



EXPLORING EXPECTANCY THEORY AS MOTIVATION FOR LEARNING FRENCH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE ACROSS GENDER

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Abstract:

Previously many language teachers feared that online learning may not give the same impact that it had for face-to-face learning. Nevertheless, now, online learning has become a new norm. More studies on online language learning have emerged. Past studies have shown that the success (or failure) of online classes is the strength of the engagement that took place during the online sessions. This study is done to see if there are gender differences in the learning of a foreign language; French; specifically in terms of Valence, instrumentality, expectancy. French as a foreign language across gender. The instrument used is a survey with four sections. Section A looks at the demographic profile, Section B looks at Valence, Section C looks at Instrumentality and Section D looks at Expectancy. A total of 170 learners responded to the survey. 44 of them were male learners, while 126 were female. Findings revealed variations in gender motivation and perceptions of online language learning.

Keywords: French language, online learning, valence, instrumentality, expectancy

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1. Introduction

Online learning modes have opened up varieties of studies especially in the learning of language. Previously many language teachers feared that online learning may not give the same impact that it had for face-to-face learning. Nevertheless, now, online learning has become a new norm. More studies on online language learning have emerged. Past studies have shown that the success (or failure) of online classes is the strength of the engagement that took place during the online sessions.

However, the study by Yu (2021), found that there are gender preferences in online learning. His study found that male learners preferred online learning compared to face-to-face learning. The study also found that female learners did not favour online learning compared to their male counterparts. In addition to that, the study by Wightman (2020) and Gtowka (2014) reported that there are differences in language learning. Wightman (2020) found that the differences occurred because of the variations in the learners' motives to learn the language. Gtowka (2014) found that there are gender differences in engagement in learning foreign languages. The study found that male learners are more engaging than female learners in the language class. Yu (2021) suggested that future studies look at gender differences in relation to online learning. Hence, this study is done to see if there are gender differences in the learning of a foreign language, French. This study is done to answer the following questions;

- 1) How is Valence portrayed in motivation to learn French across gender?
- 2) How Instrumentality portrayed in motivation to learn French across gender?
- 3) How is Expectancy portrayed in motivation to learn French across gender?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This section discusses motivations to learn, learning French online, past studies and also the conceptual framework of the study.

2.2 Demotivation and Motivation to Learn

Learners can sometimes be demotivated to learn when they fear learning the language. According to Rahmat (2019), factors like learners' strategies, learning process and learning environment can be both demotivating and motivation for learners. Nevertheless, these same factors can be motivating factors if the teachers play a major role in the classroom.

Different people are motivated by different things. Gardner & Lambert (1959) presented two types of motivation; (a) integrative and instrumentality. For integrative motivation, learners with integrative motivation want to learn the language so that they can better understand and get to know the people who speak that language. For instrumentality, learners with an instrumental motivation want to **learn a**

language because of a practical reason such as getting a job promotion or getting into university.

The motivation to do something is influenced by several related factors. With reference to figure 1, Vroom & Deci (1970), in their expectancy theory states that motivation is an outcome of how much an individual wants a reward (Valence), the assessment that the likelihood that the effort will lead to expected performance (Expectancy) and the belief that the performance will lead to reward (Instrumentality).

With regards to language learning, learners' motivation is the drive that pushes them to put effort (Expectancy). In the learning of foreign language (French), learners began with their expectation (Expectancy) of what they will get (Instrumentality) after they have completed learning (Rewards).

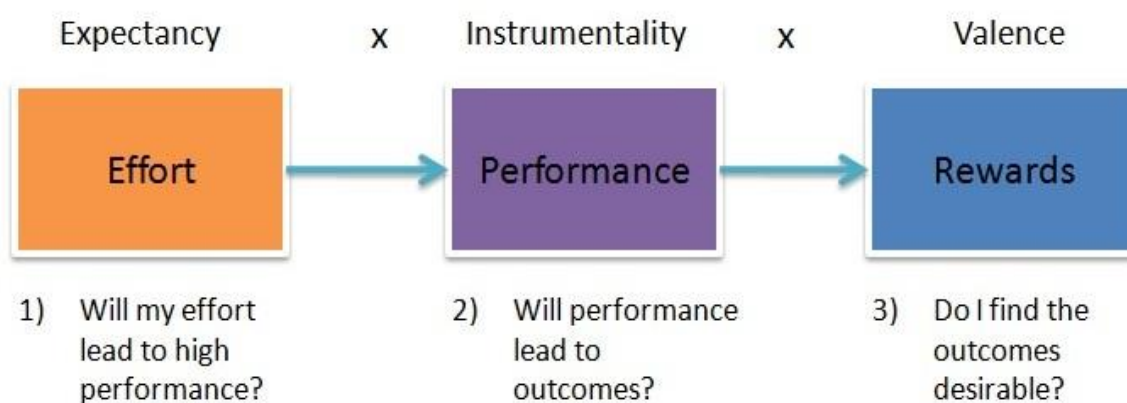


Figure 1: VIE Theory (Vroom & Deci, 1970)

