Extramural French among university students in Sweden

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Abstract
The purpose of this study is to better understand conditions for foreign language (FL) learning in Sweden. Research suggests that foreign language learners benefit from informal target language (TL) exposure and use outside the classroom (e.g., Peters, 2018; Sundqvist, 2009). While studies conducted in a Swedish context show that there are rich opportunities to come in contact with the English language outside the classroom, little is known about the learners' extramural exposure to and use of other FLs. In analogy with the term 'Extramural English' (Sundqvist, 2009), this study explores 'Extramural French'. The study includes 59 university students enrolled in a French language course. Using the survey method, we investigated the participants' engagement in Extramural French (frequency and type), and the relationship between language learning motivation, self-assessed proficiency, and frequency of Extramural French. The results showed that about half of the sample engaged in Extramural French on a relatively frequent basis. The most frequent extramural activities included listening to music, watching TV and films, and browsing online. About a third of the sample had regular access to social interaction in French. In addition, language learning motivation increased the likelihood to spend time on Extramural French activities. Overall, the study provides insights into the conditions for FL learning in a Swedish context.
Key words: foreign language learning, learning context, Extramural French, university students, Sweden

1. Introduction
This study aims to better understand current conditions for foreign language (FL) learning in Sweden (i.e., the learning of a language that is not dominant in the country, unlike a *second* language). FL learners in a formal setting are often encouraged by their teachers to use the target language (TL) as much as they can outside the classroom. It has long been argued that TL exposure and use are crucial for the FL learning process (e.g., Krashen, 1985; Long, 1996; Swain, 1995), and there is increasing empirical evidence that FL learners' TL exposure and use outside the FL classroom promote their language proficiency (e.g., Peters, 2018; Sundqvist, 2009). Recent research into Extramural English (i.e., English language exposure and use outside the classroom, cf. Sundqvist, 2009) shows that there are plenty of opportunities for FL learners of English in Sweden to engage in Extramural English, and that adolescent learners generally spend a substantial number of hours per week engaging in English-mediated activities in their spare time (e.g., Olsson & Sylvén, 2015; Sundqvist, 2009; Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2014; Sylvén & Sundqvist, 2012). English, however, has a particular status in Sweden in relation to other FLs and is

argued to have a 'second language' rather than 'foreign language' status (Cabau, 2009; Phillipson, 1992). Little is known about learners' extramural exposure to and use of FLs that do not have the same status as the English language in a Swedish context. It may be assumed that there are rich possibilities for FL exposure and use outside the classroom in an era where global mobility opens the door for encounters between speakers of different languages, and where information technology facilitates access to media as well as to real-life or internet-mediated social interaction in different languages, but this remains an area for investigation. This study fills this gap by focusing on one of the FLs that has a long tradition in the Swedish education system, namely French (see e.g., Bardel et al., 2019, and Krigh, 2019). French is one of the optional studied languages in Swedish schools, but is, in fact, today, the less chosen one, after Spanish and German, with large geographical disparity (Granfeldt et al., 2021). French language courses are also offered at several universities and private schools, both of which are important providers of French language education for adults in Sweden. The study includes university students and investigates their Extramural French. The specific aims of the study are a) to describe how frequently and in what ways university students engage in Extramural French, and b) to investigate what role self-assessed proficiency and intensity of language learning motivation play in determining frequency of Extramural French. The term 'Extramural French' is inspired by Sundqvist's (2009) 'Extramural English', which refers to the "learner-initiated informal (and typically voluntary) use of English in online and offline settings outside the walls of the classroom" (Schurz & Sundqvist, 2022, p. 1). Such language use may include both exposure to input and productive use of the language (Sundqvist, 2009, p. 25).

By providing insights regarding opportunities for Extramural French in a Swedish context, the study seeks to contribute knowledge about the conditions for FL learning in Sweden. In addition, the study seeks to contribute to research on language learners' extramural language behaviors in general, by focusing on a language other than English, and by including adult language learners, as opposed to previous research which typically focuses on Extramural English and adolescents (e.g., Peters, 2018; Sundqvist, 2009). Finally, Sweden as a European Union Member State shares the goal expressed in EU policy, namely that each citizen should learn two languages in addition to the mother tongue(s) (European Parliament, 2022). By examining students' exposure to and use of French outside the FL classroom, the study contributes to a better understanding of the conditions for FL learning in Europe.

After reviewing the literature on extramural FL use, we present the methodology of the study. Then we will present the findings and discuss the implications.

2. Literature review

Previous research on Extramural French in an FL learning context is scarce and therefore, the literature review below will draw on studies that focus on English as

an FL, since English has been the TL language in the overwhelming majority of studies investigating learners' extramural patterns of TL exposure and use.

