

4. threatened

5. awkward

6. anxious

7. friendly

8. comfortable

9. trusting

10. confident

11. safe

12. at ease

Stereotypes (Student & Non-Student local francophones) (Predictor Variable 5)

a) Please indicate the percentage of members of this group who possess each trait below.

b) Please rate the favourableness of each trait on the scale below (-5 = very unfavourable, +5 = very favourable)

1. calm

2. clean

3. sociable

4. reliable

5. considerate

6. hardworking

7. close-minded

8. boastful

9. lazy

10. loud

11. passive

12. opportunist

Student local francophones

1. Working in a study group

2. Sharing class notes

Non-student local francophones

1. At work

2. In my neighbourhood

3. During free time outside class (at coffee shops, restaurants, bars, etc.)

3. Off-work in the social domain (at coffee shops, restaurants, bars, etc.)

4. Doing group assignments

4. When using public transportation

Quality of Contact (Student & Non-Student local francophones)

How would you describe your interaction with them? (Scale *0-100*)

1. Unequal – Equal

4. Unpleasant – Pleasant

2. Involuntary – Voluntary

5. Competitive – Cooperative

3. Superficial – Intimate

6. Negative – Positive

Open-Ended Questions

1. Have you ever had a **positive** experience with a local francophone student (e.g., classmates, residence assistants) or a non-student (e.g., salesperson, bus driver) before? If yes, please briefly share it below.

2. Have you ever had a **negative** experience with a local francophone student (e.g., classmates, residence assistants) or a non-student (e.g., salesperson, bus driver) before? If yes, please briefly share it below.

3. If you communicate with local francophones, would you evaluate your interaction overall as pleasant or successful? Why or why not?

4. In your opinion, how can interaction (i.e., contact) between international students and local francophones be improved?

Appendix B

Participant Background Questionnaire (Students)

1. Birthplace (City, Province/ State): _____

2. Age: _____ (years)

3. What is your gender? _____

4. What is (are) your first language(s) from birth?_____

5. What do you consider to be your second language(s) (any level) _____

6. Which group(s) do you consider yourself a member of?

- Arab
- Black
- Chinese
- Filipino
- Indigenous peoples
- Japanese
- Korean
- Latin American
- South Asian (e.g., East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan)
- Southeast Asian (e.g., Vietnamese, Cambodian, Bangladesh, Laotian, Thai)
- West Asian (e.g., Iranian, Afghan)
- White
- Other _____

7. How long have you been living in Montréal? _____(years)_____(months)

8. What degree are you currently pursuing? Please also write your program of study in the corresponding box (e.g., Medicine, Engineering, Tourism, Business Administration):

_____

9. What year are you in your current program? _____

10a. Are you currently employed? __Yes/No__

10b. If yes, is it on campus or off campus? _____

11. Which of the following do you identify yourself with? Please specify if "other."

a. anglophone   b. francophone   c. other: _____

12. Using the slider scales below, please rate your ability to speak, listen, read, and write in English:

    Speaking

        0   100

        Not proficient at   Very proficient

        all

    Listening

        0   100

        Not proficient at   Very proficient

        all

    Reading

        0   100

        Not proficient at   Very proficient

        all

Writing

0	100
Not proficient at all	Very proficient

13. Using the slider scales below, please rate your ability to speak, listen, read, and write in French:

Speaking

0	100
Not proficient at all	Very proficient

Listening

0	100
Not proficient at all	Very proficient

Reading

0	100
Not proficient at all	Very proficient

Writing

0	100
Not proficient at all	Very proficient

14. Overall, approximately what percent of the time do you speak the following languages in your daily life?

English

0%	100%

French

0%	100%

Other _____

      0%   100%

15. How much are you familiar with English spoken by non-native speakers?

     0   100
     Not at all   Very much

16. How much are you familiar with French spoken by non-native speakers?

     0   100
     Not at all   Very much

17. Is there anything you would like to tell the researcher about the survey or the study overall?

_____

Participant Background Questionnaire (Non-Students)

1. Birthplace (City, Province/ State): _____

2. Age: _____ (years)

3. What is your gender? _____

4. What is (are) your first language(s) from birth?_____

5. What do you consider to be your second language(s) (any level) _____

6. Which group(s) do you consider yourself a member of?

- Arab
- Black
- Chinese
- Filipino
- Indigenous peoples
- Japanese
- Korean
- Latin American
- South Asian (e.g., East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan)
- Southeast Asian (e.g., Vietnamese, Cambodian, Bangladesh, Laotian, Thai)
- West Asian (e.g., Iranian, Afghan)
- White
- Other _____

7. How long have you been living in Montréal? _____(years)_____(months)

8. What is the last degree you have earned? Please also write your program of study in the

corresponding box (e.g., Medicine, Engineering, Tourism, Business Administration):

9. What is your profession? _____

10. Are you currently employed? __Yes/No__

11. Which of the following do you identify yourself with? Please specify if "other."

a. anglophone   b. francophone   c. other: _____

12. Using the slider scales below, please rate your ability to speak, listen, read, and write in

English:

