

# French as a US Heritage Language in a Multilingual World

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**Abstract**—This article examines the role of French as a heritage language in the United States within the context of a multilingual world and a framework of respect for other languages and cultures both locally and globally. As more than 10M Americans are of French ancestry and 2M speak French in the home in the US, French language and Francophone culture are part of American history and cultural identity. In addition, French is a global language spoken by 300M around the world, so French language skills and understanding of Francophone culture are also part of the global skills set. The history and current status of French in the US along with French language and Francophone cultural organizations, French language learning, and organizations and initiatives aimed at valuing the French language and Francophone culture in the US are examined. The article concludes with a discussion of the future of French, the importance of partnerships, the role of advocacy, and an affirmation of the importance of French language and Francophone culture in a globalized multilingual world and an increasingly multilingual American society.

**Index Terms**—heritage language, multilingualism, francophone, French language, language learning

## I. INTRODUCTION: FRENCH AS A HERITAGE LANGUAGE WITHIN A FRAMEWORK OF RESPECT FOR OTHER LANGUAGES AND CULTURES

Roberts et al. (2018) have written that more than half the world population is bilingual, and monolingualism has been referred to as “the illiteracy of the twenty-first century” (p. 116). However, only one in four Americans can hold a conversation in a language other than English, and Americans lag behind in language learning (Grosjean, 2010, 2020; McComb, 2001; Devlin, 2018). The US, historically a nation of immigrants, has developed within an evolving framework of many indigenous, colonial, and immigrant languages and cultures all deserving of respect, and French is one of our American languages.

The French language is spoken around the world, most often in multilingual environments (OIF, 2022). In addition, Ross and Jaumont (2014) have written that in the US “French language heritage speakers are distinguished by the diverse origins of their communities, both historically and geographically” (p. 101). French is both a global and a local language and offers, therefore, both a means of communicating directly with the globalized world and better understanding and appreciating global Francophone cultures, and of communicating with and appreciating the Francophone cultural communities in the United States.

It is essential for all of us and for the US to value all our heritage languages and the history of all our heritage cultures through our words and actions, and through policies and programs. According to Kelleher (2010), the term “heritage language” is often employed “to identify languages other than the dominant language (or languages) in a given social context” (p. 1). In the US, where English is the de facto official language, any language other than English can be considered a heritage language, and heritage languages generally include immigrant, indigenous, and colonial heritage languages. According to Goldenberg and Wagner (2015), the US, in fact, has a long history of bilingual education. An indication of the importance of all our languages is the observance of the International Year of Indigenous Languages in 2019 and the proclamation of a Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022-2032) by the United Nations, with as a goal the “preservation, revitalization and promotion” of indigenous languages around the world (United Nations, 2022, para 4).

In a globalized and interconnected world, French is global language, spoken by 300M around the world, over 10M Americans claim French ancestry, and more than 2M speak French in the home, yet Franco-Americans remain relatively invisible in the US (OIF, 2022; French Americans, 2022; Ryan, 2013; Vermette, 2016). French is a European language, a mother tongue and second/additional language spoken in France and other European countries. It is also a global language, spoken by over 300M in France and around the world, including by 33M in North America, including the United States, making it an American language (OIF, 2022; Nadeau, 2021).

Although often referred to as a foreign language, it is clear that French is actually a US heritage language. Despite the fact that the current narrative may privilege English as the US language within the context of our history as a British colony, many other languages have played a significant role in our history and may be of even more importance as the US evolves in an increasingly global, interconnected, and multilingual world. According to Stein-Smith (2022), French language and Francophone culture are an integral part of our past, present, and future.