Previous research shows that Extramural English is frequent among learners at various education levels in a variety of European contexts (e.g., Avello et al., 2017; Peters, 2018; Peters et al., 2019; Sundqvist, 2009; Schurz & Sundqvist, 2022), but that the frequency tends to vary depending on whether a country dubs media or not (Schurz & Sundqvist, 2022). In a Swedish context, several studies provide evidence that Extramural English is highly frequent among young Swedes. When taking figures into account from studies including learners of English as an FL ranging from 10-11 years old to 16-19 years old, the average number of hours spent on Extramural English activities appears to increase with age (see Olsson & Sylvén, 2015; Sundqvist, 2009; Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2014; Sylvén & Sundqvist, 2012). For example, Sundqvist and Sylvén (2014) found that the average number of hours per week spent on Extramural English activities among 10- to 11-year-olds was 7.2 (*N*=76), whereas Olsson and Sylvén (2015) found that a sample of 102 16- to 19-year-olds spent an average of 35h per week on English mediated activities. To the best of our knowledge, there are no studies that include adults, but the mentioned studies clearly indicate that Swedish adolescents frequently engage in extramural English activities. However, as pointed out by Sundqvist (2020), and as also mentioned in the introduction, the high amount of Extramural English in Sweden is not that surprising given that English not only is a prestigious language in Sweden but is also highly present through media (Phillipson, 1992; Cabau, 2009). English thus has a status in Sweden that is distinct from that of other FLs. Sundqvist (2020, p. 327) suggests that "French is not encountered often in Swedish everyday life and it is therefore rare that students learn French informally, unless of course they have a keen interest and take their own initiative for learning." This statement appears to be reflected in Sundqvist's (2009) study which focused on Extramural English but suggests that Extramural English is considerably more common than Extramural use of other FLs, at least among 15-16-year-old school students. In her study, 80 participants filled out two one-week language diaries (in addition to filling out a questionnaire targeting Extramural English), where they provided information about their extramural activities in English, Swedish, and other languages. They were instructed to self-report how often they engaged in seven extramural activities for each of the languages. Based on these data, Sundqvist states that, although some students did mention the FL that they studied in school (French, German or Spanish), learners' engagement in extramural activities in languages other than English and Swedish was limited. Interestingly, comments were also made on extramural use of twelve other languages, some of them which were spoken by their immigrant friends or relatives. In sum, among Swedish school students, Extramural English appears to be frequent, and Extramural French less so. To the best of our knowledge, there is no study that has investigated Extramural French among university students.

Concerning the nature of Extramural FL, previous research shows that the most common activities are song listening, TV watching, book and magazine reading,

and computer use (cf. Peters et al., 2019, p. 749). This indicates that language learners are mostly involved in activities that engage receptive (listening and reading) rather than productive (speaking and writing) language skills (except for "computer use", see below). Recent studies suggest that such receptive activities may contribute to incidental learning of vocabulary including both single words and formulaic sequences (e.g., Pavia, Webb & Faez, 2019; Pellicer-Sánchez, 2017; Peters & Webb, 2018; Puimège & Peters, 2019), although scholars often encourage learners' *active* involvement with the target language through social interaction (e.g., Ellis, 2015). Little is known about adult FL learners' extramural participation in social interaction, but there are a number of studies that investigate this topic in a Study Abroad context. This research suggests that adult international students use the TL in social interaction to varying extents. While some students establish a rich TL-speaking social network, others struggle to come in contact with TL speakers even in a learning environment where the TL is the dominant language (e.g., Arvidsson, 2021; Mitchell et al., 2017). Interviews with students suggest that those who did find access to social interaction outside the classroom, during their study abroad, made contact with TL speakers by going out to bars, dates, language tandems, or by joining a sports team (e.g., Arvidsson, 2021; Mitchell et al., 2017). It is however unclear to what extent such contact opportunities are available in the FL learning context.

Cutting across the traditional distinction between the four skills of reading, listening, writing, and speaking, learners' computer use provides numerous possibilities to engage with FLs outside the formal learning environment. For instance, video websites and international streaming services on the Internet provide the possibility to watch TV shows, movies, and other entertaining or instructional programs. Also, as mentioned above, learners have the possibility to expose themselves to and use the FL through social networks and discussion forums online, where they may interact and communicate with other TL users (e.g., Jayaron & Abidin, 2016). In addition, the internet contains numerous websites for language learning, where learners have the possibility to practice different FL competence areas in a more structured way, whenever it suits them (e.g., Dincer, 2020). Digital technologies also pave the way for increasing gamification of language learning. Gaming is argued to influence affective dimensions of language learning positively (Reinders, 2017), in that it provides the learner with a sense of agency (Cairns et al., 2014) and with opportunities for meaningful L2 use (Cornillie, 2017). Research suggests that adolescents spend a lot of time playing games in English outside the classroom (e.g., Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2014), yet, little is known about gaming habits in other FLs and in an adult population.

Even if studies show that informal learning is generally relatively common at least with respect to English (e.g., Kuppens 2010; Sockett 2014; Sundqvist, 2009), it has been observed that learners engage in extramural activities to varying extents (e.g., Sundqvist, 2009). Without focusing specifically on frequency of extramural FL use, some studies have investigated what factors influence learners' willingness to communicate (WTC), which refers to a learner's readiness to communicate in

the FL when there is an opportunity to do so (MacIntyre, 2007, p. 564). A learner's WTC is assumed to be influenced by his or her perceived L2 competence, level of FL anxiety, motivation, and willingness to communicate with a specific person. Indeed, several studies suggest that perceived FL competence may play an important role in this regard, as well as motivation. For example, Lahuerta (2014) investigated what factors predict WTC in English as an FL among 195 Spanish undergraduate students. She found that both self-perceived English competence and motivation to learn English were important predictors. In another study, Baker & MacIntyre (2000) found a strong correlation between self-perceived competence in French and WTC among 124 French FL school students in a Canadian context. Furthermore, Lee (2019) investigated what factors influence WTC in the extramural digital context among 98 Korean students. The author conducted in-depth interviews with all participants and found that self-confidence, among other contextual and individual variables, may have influenced the students' WTC. Finally, it should be pointed out that an individual's WTC is not necessarily stable over time, but may fluctuate on a week-to-week basis, as suggested by recent case studies conducted in a Swedish context (Henry et al., 2021). On a more general level, engagement in extramural activities could be seen as one component of learner engagement, which refers to active involvement and commitment to one's learning, considered a precondition for meaningful learning to take place (see Hiver et al., 2021, p. 2).

In sum, the literature review reveals that learners generally engage rather frequently in extramural English and that extramural FL use may include a range of activities. There is, however, individual variation and the learner's perceived FL proficiency as well as his or her motivation to learn the FL may influence extramural practices. However, to the best of our knowledge, no study investigates Extramural French exclusively among adult language learners in Sweden, which the present study sets out to do. The study explores the following research questions:

1. How frequently do students engage in Extramural French?
2. What Extramural French language activities do Swedish students engage in?
3. On average, how many French-speaking persons do students interact with regularly?
4. How do students come in contact with French language speakers?
5. To what extent do self-assessed French language proficiency and intensity of language learning motivation predict frequency of Extramural French?

