

Abstract

The use of a second language (L2) elicits a variety of emotions that change dynamically and affect the language user's L2 communication. Specifically, anxiety appears to be a strong predictor for an individual's communication proficiency and their willingness to communicate (WTC). The current study is a two-part study that looked at English-French bilinguals in Ottawa, Canada and tested the relationship between French contact and the aforementioned variables. The results of the first study generated a better understanding of how anxiety can be used to predict their WTC. The second study will determine how emotions, with a focus on anxiety, fluctuate when an individual uses an L2. Specifically, our goal is to examine whether frequent and pleasant contact with French speakers will increase Anglophone students' perceived French proficiency, their identification with the Francophone group, and decrease their anxiety in using French. Furthermore, there are pedagogical implications on how anxiety affects L2 learning and the strategies that can be implemented to alleviate negative emotions during L2 use.

Introduction

Idiodynamic Method:

- Emotions related to L2 use are dynamic, fluctuating and overlapping over the course of a speech task (MacIntyre & Legatto, 2011)
- Method involves watching back presentations and rating moment-by-moment emotions.

Anxiety:

- Reported as one of the strongest emotions that occur during L2 speech tasks.
- Affects L2 use negatively, but the effect depends on the anxiety levels of the individual. A high anxiety individual will have more impaired L2 use than a low anxiety individual (Gregersen, MacIntyre, & Meza, 2014.)

Hypotheses:

Study 1

1. More frequent and higher quality contact with French speakers is expected to be associated with lower L2 use anxiety and perceptions of higher L2 proficiency.
2. Anxiety and perceived L2 proficiency are predictors of how willing the participants will be to communicate in their L2 (WTC).

Study 2

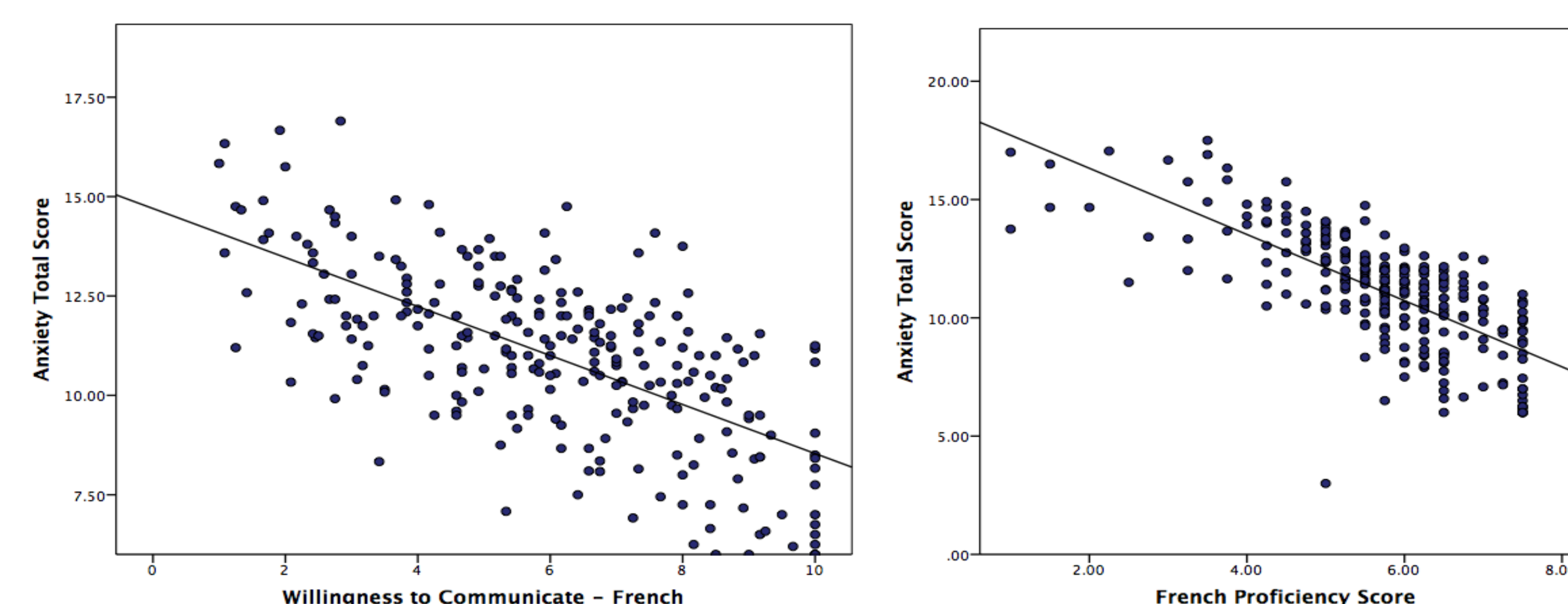
1. Priming participants for the the Canadian condition will facilitate L2 use and reduce anxiety due to feelings of connectedness with their Canadian identity (bilingual).
2. Priming participants for the Ethnic condition will impede L2 use and increase anxiety due highlighting differences between their ethnic background and their Canadian identity.

Study 1 – Method & Results

Method

- The first study was an online study (n=271)
- Questionnaires assessed several variables, including:
 - Language use
 - Language anxiety
 - Willingness to communicate
 - Situated ethnic identity
 - Perceived L2 proficiency

Results



Study 1 – Discussion

The hypotheses were supported, indicating that perceived L2 proficiency and anxiety appear to be strong predictors of willingness to communicate.