There are at least 10M Americans of French ancestry, and over 2M in the US speak French in the home (French Americans, 2022; Ryan 2013). The future of French in the US is framed by and grounded in a partnership among those with a long history in the US and those who have recently arrived, among French-speaking communities and French language educators, among Francophones and Francophiles, and among all French language stakeholders. French is the second most widely studied language in the US, and French and Francophone Americans, including historical communities, new arrivals, and expatriates, can be found across the country (French Americans, 2022; American Councils, 2017). In addition to honoring our French and Francophone cultural heritage, it is essential to recognize the role of the French language and Francophone culture in our contemporary US communities and identity, and in our future.

## II. THE CURRENT STATUS OF FRENCH LANGUAGE AND FRANCOPHONE CULTURE GLOBALLY AND IN THE UNITED STATES – FRENCH LANGUAGE AND FRANCOPHONE CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS AND IN INITIATIVES IN THE US

In a discussion of French language and Francophone culture in the US, it is important to consider the role of French both globally and locally, French language learning and use in the US, and French language and Francophone culture organizations and initiatives in the US.

Grounded in the historical presence of France in the US beginning in the earliest years of the European era, French language and Francophone culture is firmly embedded in US history and cultural identity, and France is favorably viewed by a vast majority of Americans (Brenan, 2022; Saad, 2016). More than 10M Americans are of French ancestry, and more than 2M speak French in the home. Francophone communities exist across the country, and in New York City alone, there are more than 80,000 Francophones (French Americans, 2022; Ryan, 2013; Sicot, 2019). French is the second most widely studied foreign language in the US, as it is in the world, with 1.3M French language learners in K-12 alone, and an additional 176K at the postsecondary level in the US (American Councils, 2017; MLA, 2019).

French language and Francophone culture play both an economic and cultural role in the US. France is a major investor in - and trading partner of - the US, and thousands of French companies operate throughout the US and employ over half a million American workers (France in the US, n.d.; France-Amérique, 2018). TV5Monde, an international Francophone television network, has 1.5M viewers in the US (TV5Monde n.d.). Not only do French books, movies, media, and fashion enjoy great popularity in the US – *Lupin*, *Dix pour cent/Call My Agent*, *Emily in Paris*, Dior, and Paris Fashion Week are just a few examples, any trip to a supermarket or shopping center offers numerous examples of camembert, champagne, and croissants, and images of the iconic French images like the Eiffel tower on items ranging from T-shirts to notepads, and more.

Africa, and whose influence is only predicted to increase, is home to half of the world's Francophones. In addition to that, a growing number of Africans are making their home in the US, where many are part of growing Francophone communities across the country and playing a significant role in the resurgence of French (EY, 2020; Lorenzi & Batalova, 2022; Hechivi, 2021). Within the North American context, beyond the US, French is an official language of Canada, in many parts of the Caribbean, and in Saint-Pierre and Miquelon.

### A. *The Role of French Language and Francophone Culture Both Locally and Globally*

French is a global language, spoken around the world, but it is also an American language – part of our US cultural identity. More than 10M Americans are of French ancestry, and at least 2M Americans speak French in the home. This dual role of French as a global language that is spoken around the world, the language of family, friends, and neighbors, as well as being a significant part of American history, is one of the tremendous advantages of French language skills. French speakers around the world can speak a local variety of the language to family and friends, and to their local community, while at the same time they can communicate directly with others around the world in French.

So many of us have been taught to identify with our British colonial history and the English language as our identity, but if truth be told, English played a limited role in the history of what is now the United States during the European era. Both France and Spain played a role in what is now the US that might easily be considered more significant than the one played by the British, yet the British and English language narrative has been predominant in our public history. It is important to remember both the historical and contemporary French presence in what is now the US, the significance of France as an ally and supporter of the Americans during the American Revolution and throughout our history, and the enduring relationship that has existed between the French and the Americans (Shachtman, 2017; Desmarais, 2019).

The *Organisation internationale de la Francophonie* (OIF) is a worldwide organization which supports the French language within the context of a multilingual world, and the *Centre de la Francophonie des Ameriques* (CFA) supports the French language within the diversity of North America.