Concerning RQ5, we hypothesize, in the light of previous research that has established associations between perceived L2 proficiency, motivation, and WTC in an FL (Baker & MacIntyre, 2000; Lahuerta, 2014; Lee, 2019), that self-assessed proficiency and intensity of language learning motivation will significantly predict frequency of Extramural French.

3. Methodology

The study uses the survey method and includes university students learning French at two Swedish universities. Here below, we describe the sample and data collection procedure, the participants, the survey, and the data analysis.

3.1 Sampling procedure and data collection procedure

The study used a convenience sample consisting of adult students studying French as an FL at the A1 to B1 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2001, 2020) at two Swedish universities (UniA and UniB). UniA offers French classes on campus and UniB offers French classes online. Data were collected during Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 (for an overview, see Table 1 below). Among the online students, data were collected through an online survey created via the software *Survey & Report*. Students were allowed to fill out the survey in class or outside of regular class hours (the survey was open for two weeks). Such flexibility was allowed to increase the response rate. Among the campus students, data were collected through a paper-and-pen survey, filled out by the students in the classroom. The survey took around ten minutes to fill out and is described further below, in section 3.2. In total, 66 students completed the survey. Since this study is concerned with Extramural French in the Swedish context, we excluded the 2 participants who reported living in France at the time of the study, and the 4 participants who reported that they alternated living in Sweden and France. Therefore, we also excluded the one participant who reported living between Sweden and a non-French-speaking country.

3.2 Participants

Out of the 59 participants, 19 were men, 39 were female and one 'other'. Concerning L1s, 52 reported having Swedish as their or one of their L1(s), and other L1s represented were English (*n*=1), German (*n*=1), Spanish (*n*=1), Portuguese (*n*=1), and Other (*n*=7). None of the students thus had French as an L1. The age ranged from 19 to 76 and the mean age was 38.8 (SD=15.4) (one participant did not report age). As seen in Table 1, students either received instruction remotely or in a physical classroom, on campus.

Table 1. Sub-groups, level of French studies, and teaching format

Teaching format	University belonging and time for data collection	N
Online	UniA Fall 21	26
	UniA Spring 22	15
Campus	UniB Fall 21	18
Total		59

Out of the 59 participants, 40 had studied French in some capacity before starting the current French course, and 10 had lived in a French-speaking country prior to

the ongoing semester. A total of 39 students studied French at the A1.1-A2.1 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2001), and 20 students studied French at the A2.2-B1.1 level. Table 2 illustrates the geographical distribution of the sample, as well as the distribution of the general population, for comparison. The totality of the sample (N=59) reported having Internet access at home.

Table 2. Geographical distribution

Current place of residence	N (%)
Swedish city with at least 500 000 inhabitants	22 (37)
Swedish city with 200 000 to 499 999 inhabitants	9 (15)
Swedish city with 40 000 to 199 999 inhabitants	16 (27)
Swedish city with 15 000 to 39 999 inhabitants	4 (7)
Less than 15 000 inhabitants	8 (14)
Total	59

3.3 The survey
The first section of the survey yielded biographic information (age, gender, place of residence, and languages known). The second section targeted students' self-assessed proficiency in French, their motivation to learn and use French, and their Extramural French use.

To assess the participants' perceived proficiency level, we asked them to self-report their listening, reading, writing, and speaking proficiency in French, on a scale from 1 to 10 (cf. Dewaele & Dewaele, 2021). Respondents were then asked how motivated they were to learn French, on a scale from 1 to 7 (1 = not at all motivated, 7 = very motivated). Language learning motivation was thus conceptualized and assessed in terms of sheer intensity, inspired by Gardner's (1985) concept of 'motivational intensity'.

With respect to Extramural French, we first asked the respondents to indicate how often they used French by choosing one of the following options: never, a few times since the semester started, some or a few times a month, some or a few times a week, or daily. These responses were then coded from 0 to 4. Then, to investigate *how* the students used the French language outside the classroom, we used an instrument largely based on the Language Engagement Questionnaire (LEQ) developed by McManus et al., (2014), where respondents are asked to report how frequently they do a number of activities in the target language, activities which include both passive and active language use, such as "reading newspapers", "browse the internet", "small talk", and, "have longer informal conversations". Although this instrument was developed by the LANGSNAP research team to investigate patterns of language use in a study abroad setting, it lends itself for investigating extramural target language use also in an FL learning environment. We adapted the original version of the LEQ, containing 26 items, to the present research. For example, given that the present study concerns Extramural French

use, we took out those items that concerned TL use in an instructional setting (e.g., "participate in seminars/language classes" and "listen to lectures"), and TL use in relation to teacher assistantship ("teach a class" and "have meetings"). Also, we collapsed certain items (e.g., "watch TV" and "watch films"). In addition, and based on insights from other studies (e.g., Lee & Lee, 2021; Sundqvist, 2009), we incorporate two additional items which target digital extramural habits: "play video games" and "watch YouTube". All in all, the instrument used in the present study includes 22 items (for an overview of the items, see Table 4 in the result section). To get an idea of how often they used French for the included purposes, the response options were the same as for the question regarding frequency, and thus ranged from "never" to "daily", also coded as 0-4. At the end of this instrument, the respondents were also asked to name ways in which they had used the French language that were not on the list.

To further investigate extramural social interaction in French, participants were asked to estimate how many persons they regularly interacted with in French, including the possibility to indicate "0". To find out in what ways Swedish university students come in contact with French language users, respondents were asked to indicate how they had come into contact with French speakers, if this applied to them. Here, they were presented with 19 options largely based on Dewey et al., (2013), including "other" followed by the possibility to further specify.