Speaking

0	100
Not proficient at all	Very proficient

Listening

0	100
Not proficient at all	Very proficient

Reading

0	100
Not proficient at all	Very proficient

Writing

0	100
Not proficient at all	Very proficient

13. Using the slider scales below, please rate your ability to speak, listen, read, and write in French:

Speaking

0	100
Not proficient at all	Very proficient

Listening

0	100
Not proficient at all	Very proficient

Reading

0	100
Not proficient at all	Very proficient

Writing

0	100
Not proficient at all	Very proficient

14. Overall, approximately what percent of the time do you speak the following languages in your daily life?

English

0%	100%

French

0%	100%

Other _____

0%	100%

15. How much are you familiar with English spoken by non-native speakers?

0   100
Not at all   Very much

16. How much are you familiar with French spoken by non-native speakers?

0   100
Not at all   Very much

16. Is there anything you would like to tell the researcher about the survey or the study overall?

_____

Appendix C

Context statement targeting local francophone students

As you respond to the items below, please think about local francophone students you may encounter on campus (e.g., classmates, residence assistants) with little or some English background and who mostly use French in their day-to-day activities on and off campus.

Context statement targeting local francophone professionals (i.e., non-students)

As you respond to the items below, please think about local francophone professionals you may encounter off campus (e.g., salesperson, bus driver, hairdresser, police officer) in Montréal with little or some English background and who mostly use French in their day-to-day activities.

Note: In the measures that follow, the pronouns 'they' and 'them' is used to refer to L2-English speaking international students in Study 1 and local francophones in Study 2 to avoid repetition and to achieve parallelism across the two studies as much as possible. Context statements such as the ones above will be provided to participants in both studies before each measure to suggest what pronouns 'they' and 'them' refer to in each case.

Measurements for variables

Attitudes (the same for both groups of participants) (Outcome Variable)

Using the scales below, please indicate to what degree the following words describe your attitudes toward them:

0 = Not at all, 100 = Very much

1. hostility	**7.** admiration
2. disdain	**8.** approval
3. dislike	**9.** acceptance
4. hatred	**10.** sympathy

5. superiority	**11.** affection
6. rejection	**12.** warmth

Realistic Threat (Predictor Variable 1)

Student local francophones	**Non-student local francophones**
1. They take jobs away from international students in Montréal (e.g., part-time employment as a barista off campus, teaching/research assistantships on campus).	**1.** They take jobs away from international students in Montréal (e.g., part-time employment as a shopping assistant, courier, food delivery person).
2. They take valuable educational resources away from international students in Montréal (e.g., financial aid, university housing, scholarships).	**2.** They take valuable resources away from international students when, for instance, they do not rent apartments to international students.
3. Thanks to their already established social and professional networks and French skills, they will make it very difficult for international students to find a decent job upon graduation.	**3.** Thanks to their already established social and professional networks and French skills, they will make it very difficult for international students to find a decent job upon graduation.
4. They decrease the quality of international students' overall study abroad experience by being unwelcoming on campus.	**4.** They decrease the quality of international students' overall study abroad experience by being unwelcoming off campus.
5. They make international students feel unsafe on campus.	**5.** They make international students feel unsafe off campus.

6. Being paired with a local francophone student for a group project in class can cause me to receive a lower grade than I otherwise would get when paired with another international student or someone from my country of origin.

6. As opposed to collaborating with another international student or someone from my country of origin, working with a local francophone can jeopardize my performance at work.

Symbolic Threat (Predictor Variable 2)

Student local francophones

1. They impact international students' academic and social life in Montréal negatively.

2. Due to the strong Québécois character they assume, international students' own social and cultural identity may be lost.

3. They do not respect international students' social and cultural norms, values, and ways of being.

4. Their beliefs regarding moral and religious issues **are not** compatible with those of most international students.

5. Their academic culture **is not** compatible with that of most international students.

Non-student local francophones

1. They impact international students' academic and social life in Montréal negatively.

2. Due to the strong Québécois character they assume, international students' own social and cultural identity may be lost.

3. They do not respect international students' social and cultural norms, values, and ways of being.

4. Their beliefs regarding moral and religious issues **are not** compatible with those of most international students.

5. Their academic culture **is not** compatible with that of most international students.

6. The way they socialize/interact in the community is in direct contrast to international students' norms.

7. Their strong emphasis on the value of secularism in Québec threatens some international students' religious beliefs, particularly those who openly practice them (e.g., wearing religious symbols).

6. The way they socialize/interact in the community is in direct contrast to international students' norms.

7. Their strong emphasis on the value of secularism in Québec threatens some international students' religious beliefs, particularly those who openly practice them (e.g., wearing religious symbols).

Language Attitudes (Predictor Variable 3)

Student local francophones

1. French is the official language in Québec so I should speak only French when interacting with locals in the public domain. (reverse-scored)

2. They must understand that English is the lingua franca (i.e., common language across the globe) and be more flexible about French.