### B. *French Language Learning and Francophone Culture in the United States*

It would seem as though the future of French in the United States is assured. However, although French is a language of historical and cultural importance in the US, and French is the second most widely studied language in the US, the future of French is, in fact, far from assured. Not only have French language programs at the college and university level diminished in recent years, contributing to a shortage of qualified teachers of French, but also the availability of

foreign language learning (including French) has diminished at the elementary and middle school level (MLA, 2019; ACTFL, n.d.; AMACAD, 2017; Johnson, 2019).

The overall picture is complex, but not altogether encouraging. On the one hand, French language and culture enjoy prestige and demonstrate soft power in the world (Saad, 2016; Gray, 2017; Brenan, 2022). In addition, the French and Francophone presence in the US is growing through increasing numbers of new arrivals from France and the Francophone world (French Morning Staff, 2017). On the other hand, both French programs in colleges and universities are decreasing and at risk, and AMACAD (2017) has found that the opportunity to learn additional languages, already limited, is decreasing in our elementary and middle schools.

The lack of access and opportunity for young students to begin continued language learning, coupled with a lack of pre-professional language programs in higher education presents a challenge for the future of French and for the future of our children. The AATF (American Association of Teachers of French), with its mission “to promote throughout North America the teaching and learning of the French language and French-speaking cultures and civilizations, welcomes and supports educators of French at all academic levels (AATF, n.d., para 1).

### C. Valuing the History of the French Language and of Francophone Culture in the United States French - Organizations and Initiatives

French language and Francophone culture organizations and initiatives in the US include and the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana/*Conseil pour le développement de la langue française en Louisiane* (CODOFIL), but also numerous local and grassroots initiatives such as the French-Canadian Legacy Podcast, NH PoutineFest, and Franco-American Centre, along with in the Nous Foundation in New Orleans.

Beyond national and global educational and government programs like the worldwide French language campaign launched by the government of France in 2018, concepts like the *Oui* Initiative in Louisiana demonstrate the significance of local counterparts in the movement for French language and Francophone culture in the US (French Diplomacy, n.d., Gaglione, 2019).

In addition to these examples, there are countless current and potential initiatives and programs across the country, such as the UM Franco American Programs, the *Archives Acadiennes* – every school or institution of higher education has the potential to create new language programs and to support and strengthen existing ones, and every community has the possibility of launching a language or cultural initiative, either in person or online.

The possibilities are endless, ranging from language classes for all ages, either face-to-face or online, to cultural events appealing to a wide range of interests and levels of knowledge of both the language and the culture. Online technologies have dramatically increased the possibilities for reaching a broader public. As generations of heritage speakers of French and other languages have experienced language loss to varying degrees due to the passage of time and lack of opportunity for language learning and use, outreach to those who need to increase their language skills and the opportunity to re-learn or re-acquire a partially or completely lost or forgotten heritage language are all the more important.

The keys to success lie not only in funding and institutional support, but perhaps even more importantly, in developing sustainable interest and motivation in our communities and in our broader society, and this requires broad-based grassroots support from community and cultural groups, as well as from within the home. Parents and communities are among the most important, and often overlooked, partners in developing both educational and cultural language initiatives, and communication and interaction among parents and communities, and educational institutions and government are essential.

## III. THE HISTORY OF FRENCH LANGUAGE AND FRANCOPHONE CULTURE IN THE US

While the membership of Louisiana in the *Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie* (OIF) is relatively recent, dating back only to 2018, it is a watershed moment for French in Louisiana and in the US (Hasselle, 2018). The French presence in the US dates back to the earliest years of European era in North America, and much of what is now the US was once part of *la Nouvelle France*. In addition to early French explorers and settlers, the *Grand Dérangement* brought *Acadiens* to Louisiana, the British colonial era in Canada brought a million French Canadians to New England, often for work, and throughout our history, Francophones from many parts of the world have come to the US.