3.4 Data analysis
The quantitative data were coded and imported to SPSS version 27.0. We performed descriptive and inferential statistical analyses. Descriptive statistics were used to respond to research question 1- 4. Concerning research question 2, we present the data pertaining to the 22 different French language activities in a reduced form, with the goal of making the findings more readily available to the reader. We decided to regroup the response values 0-4 into two categories: "high" versus "low" frequency of Extramural French. The first, "high frequency of Extramural French", represents the values 3 and 4 (i.e., a few times a week or daily). The second, "low frequency of Extramural French", represents the values 0, 1 and 2 (i.e., never, a few times since the semester started and some or a few times a month). A Chi Square test revealed that the response patterns for overall frequency of Extramural French did not differ in any significant way between students studying online and students studying on campus, and, therefore, the data are presented together (X^2(1, N=59)= .681, *p.* 409).

To respond to research question 5, we conducted a binary logistic regression analysis, with "frequency of Extramural French" ("low" vs. "high") as a binary dependent variable and five binary independent variables: "motivation to learn French", self-assessed French proficiency in listening, reading, writing and speaking. The dependent variable draws on the data presented in Figure 1 and consists of the binary categories "high" versus "low" frequency of Extramural French. The category "high frequency of Extramural French" groups the values 3-4 (i.e., a few times a week or daily). The category "low frequency of Extramural

French" groups the values 0-2 (i.e., some or a few times a month, a few times since the semester started, or never). This reduction of the data was meaningful since it makes it possible to state whether the majority of the students spend time on a given extramural activity in French relatively often, or, relatively rarely. When inspecting the data linked to the independent variables, we observed that students had not used the full range of values in the Likert scales and that some values were only represented by very few participants (<5) (see Figures 4 and 5, and see Table 7 in Appendix). Therefore, we decided to reduce also these data and created binary independent variables. These also represent two categories per variable, named "high" and "low". The observed values were assigned to the category "high" or "low" by cutting the observed value range in two when possible (i.e., when the number of used response options was even), and according to the following proportions when not possible: "low" = 6/10, and "high" = 4/10. Table 3 presents the value distribution for each of the variables.

Table 3. Overview of binary categories used for the binary logistical regression analysis

Variable	Possible value range	Observed value range	Binary categories	
			"low"	"high"
Dependent variable				
Frequency of Extramural French	0-4	0-4	0, 1, 2	3, 4
Independent variables				
Motivation to learn French	1-7	3-7	3, 4, 5	6, 7
Self-perceived proficiency				
Listening	1-10	1-8	1, 2, 3, 4	5, 6, 7, 8
Writing	1-10	1-8	1, 2, 3, 4	5, 6, 7, 8
Reading	1-10	1-8	1, 2, 3, 4	5, 6, 7, 8
Speaking	1-10	1-7	1, 2, 3, 4	5, 6, 7

We use robust statistics in line with recommendations within the field of SLA (cf. Larson-Hall & Herrington, 2010). The regression analysis is based on a bootstrapped sample using 1000 randomly generated replications. A 5% significance level was considered when interpreting the results. The tolerance values were acceptable (> 0.1) indicating that the variables in the model were not highly intercorrelated (cf. Pallant, 2010), and no outliers were found.

The qualitative data consisted of participants' own descriptions of ways in which they had come in contact with French language speakers. These responses have simply been listed and are presented in connection to the quantitative findings to research questions 4. In other words, there was no analysis involved in the

transcription of the responses, since this was not deemed necessary to respond to the research question.

4. Results

4.1 Frequency of Extramural French

Figure 1 reveals that the respondents engage to varying extents in Extramural French, with responses ranging from 0 ("never") to 5 ("daily"). The frequency distribution presented in Figure 1 shows that the students typically engage in Extramural French "sometime a week or a few times a week", since this is the most represented response option in the sample (n=24/n=59). Among a total of 59 participants, five students report *never* engaging in Extramural French, while seven students report engaging *daily* in Extramural French. Just over half of the sample (n=31) report engaging in Extramural French sometime a week or more often.

Figure 1. Frequency of Extramural French (N=59)
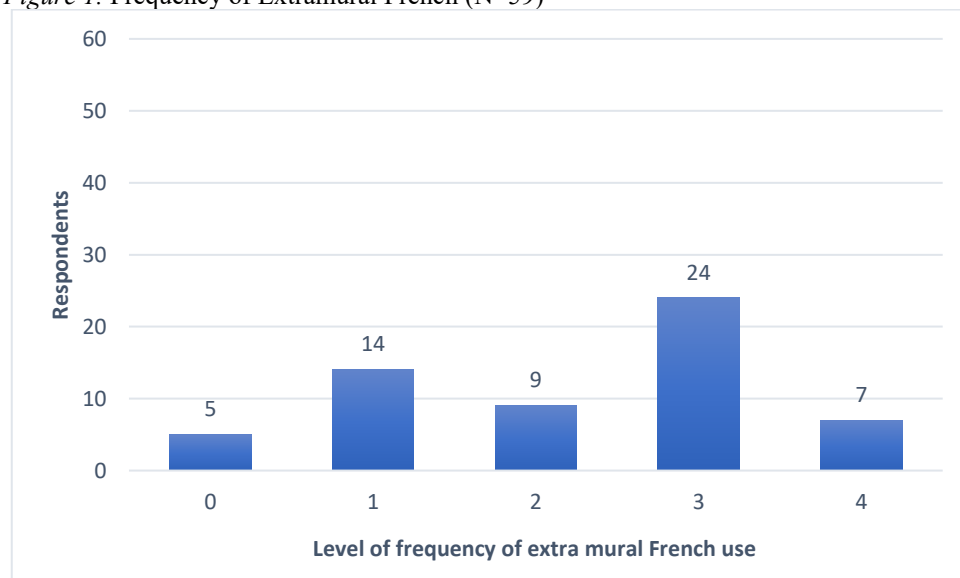
0=never, 1=rarely, 2=a few times a month, 3=sometime a week or a few times a week, 4=daily