3. They spoil international students' study abroad experiences by insisting on speaking French as opposed to other languages during daily interactions in Montréal.

Non-student local francophones

1. French is the official language in Québec so I should speak only French when interacting with locals in the public domain. (reverse-scored)

2. They must understand that English is the lingua franca (i.e., common language across the globe) and be more flexible about French.

3. They spoil international students' study abroad experiences by insisting on speaking French as opposed to other languages during daily interactions in Montréal.

4. Regardless of the country of origin, I must learn basic French prior to coming to Montréal. (reverse-scored)

5. They must accept that, when necessary, international students should be offered services in a language other than French (i.e., English or another language if possible) regardless of the length of their stay in Montréal.

6. I don't mind if they expect all signs and announcements to be only in French in the public domain in Montréal. (reverse-scored)

7. Their insistence on using French only is understandable because they generally have poor English skills. (reverse-scored)

Intergroup Anxiety (Student & Non-Student local francophones) (Predictor Variable 4)

How would you feel when interacting with them? *0 = Not at all, 100 = Very much*

1. Apprehensive

2. uncertain

3. worried

4. threatened

5. awkward

6. anxious

7. friendly

8. comfortable

9. trusting

10. confident

11. safe

12. at ease

Stereotypes (Student & Non-Student local francophones) (Predictor Variable 5)

a) Please indicate the percentage of members of this group who possess each trait below.

b) Please rate the favourableness of each trait on the scale below (-5 = very unfavourable, +5 = very favourable)

1. close-minded	**7.** welcoming
2. arrogant	**8.** clean
3. superficial	**9.** sociable
4. ignorant	**10**. cultured
5. disinterested	**11.** reliable
6. aggressive	**12.** considerate

Quantity of Contact

How often do you interact with them in the following contexts: *0 = Never, 100 = Always*

Student local francophones	**Non-student local francophones**
1. Working in a study group	**1.** At work
2. Sharing class notes	**2.** In my neighbourhood
3. During free time outside class (at coffee shops, restaurants, bars, etc.)	**3.** Off-work in the social domain (at coffee shops, restaurants, bars, etc.)
4. Doing group assignments	**4.** When using public transportation

Quality of Contact (Student & Non-Student local francophones)

How would you describe your interaction with them? (Scale *0-100*)

1. Unequal – Equal	**4.** Unpleasant – Pleasant
2. Involuntary – Voluntary	**5.** Competitive – Cooperative

3. Superficial – Intimate   **6.** Negative – Positive

Open-Ended Questions

1. Have you ever had a positive experience with an international student before? If yes, please briefly share it below.

2. Have you ever had a negative experience with an international student before? If yes, please briefly share it below.

3. If you communicate with international students, would you evaluate your interaction overall as pleasant or successful? Why or why not?

4. In your opinion, how can interaction (i.e., contact) between international students and local francophones be improved?

Appendix D

Participant Background Questionnaire

1. Birthplace (City, Province/ State): _____

2. Age: _____ (years)

3. What is your gender? _____

4. What is (are) your first language(s) from birth?_____

5. What do you consider to be your second language(s) (any level): _____

6. Which group(s) do you consider yourself a member of?

- Arab

- Black

- Chinese

- Filipino

- Indigenous peoples

- Japanese

- Korean

- Latin American

- South Asian (e.g., East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan)

- Southeast Asian (e.g., Vietnamese, Cambodian, Bangladesh, Laotian, Thai)

- White

- Other _____

7. How long have you been living in Montréal? _____(years)_____(months)

8. What degree are you currently pursuing? Please also write your program of study in the corresponding box (e.g., Medicine, Engineering, Tourism, Business Administration):

_____

9. What year are you in your current program? _____

10a. Are you currently employed? __Yes/No__

10b. If yes, is it on campus or off campus? _____

11. Using the slider scales below, please rate your ability to speak, listen, read, and write in English.

Speaking

0   100
Not proficient at all   Very proficient

Listening

0   100
Not proficient at all   Very proficient

Reading

0   100
Not proficient at all   Very proficient

Writing

0   100
Not proficient at all   Very proficient

12. Using the slider scales below, please rate your ability to speak, listen, read, and write in French:

Speaking

0   100
Not proficient at all   Very proficient

Listening

0   100
Not proficient at all   Very proficient

Reading

0   100
Not proficient at all   Very proficient

Writing

0   100
Not proficient at all   Very proficient

13. Overall, approximately what percent of the time do you speak the following languages in your daily life?

English

0%   100%

French

0%   100%

Other _____

0%   100%

14. Approximately what percent of the time do you speak English at each location?

On campus

0%   100%

Off campus

0%   100%

15. Approximately what percent of the time do you speak French at each location?

On campus

0%   100%

Off campus

0%   100%

16. Is there anything you would like to tell the researcher about the survey or the study overall?

_____