Today many French expatriates and Francophones from around the world make the US their home, and according to Ryan (2013), French is spoken by 2M in the home in the US. French is one of the most widely spoken languages in the US, and it is also one of the most sought-after languages in international business and in the US workplace (Ross & Jaumont, 2014; NAE, 2017; ACTFL, 2019). In addition to vibrant French and Francophone communities across the country, French is the second most widely studied language in the US (French Americans, 2022; Ryan, 2013; American Councils, 2017). However, although according to Vermette (2016), French language and Francophone culture have been considered “invisible” in the US, there has been growing awareness and implementation of French language immersion programs across the US (para 1).

Much of what is now the US was once part of *La Nouvelle France* - Eastern Canada, through the Mississippi Valley – From Quebec and Montreal, to Detroit, to Saint Louis, and to New Orleans. Beyond the place names and historic sites, over 10M Americans claim French ancestry, and over 2M in the US speak French in the home.

French Language and Francophone culture in the US include not only descendants of early French in North America and of French Canadians from Quebec and Acadia, but also the many French expatriates - approximately 160K - and recent arrivals from Francophone regions around the world (French Morning Staff, 2017). In addition to our French heritage and our Francophone present, many others in the US – sometimes referred to as Francophiles -- honor and cherish the French ideas and core values that have shaped our US cultural identity and have embraced all things French.

In order to support and defend French language and Francophone culture in the US, it is necessary to consider both French language learning in the classroom and the learning and use of French in our society. French is the second most widely studied language in the US, as it is in the world. Nearly 2M students study French in US K-12 education (American Councils, 2017; MLA, 2019). In the US, 10M have claimed French ancestry, and 2M speak French in the home. It is essential to support French language educators and learners in all our schools and educational institutions and to support French language learning and use in our communities.

#### IV. THE FUTURE OF FRENCH IN THE US: CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES, THE NEED TO CREATE A SENSE OF URGENCY, AND THE IMPORTANCE OF PARTNERSHIPS

The future of French language and Francophone culture in the US is bright – with so many Americans of French ancestry, so many French-speakers in the US, and so many French language learners. However, it is important that we support them all.

Challenges to French language and Francophone culture in the US include assimilation and language loss, as well as the lack of opportunity and lack of access to language learning, and there is a need to create a sense of urgency (Huss, 2016; AMACAD, 2017; Johnson, 2019; MLA, 2019; Kotter, 2008). Opportunities include the appeal of France in the US and the significant interest in French language and Francophone culture in the US – including Francophone families and communities, Francophiles, and students of French, as well as French language stakeholders and partners in business, government, and philanthropy (Brenan, 2022; Gray, 2017).

Responses include advocacy and support for French language and French language educators, language requirements, double majors, and joint degrees, immersion programs, heritage language programs, and language policy, as well as community programs and partnerships with language stakeholders, including those with limited knowledge of French (AATF, n.d.; MLA, 2012; MLA, 2019; FACE, n.d.). Methods have included grassroots campaigns and parent engagement, as well as public and private funding (FACE, n.d.; Jaumont, 2017).

While any discussion of French language and Francophone culture in the US is framed by the history of French in North America and the vast part of the US and Canada that was part of *La Nouvelle France* – hence, the French place names across the US, from Boise to Detroit, and from New Orleans and St. Louis to Montpelier, the future of French is an evolving and continuing story. In addition, areas with a French and Francophone history like Louisiana and New England have now been joined by New York, the unrecognized capital of the *Francophonie* in the US, largely due to French expats and new arrivals (Sicot, 2019).