4.2 Extramural French language activities

Table 4 contains information about the frequency with which the sample engages in 22 different extramural activities in French. In this table, we present the data reduced into two categories: "low" (i.e., a few times a month, rarely, or never) versus "high" (some time or a few times a week or daily) frequency of Extramural French (see Table 8 in the Appendix for a detailed overview of the sample's responses). The activities are ranked according to the category "high" frequency Extramural French, and thus reveal which activities the sample most frequently engages in. The five extramural activities in the sample (N=59) with "high" frequency include "listen to music" (22/59), followed by "watch TV, series, and/or movies" (15/59), "browse online" (14/59), "watch YouTube" (11/59) and "read

posts on social networks online" (11/59). The number of students who frequently engage in other extramural activities in French is declining rather drastically after the mentioned five activities. For example, only seven respondents report that they frequently read books or comic strips, and even fewer frequently engage in the remainder of the listed activities. *No* student reported using French frequently to write posts on social networks online, read newspapers, or in longer informal conversations. It is interesting to observe that there is no activity in which the majority of the sample engages frequently since the category "low" represents the highest "n" in all 22 cases.

*Table 4.* Response frequency for frequency and type of French use

Frequency of use	Low (0-2)	High (3-4)	Total
Activity	n	n	N
Listen to music	37	22	59
Watch TV, series and/or movies	44	15	59
Browse online	44	14	58
Watch YouTube	48	11	59
Read posts on social networks online	48	11	59
Read books including comic strips	52	7	59
Listen to radio	53	5	58
Small talk	54	5	59
Read and write text messages	55	4	59
Read emails	56	3	59
Shorter phone conversations (<5 minutes)	58	3	59
Read academic texts	57	2	59
Read other magazines	57	2	59
Write for pleasure (e.g., journal, poetry)	57	2	59
Longer phone conversations (>5 minutes)	57	2	59
Videogames	58	1	59
Write emails	58	1	59
Service encounters	58	1	59
Participate in organized social activities	58	1	59
Write posts on social networks online	59	0	59
Read newspapers	58	0	58
Longer informal conversations	59	0	59

0=never, 1=rarely, 2=a few times a month, 3=some time a week or a few times a week, 4=daily

4.3 Number of French-speaking interaction partners
As figure 2 indicates, just over a third of the respondents (23/59) of the students reported interacting regularly with French speakers. Among those who did engage in regular interaction with French speakers, most students reported having one such person (rather than two or more) in their network. The majority (36/59) of the students, however, reported not interacting with *anyone* in French outside the classroom on a regular basis.

Figure 2. Number of French speakers that respondents interact with regularly (N=59)
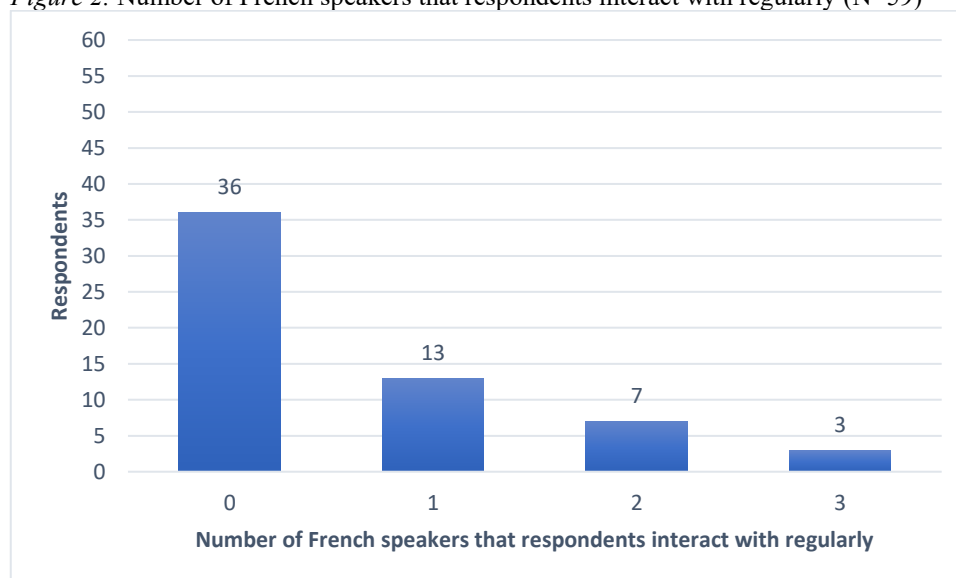
4.4 Ways to come in contact with French language speakers
Table 5 reveals how the respondents had come in contact with French language speakers, which was the fourth research question. Only those participants who had indeed come in contact with French language speakers filled this section out, and some participants chose more than one option. As seen in table 5, the most represented response option was "In a way that is not listed", reflecting that the response options provided a priori were not exhaustive. Among the listed possibilities, it was most common for the respondents to come in contact with French-speaking people through common friends and acquaintances (7/23), as well as through applications such as Tinder (7/23). Shared housing, public spaces, and social networks online were also relatively common platforms for coming in contact with French speakers (5/23), as well as bars, restaurants, and cafés (4/23). Less represented ways to meet French speakers among the sample are: striking up conversations with unknowns (2/23), meeting French-speaking people at the gym (2/23), and through a sports activity (1/23). Finally, no one in the sample made contact by asking for help or helping someone on the street, by participating in cultural events, through language tandems, or through a music activity.

The respondents were invited to specify how they met French-speaking people in addition to the options provided in the list. Only eight answers were provided, and these are listed in table 6.