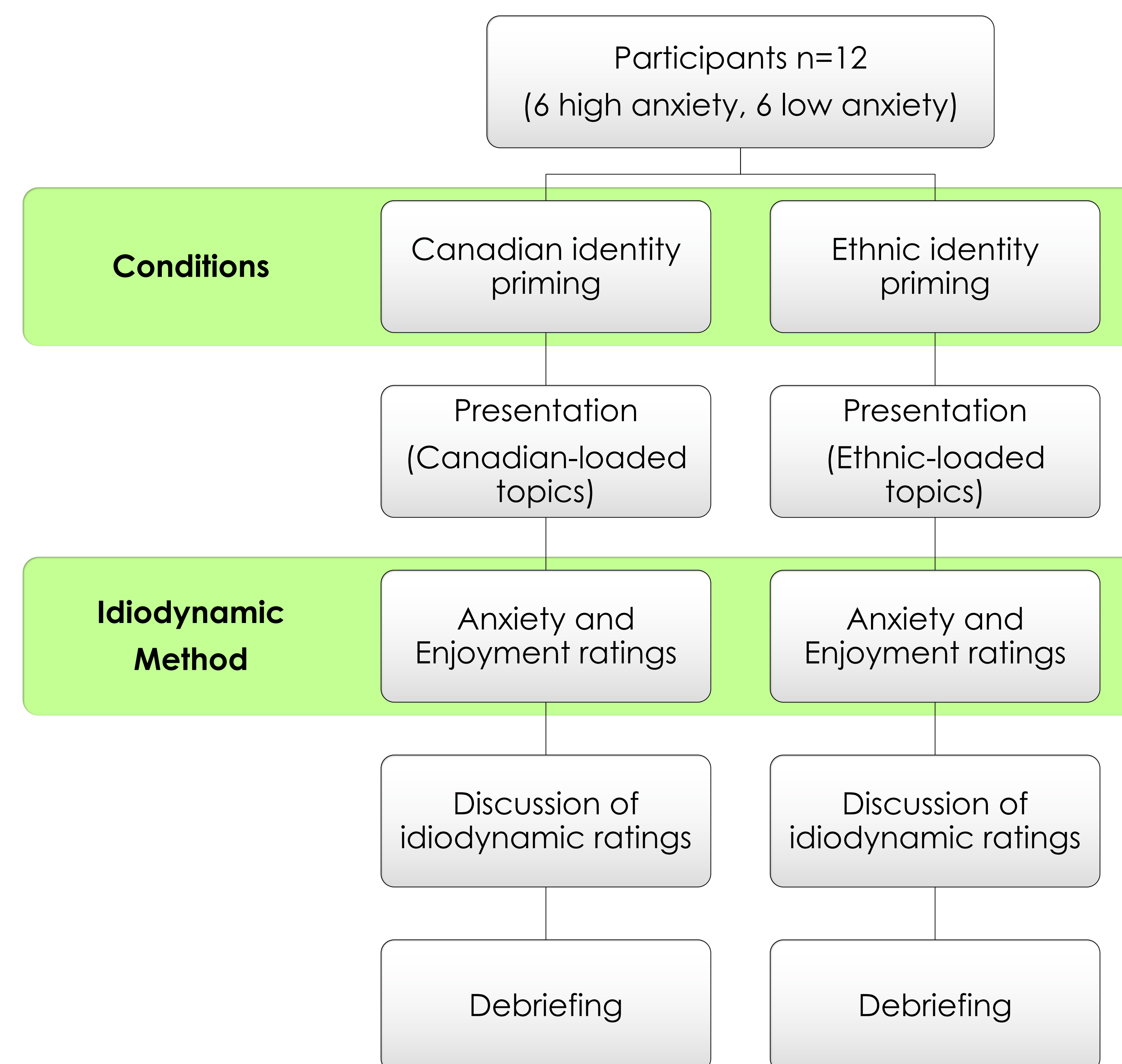
- Strong correlation between anxiety and French willingness to communicate ($p=-0.655$) and anxiety and French proficiency ($p=-0.717$).

Therefore, the results of the anxiety scales will allow us to separate our participants into two groups, low anxiety and high anxiety, for Study 2. On a scale out of 21, the scores ranged from 3 (low anxiety) to 17.5 (high anxiety).

Study 2 – Expected Results

- Data collection is currently ongoing and will be completed by the end of April 2018
- The expected results of the second study are that participants in the Canadian condition will have facilitated L2 use and reduced anxiety (both physiological and self-ratings) for both the low and high anxiety groups and the participants in the ethnic condition will have impaired L2 use and increased anxiety. Results would support hypotheses and past studies.

Study 2 - Method



- Participants are sorted into two groups: low anxiety (n=6) and high anxiety (n=6)
- Participants will participate in the video-recorded presentation in French (L2) while wearing Electrocardiogram (ECG) and Galvanic Skin Response (GSR) sensors.
- Deception: In order to induce anxiety, participants will be told that their presentations are being broadcasted live to French second language teachers who will analyze their presentation style.
- Afterwards, they will watch the presentation recordings and rate their moment-by-moment anxiety and enjoyment using the Anion Variable Tester V2 Software.
- Finally, they will partake in an audio recorded semi-structured interview to discuss their idiodynamic ratings.

Discussion

Emotions, particularly anxiety, heavily influence L2 use and are predictors of willingness to communicate. The first study suggested the predictive nature of anxiety as well as perceived L2 proficiency on WTC. The second study, which is ongoing, is expected to report that, depending on an individual's anxiety level, a primed identity (Canadian vs. Ethnic) will affect L2 use and anxiety.

References

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- MacIntyre, P. D., & Legatto, J. J. (2011). A dynamic system approach to willingness to communicate: Developing an idiodynamic method to capture rapidly changing affect. *Applied Linguistics*, 32(2), 149-171. doi:10.1093/applin/amq037

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