In order to ensure the future of French, it will be necessary to respond the needs of these various stakeholder groups, making sure that opportunities to learn, to use, and to create in French, are available. In addition, programs and events of interest to all need to be available. Most importantly, it is important to include those who may no longer speak French. Language loss, “societal or individual loss in the use or in the ability to use a language, implying that another language is replacing it,” has impacted many in the US throughout our history (Huss, 2016, p. 1). Although many descendants of French-speakers may no longer speak French, language loss impacts the whole person, and initiatives to support and revitalize French language and Francophone culture should include those who may no longer speak French fluently, or at all. This means planning events and programs likely to be of interest both to the fluent speaker and to the beginner, and if possible, to interest those who have partially or completely lost the language.

To bring about a resurgence of French, above all, it is essential to create a sense of urgency (Kotter, 2008). In the most recent enrollment survey, French programs in higher education were the most severely impacted, with a loss of 192 programs as defined in the report (MLA, 2019; Johnson, 2019). French language stakeholders and partners in advocacy - including educators, business, government, external stakeholders, and most importantly, families and communities. French language educators - understand the importance of French language skills and knowledge of French and Francophone culture. Business, government, nonprofit/nongovernmental organization need these same skills and knowledge. Families and communities are trying to safeguard heritage languages and cultures, and to ensure that they are transmitted to future generations.

It is also essential to include current, former, and potential language learners in this broad coalition of language supporters and advocates, linking past, present, and future, and demonstrating and ensuring ongoing language use. Moving forward, it is essential to support existing communication and teamwork among stakeholder groups and to develop additional partnerships across geographic and disciplinary/subject-area boundaries. It is also additional to take advantage of online and social media tools to enhance existing relationships and to build new ones.

As the French language and Francophone culture have historical roots and a contemporary presence in much of what is now the United States, it is not difficult to see beyond place names like Maine, Detroit, St. Louis, and New Orleans to envision a new global Francophone community in the US. Beyond this vision however, we need to envision the opportunity for new partnerships and collaborations to build a new, united French language and Francophone

community in the US, including French language speakers along with Americans of French and Francophone heritage. Additional partners include French language stakeholders in business, government, and in our communities.

Building on French language education in our schools and the professional engagement and advocacy of French language educators, parents and communities can play a role in ensuring not only that French language programs in our schools have their support, but also that opportunities for French language learning and use exist throughout the community – including after-school, weekend, and summer programs, as well as experiential and pre-professional learning opportunities and internships.

French language and Francophone partners can play a significant role – not only has the French government launched a worldwide campaign for French based on communication and creativity, but potential Francophone partners exist at both the local and regional levels through the *Organisation de la Francophonie* (OIF), the *Centre de la Francophonie des Amériques* (CFA), the *Conseil pour le développement de la langue française en Louisiane* (CODOFIL), the Franco-American Centre (FAC), etc.

With the context of the importance of French in a multilingual world and an increasingly multilingual US, it is important to consider the current and potential future status of French in the US. While French is the second most widely studied language in the US, as it is in the world, it is nevertheless important to recognize and acknowledge the challenges faced by French language learning and use in the United States, only made worse by the COVID pandemic, and to work to develop partnerships among educators, communities, and prospective employers for French and for multilingualism.

#### V. THE ROLE OF ADVOCACY IN BUILDING MULTILINGUAL FRENCH LANGUAGE SKILLS – PURPOSE, LEADERSHIP, AND METHODS

Advocacy, “persuading people who matter to care about your issue,” is essential in building French language skills and awareness of Francophone culture in the US. Advocacy means “getting listened to, being at the table when decisions are made, being heard by people who make decisions,” and includes “facing and overcoming resistance,” as well as “speaking and writing in compelling ways that make decision makers want to adopt your ideas” (Daly, 2011, p. 15).

Goals of advocacy include increasing availability and access to French language learning through the support and expansion of existing programs and the development of new programs, as well as support of immersion, professional, and heritage and community-based programs. Online and distance learning offer possibilities for extended outreach to underserved learners.

Advocacy is both a challenge and an opportunity for leadership, “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal,” for the French language supporter or stakeholder (Northouse, 2013. p.5). When considering language advocacy, it is important to bear in mind that “throughout history. Social movements – small groups that are loosely connected but united by a shared purpose – have created transformational change” (Satell & Popovic, 2017, para 1).