Table 5. Frequency figures for ways to meet TL speakers

	Frequency
In a way that is not listed	20
Through common friends and acquaintances	7
Through applications such as Tinder	7
Through shared housing	5
In a public space (a square, train station etc.)	5
Through social networks online (e.g., Facebook, Instagram)	5
At a bar or restaurant	4
At a café	4
By initiating conversation with unknowns	2
At the gym	2
Through a sport activity	1
Through religious or political engagement	0
By helping someone	0
By asking for help	0
By showing interest in the target language culture	0
By responding to add for language tandem	0
By posting an add for language tandem	0
Through a choir or other music interest	0
Total	62

Table 6 suggests that a French-speaking partner, the workplace, cultural institutions, family, institutionalized social platforms such as language cafés, and stays in France, may also provide opportunities to come in contact with French language speakers, for learners who reside in Sweden.

Table 6. Students' freely added responses to the question "If you have come in contact with French-speaking people in another way, since the start of the semester, how did you meet?"

| |
|---|
| partner and common friends (1*) |
| at work (1) |
| a colleague (1) |
| through the application Gofriendly (1) |
| movie theatre (1) |
| Alliance Française (1) |
| through the daughter's husband and grandchildren (1) |
| by socializing with French-speaking neighbours (in France) (1) |
| through language café (1) |

*Number of participants having provided the response in question.

4.5 The influence of self-assessed French language proficiency and motivation on students' Extramural French

A binary logistic regression analysis was performed to evaluate the influence of motivation to learn French and self-assessed proficiency in French, on the likelihood that respondents would report a high frequency of Extramural French. The model contained five binary independent variables (self-assessed proficiency in listening, writing, reading, speaking, and motivation to learn French). Descriptive statistics are available in Figure 3 and 4. As shown in table 7, the model as such, containing all predictors, was not statistically significant ($\chi2$ (5, N = 59) = 9.57, *p* .088). This indicates that the model was not able to distinguish between a high and a low frequent Extramural French. However, as also shown in table 7, one independent variable made a statistically significant contribution to the model, namely motivation to learn French (Exp(B) = 3.55, *p* = .047). The dependent variable, motivation to learn French, has an odds ratio of 3.55, indicating that respondents who reported a high motivation to learn French were over 3 times more likely to frequently engage in Extramural French. None of the proficiency-related variables contributed in a statistically significant way to predict the frequency of Extramural French.

Figure 3. Descriptive statistics for motivation to learn French (N=59)
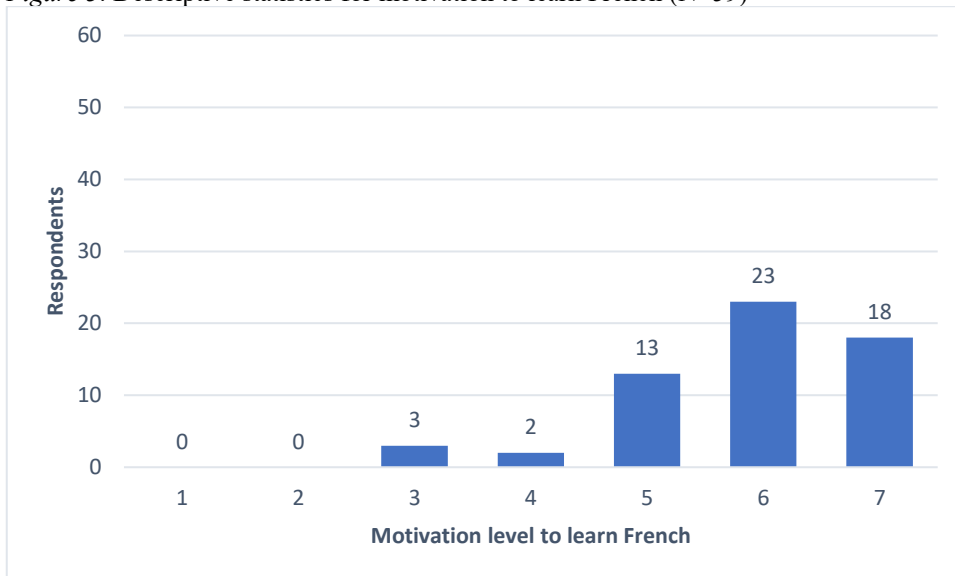
1 = not at all motivated, 7 = very motivated

Figure 4. Descriptive statistics for self-reported proficiency in listening, writing, reading, and speaking (N=59) on a scale from 1 (low) to 10 (high).
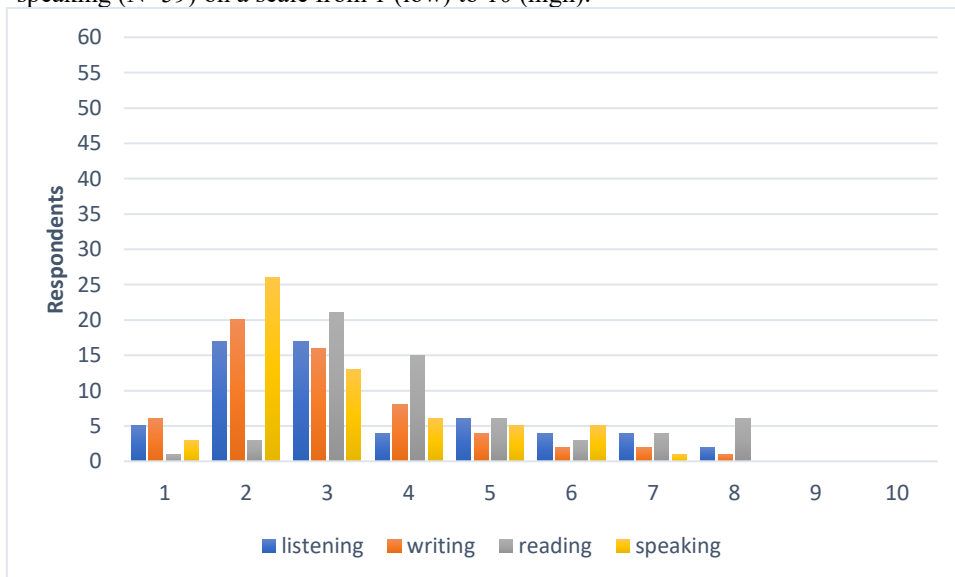
Table 7. Binary Logistic Regression Predicting Likelihood of High Frequency Extramural French Use

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	*p*	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
							Lower	Upper
Listening proficiency[1]	1.279	1.306	.959	1	.328	3.592	.278	46.439
Writing proficiency[1]	-1.190	1.149	1.074	1	.300	.304	.032	2.888
Reading proficiency[1]	1.994	1.226	2.646	1	.104	7.343	.665	81.130
Speaking proficiency[1]	-2.632	1.513	3.027	1	.082	.072	.004	1.395
Motivation[2]	1.267	.637	3.956	1	.047*	3.550	1.019	12.375
Constant	-1.036	.588	3.107	1	.078	.355		

[1]Self-assessed proficiency, [2]Motivation to learn French, *$p = <$ .05.