Advocacy, data driven and grounded in our belief in the value of multilingualism, can be framed by theory in change management, blue ocean strategy, public relations, disruptive innovation, and the psychology of influence. Methods of advocacy include professional engagement, speaking, research, and writing, lobbying, grassroots and social movements, and political action, as well as the use of online and social media.

Beyond an understanding of the nature of advocacy, a willingness to accept the responsibility of leadership, the ability to remain focused on the purpose of advancing French language and Francophone culture in the US, and a working knowledge of the methods of advocacy – from change management and blue ocean strategy to negotiation and social movements, and more -- is essential. That being said, advocacy is for all, with room for many voices and for a wide range of skills and time for engagement.

Lastly, and most importantly, affordability and accessibility are essential for inclusion of all interested learners, with community organizations, philanthropy, and external partners assets for affordability, along with technology and online learning for both.

#### VI. CURRENT TRENDS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Framed by its historic role and current status in the US, the future of French in the US might seem assured. However, language learning and the use of other languages in addition to English generally face challenges in terms of access and availability due to the relatively small number of programs offered, and the elimination of programs (AMACAD, 2017; MLA, 2019; Johnson, 2019). Although the second most widely studied language in the US, French programs also suffered the most significant losses according to the most recent MLA enrollment survey.

Partnerships are essential, including those among educators across the disciplines as well as those with language stakeholders in business, government, and communities – especially including parents. In addition, external stakeholders, such as the French government campaign for the French language worldwide and the French Dual Language Fund, play a major role (French Diplomacy, n.d.; FACE Foundation, n.d.).

## VII. CONCLUSIONS – FRENCH LANGUAGE AND FRANCOPHONE CULTURE IN THE US WITHIN A MULTILINGUAL SOCIETY AND A MULTILINGUAL WORLD

In addition to honoring the role of the French language and Francophone culture in our US history, heritage, and cultural identity, it is just as important to examine the future of French – the language and the cultures – in our future as Americans both at home and as global citizens in a globalized world. “It is thanks to the ethnic and sociocultural diversity of this large family that is ‘La Francophonie’ that the French language regains ground in the United States” (Jaumont & Ross, 2017, para 9).

The significance of French as an American heritage language is multifaceted, including its history, its contemporary role, and its future, as well as the role of both France and of Francophone communities from various parts of the world throughout our history. It is also important to consider the role of linguistic diversity and of multilingualism with respect for all our languages within a country with no official language, and it is essential to bear in mind that there are many heritage languages representing different aspects of our history and of our diversity in what is now the US.

There are several fundamental elements – the use of French throughout our society and the learning of French, along with awareness of the significance of French language and Francophone culture locally and globally, and throughout our history as well as in contemporary society. While they may be considered and discussed separately, it is their interplay both within the individual, in our increasingly multilingual society, and globally, that is most revelatory. Action plans need to be developed for each, with appropriate linkages to ensure maximum impact. The future of French language and Francophone culture in the US has linkages to the current international campaign for the French language in the world, which centers on “learning, communicating and creating in French” (France Diplomacy, n.d., para 5).

The use of French includes several elements – its use in the home, the community, the workplace, in the creative and performing arts, and in research. In order to promote the use of French in the home, it is essential to ensure that the use of other languages in the home is actively encouraged for all ages, and especially within the child development, parenting, and early childhood education sectors. This includes recreational and social opportunities for all ages as well as the development of relevant materials and media, especially for children and young people. In addition, French needs to be present in the community, with opportunities to hear and observe French being used in a variety of settings, including local institutions, organizations, businesses, reflecting the need for language skills generally and French language skills in the workplace and for employment opportunities through job fairs and other initiatives (NAE, 2017; ACTFL, 2019; Gaglione, 2019; Cultural Services, n.d.a). In the workplace, the use of French should be encouraged in as many areas as possible, including customer service, public relations and advertising, as well as through internships and professional development. The creative and performing arts are especially important in developing the sustainable use of French as a means of individual and collective expression, and opportunities should be developed at all levels, and – while partnerships are always beneficial – this is an area in which the support through philanthropy and external partners can play an especially important role. Lastly, while research is not as frequently discussed in terms of language, it is important to note the major role of the French language as a research tool, via scholarly monographs as well as through scholarly and peer-reviewed journals available through databases like *Persée*, *Gallica*, and others. The use of French-language research resources should also be encouraged in writing about French, Francophone, as well in research generally.

The learning of French includes educational institutions at all levels and for all ages, immersion programs, online learning, study abroad, as well as after-school, summer, and weekend programs. In the US generally, not all students have the opportunity to learn additional languages, as only 15% of elementary schools offer language programs and some French programs, especially in colleges and universities, are at risk or have been eliminated in recent years (AMACAD, 2017; Johnson, 2019; MLA, 2019). Community-based programs, which can be created by sociocultural organizations and institutions, along with online learning, can play an important role in providing relevant and low-cost learning opportunities.

Increasing general interest in and awareness of French language and Francophone culture also includes the engagement of those who may not speak French, and this means active outreach to all – to Americans of French and Francophone ancestry and beyond. It is important to remember the more than 10M Americans of French ancestry in the US, and also to include the 1.3M French language learners along with those who have studied French at some point, Francophiles of all ages, and the general public – who may be potentially interested in learning the language and/or in learning more about the culture (French Americans, 2022; American Councils, 2017). Capturing the interest of a broad cross-section of the public through a wide range of French- and Francophone-related activities, programs, and events is essential in creating the environment to promote deeper interest in the culture which may lead to the motivation to learn a new language or re-acquire a completely or partially lost heritage language.

Any action plan needs to focus on purpose – why a person would develop an interest in another culture, and why any person would take on the challenge of learning and using an additional language. These purposes can range from the desire to communicate with a family member or loved one in their mother tongue to a desire to make the world a better place. It is interesting to note that – although important -- career and job demands are not the most powerful drivers of successful learning (COERLL, n.d.). This central question has often been discussed in terms of attitude, motivation, and the psychology of the language learner (Dornyei, 2005). On closer examination, drilling down into the day-to-day reality of the process, the interaction of motivation, resolution, and habit, are the critical factors in sustainable learning

and use of additional languages. The first step is to create the desire to learn more about the language and the culture – through activities, programs, events, and media aimed at a wide public. Once the initial motivation is in place, and the decision/resolution to move forward has been made, many believe that the most difficult challenge has been successfully met and resolved. However, sustainable motivation and the habit of language learning require making a place for the new language in the life of the learner and making time for language learning and use (Leveen, 2021).

### VIII. CONCLUDING THOUGHT

As a nation of immigrants, the United States has always been home to many languages and many cultures. Continuing to encourage multilingualism – the learning and use of other language -- is both a good thing and the right thing to do. In a globalized and interconnected world, multilingualism is no longer a skill for the future, but for the present (Montlaur, 2019).

In terms of French as a heritage language in the US, the future of the French language and Francophone culture in the US is largely a question of *Francoresponsabilité* defined as “*développer l’usage de la langue française au quotidien,*” or developing the use of the French language on a daily basis – in daily life (France-Amerique, 2019, para 1). Just as language is part of the whole of life and bilingualism is a way of life for more than half the world population, the future of French includes all French and Francophone stakeholders – in the classroom, in the community, and in the worldwide community of French language speakers excelling in all domains.

French language skills and knowledge of Francophone culture are a wonderful window into many diverse Francophone cultures around the world and here at home, empowering us to reconnect with our US history and heritage as well as facilitating an understanding of other mindsets and worldviews and collaborations both globally and locally.

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