5. Discussion and conclusion
The study investigated university students' engagement in Extramural French in Sweden through the survey method. We will discuss the findings pertaining to each of the research questions before discussing the limitations of the study and its implications.

The first research question concerned the respondents' overall frequency of Extramural French. Respondents were asked to indicate how often they engaged in Extramural French with five response options ranging from "never" to "daily". A descriptive analysis revealed that a marginal majority of the students reported engaging in Extramural French sometime a week or more often. This finding indicates that it is indeed *possible* to find ways for French language learners to expose themselves to and/or use French in a Swedish FL learning context. Almost half of the students however reported low-frequent Extramural French, including no Extramural French at all. The low frequent Extramural French observed among almost half of the students may thus rather reflect a certain lack of initiative, of awareness of what kind of target language activities are actually available outside the classroom, than an impossibility to access French outside the classroom (as also suggested by the results of the fifth research question, discussed below). That behaviors vary between individuals is also in line with previous research on extramural English in the Swedish context (Sundqvist, 2009), which, however, includes adolescent language learners and not adults.

The second research question asked what Extramural French activities the students engaged in. The participants were asked to indicate how frequently they engaged in 22 different activities on a scale ranging from "never" to "daily", and then reduced the responses to either "low" or "high" frequency of Extramural French. The data revealed that the five most common extramural activities were such that involved receptive language skills ("listening to music", followed by "watch TV, series and/or movies", "browse online", "watch YouTube", "read posts on social networks online"), which aligns with previous research on extramural FL activities (see Peters et al., 2019, p. 749). It was also less common for students in the present study to engage in extramural activities which involve productive language skills (writing, speaking). It is possible that the participants' relatively low

proficiency level in L2 French (A1-B1 level) helps explain their Extramural French practices. Reading and listening are activities that the learner can carry out alone and may be perceived as less challenging than producing linguistic output through writing and speaking. Although scholars certainly emphasize the importance of active involvement with the TL, it is possible that the students benefit from their receptive Extramural French in terms of incremental vocabulary growth (see e.g., Pavia, Webb & Faez, 2019; Pellicer-Sánchez, 2017; Peters & Webb, 2018; Puimège & Peters, 2019). However, the data do not allow for drawing any conclusions in this regard. It is also possible that the students tend to use the French language in a receptive and more solitary manner out of practical reasons such as an inflexible schedule outside the language classroom. In fact, the sample includes adults between the age of 19 to 76, and the mean age was 38.8, and it is likely that many of them have other responsibilities such as work and family outside their studies. These remain speculations, yet it seems reasonable to assume that the learner's life situation may affect the nature of his or her extramural FL engagement. Another practical reason could be a lack of contact with speakers of the TL, which will be further discussed. Finally, unlike previous research focusing on English which includes younger learners (e.g., Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2014), playing video games was not a common Extramural French activity in the present sample.

The third and fourth research questions focused on the students' social interaction in the French language since scholars insist on the importance of social interaction for the development of communicative competence in an FL (e.g., Ellis, 2015). We asked the students how many French speakers they interacted with on a regular basis and found that about 6 out of 10, (36/59) did not interact regularly with *any* French-speaking person. This also implies that social interaction is typically not part of the students' extramural practices. These findings may indicate either that it is difficult for the students to find potential French-speaking friends or acquaintances in Sweden, or, that they do not take initiative in this direction. Such an interpretation is possible considering that previous research has shown that, even in a second language learning context where opportunities for social interaction in the TL are assumingly more readily available, some students find it challenging to come in contact with TL speakers (e.g., Arvidsson, 2021; Mitchell et al., 2017). The geographic factor may play a role in this regard, although this has not been formally analyzed in this study. Future studies could investigate whether the place of residence (e.g., urban vs. rural environment) affects possibilities for social interaction in the target language. The remaining proportion of the students (about 4/10) however seems to have found opportunities to interact on a regular basis, leading to an investigation of how students come in contact with target language speakers.

To answer the fourth research question, we asked respondents to indicate how they had come in contact with French language speakers, if this applied to them, by ticking the options on a list that corresponded to their experience, and by writing their response if their experience was not listed. It appeared that the students' network of friends and acquaintances, social venues (bars, restaurants, and cafés),

and online social forums including dating applications constituted platforms for making contact with French-speaking persons. It is possible that such possibilities are geographically bound (i.e., that urban areas would present more opportunities to come in contact with French speakers), although we have not been able to find reliable data on the geographical distribution of French-speaking people in Sweden and can therefore not draw any conclusions in this regard. It is also possible that those participants who reported having lived, however briefly, in a French-speaking country prior to the current French language course had made contact with French-speaking people already prior to the current French language course, contact which they may then have maintained after moving back to Sweden. Although dating applications appeared to be a relatively common way to meet French-speaking people, it is slightly surprising that not more participants had met French-speaking people through online discussion forums, games, and social networking platforms, given that these are ways to establish contact available to the students through the Internet.

The fifth research question concerned the importance of self-assessed French language proficiency and motivation for Extramural French engagement. A binary logistic regression revealed that motivation to learn French was the only significant predictor of frequency of Extramural French, and that motivated students were more than three times more likely to frequently engage in Extramural French. Motivation was assessed in terms of motivational intensity. That motivational intensity was a significant predictor was expected and although this study concerned frequency of Extramural French and not WTC, the finding is in line with previous research observing that motivational intensity plays a role in FL learners' WTC (e.g., Lahuerta, 2014). The finding reflects the importance of learner engagement in creating opportunities for TL use (see Hiver et al., 2021), and aligns well with Sundqvist's (2020, p. 327) statement that learners who engage in Extramural French in Sweden are driven learners. The analysis does not allow us to further disentangle the relationship between motivation and extramural FL use, but it is possible that these variables work in both ways, i.e., that positive experiences from extramural FL use generate a stronger motivation for language learning which in turn may spur the desire for extramural FL use. It was however somewhat unexpected that none of the proficiency-related variables (self-assessed listening, reading, speaking, and writing proficiency) significantly increased the odds for Extramural French, as previous studies have found links between self-perceived L2 competence and WTC (e.g., Baker & MacIntyre, 2000; Lahuerta, 2014; Lee, 2019). It is possible that the results would have been different if there was more of an alignment between the dependent variable and the independent proficiency-related variable, i.e., if we had investigated the impact of self-assessed speaking proficiency on the frequency of French language use in social interaction.

The study has its limitations. The study focuses only on French and the findings can therefore not be generalizable to other FLs. Also, the analysis draws on a sample including adult students studying from the A1 to B1 levels and the findings are therefore not necessarily generalizable to FL learners of French at other proficiency

levels. Also, the study investigated the impact of self-reported proficiency on Extramural French. It is possible that *actual* proficiency level, measured objectively, would yield other results. In order to reach a fuller understanding of FL learning conditions in Sweden, future studies could investigate extramural FL use among students learning different target languages and compare student populations from a range of proficiency levels. Furthermore, the study (mainly) relies on quantitative data, which hinders us from gaining more detailed insights into French language students' extramural practices in Sweden. Future studies could also complement quantitative methods with a qualitative approach and ask FL students to share their experiences from extramural FL use through interviews or diaries. Such an approach would allow us to better understand whether patterns of FL use depend on external factors versus learner internal factors (e.g., perceived proficiency level, motivation, and interest, FL anxiety). Recent studies have used applications to track TL use among language learners (Arndt et al., 2021). This could also be an interesting method to apply in the study of extramural FL use.

The study is based on a limited sample but nonetheless has certain pedagogical implications. The study found that university students in Sweden tend to mainly engage in receptive French language activities outside the classroom, including listening and reading, and less in active activities (writing and speaking). However, the students' access to regular social interaction in French is limited. It, therefore, seems important that teachers use their ability to create a positive and cooperative atmosphere in the classroom, in order to stimulate students' willingness to communicate and motivation to take more initiative outside the classroom. Oral activities such as role plays, vlogs, debates, etc. may help students become more confident and used to speaking without preparation. Such exercises may help them build confidence and become autonomous learners who more easily engage in extramural TL activities. Our findings indicate that more than half of the students do not have a regular French-speaking conversation partner. In the classroom, teachers could encourage students to proactively arrange contact opportunities for practice outside the classroom, through tandem exchanges, language cafés, or through the organization of social events in collaboration with French-speaking associations in Sweden. One classroom activity could be focused on establishing a list of possible ways to meet TL speakers both in real life and online. The contact forums found in this study could serve as a point of departure. Furthermore, the observation that a strong motivation for French language learning, rather than self-assessed proficiency in French, significantly increased the probability of high-frequent Extramural French may be useful to students themselves. The finding signals that the learning process to a large extent lies in the hand of the learner herself, and is, not surprisingly, partly contingent upon individual driving forces. This could per se be useful information for the adult student, who could reflect upon ways to increase or maintain his or her FL learning motivation. By consciously trying to create a motivating classroom atmosphere, the teacher may also help strengthen the students' engagement in the learning process.

In conclusion, the present study offers insights both into student behaviours and into conditions for FL learning in Sweden, by revealing how often and in what ways adult French language students engage in Extramural French. Students vary in how frequently they engage in Extramural French, and activities such as listening, watching, and reading seem to be more popular (and perhaps more accessible) than activities requiring active learner participation. Extramural French among adults in Sweden also seems to be partly contingent upon the learner's own motivation and initiative. In view of the findings of this study, Sweden appears to provide relatively beneficial conditions for FL learning – for those who seize the opportunity.

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Appendix

Table 8. Response frequency for frequency and type of French use

Frequency of use	0	1	2	3	4	Total
Activity						
Watch TV, series and/or movies	8	21	15	13	2	59
Browse online	17	17	10	11	3	58
Videogames	55	3	0	0	1	59
Watch YouTube	19	14	15	10	1	59
Read posts on social networks online	30	11	7	8	3	59
Write posts on social networks online	53	5	1	0	0	59
Read and write text messages	39	9	7	3	1	59
Read emails	37	9	10	3	0	59
Write emails	42	10	6	1	0	59
Listen to music	10	10	17	14	8	59
Listen to radio	45	6	2	3	2	58
Read books including comic strips	27	19	6	6	1	59
Read academic texts	44	11	2	2	0	59
Read newspapers	42	9	7	0	0	58
Read other magazines	40	13	4	1	1	59
Write for pleasure (e.g., journal, poetry)	50	6	1	0	2	59
Shorter phone conversations (<5 minutes)	46	10	2	3	0	59
Longer phone conversations (>5 minutes)	53	3	1	2	0	59
Service encounters	50	6	2	1	0	59
Small talk	28	16	10	4	1	59
Longer informal conversations	44	9	6	0	0	59
Participate in organized social activities	55	3	0	1	0	59

0=never, 1=rarely, 2=a few times a month, 3=some time a week or a few times a week, 4=daily