In this paradigm (Figure 1), motivation refers to three factors

- Valence: what we think we will get out of a given action/behaviour (what's in it for me?)
- Instrumentality: the belief that if I perform a specific course of action I will succeed (clear path?)
- Expectancy: the belief that I will be definitely able to succeed (self-efficacy)

2.3 Learning French Online

Given no choice from the pandemic, language teachers have to cope with teaching online. Janssen (2021) reported that learners are concerned with content when they study online. In addition to that, learners felt that they had less attention span for online learning than for face-to-face classes. This is because they felt online classes lacked engagement. On the other hand, according to Lin and Warschauer (2014), the learning of French and Spanish has been taught online even before the pandemic. Teachers need to improvise their approach to make the online classes successful.

2.4 Past Studies

This section discusses past studies on learning foreign language for instrumental reasons, learning French for instrumental reason, learning French for social reasons, and also learning French with grammar rules.

2.4.1 Learn Foreign Language for Instrumental Reasons

There are past studies to show that learners often learn a foreign language for instrumental reasons. The study by Lai (2013) investigates Taiwanese university students' English learning orientation from the perspective of various important L2 motivation concepts and the notion of English as an international language. The uniqueness also lies in its comparison and contrast of both day and night school students' motivation for studying English. A total of 267 undergraduate students from a science and technology university in New Taipei City, Taiwan, participated in this survey study. The results show that the majority of the participants studied English for travel, instrumental and integrative orientations, as well as intrinsic motivation and the ideal L2 self, but not for external pressure and the ought-to L2 self. No significant difference was found between day and night school students' motivation for studying English. The term "imperativeness /integrative orientation", which has been rooted in L2 motivation research for decades, is re-examined in this study, especially with the current important status of the English language in the world. This paper will consider possible implications for English language professionals to reconceptualise and re-approach EFL learners' motivation to study English.

2.4.2 Learn French for Instrumental Reasons

Every learner who studies French has different reasons to do so. It could be because of trivial reasons such as filling in their own past time or for specific instrumental reasons. Study by Ruyffelaert & Hadermann (2012) shows the impact of age and gender on high school students' motivation and attitudes towards French in Instituut Van Gent (Flanders, Belgium). 126 learners, 60 males and 66 females, answered a modified version of the survey developed by Housen, Pierrard & Janssens (2001). The surveys include questions regarding demographic information, attitude and the general opinion of the students, and the factors of integrative and instrumental motivation. The findings were then classified into genders and age of these students. Ruyffelaert (2012) and his team found that male students are more likely to learn French because of instrumental matters such as increasing likelihood of getting hired. Whereas female students seek to incorporate the language in their daily life for social settings. Another finding from this study is that younger students appear to be motivated to learn compared to older age groups.

Besides this, Johnson (2010) also conducted a study on motivation and attitudes towards learning French in the university's foreign language classroom. A class of 22 students from the age of 18 to 29 who registered for a French course in Midwestern American University took part in this study. Johnson mentioned that not all of these

learners are enrolling with the intention of fulfilling their core curriculum requirement. Thus, Johnson prepared a questionnaire to make out their true motivation in learning French at the beginning of the semester and also at the end of it. An interview was also conducted personally with each student to get a better insight of their motivation. On top of that, classroom observations were conducted six times. The results of this study shows that instrumental motivation of the participants are constant throughout the semester meanwhile their integrative motivational tendencies increased positively.

2.4.3 Learn French for Social Reasons

A quantitative study involving 162 respondents from six public institutions in Malaysia who choose French as the elective subject (Hassan Hussin 2020), found that the majority of participants choose French to increase their foreign language proficiency, followed by communication and understanding of French culture. Some of the respondents learn French for tourism, employment, and business. The results of this study are intended to assist the lecturers and curriculum makers in providing teaching materials and finding methods that are compatible with the learning objectives and the background of students. This finding is in line with the objective of the French government (France Diplomacy 2021) to encourage people to learn French for social reasons such as French for cooking, fashion, theatre, the visual arts, dance and architecture. Mastering basic French language also comes handy upon visiting France and offer insights into France's culture.

2.4.4 Learn French Following the Grammar Rules

Sewoenam (2016) found that there was evidence of the influence of English in learning French as a foreign language. It was a natural process for students to learn French and the teachers can take advantage of it to improve their teaching methods to students. The study which involved first and second year students of French from the University of Ghana, a total of 100 first- and second-year students showed that the students had influence of English when they were asked to describe an image orally and in written form. This should not be seen as a source of frustration for the teachers but instead as an opportunity to improve the quality of teaching. Beside of that, Tobing & Pranowo (2020) conducted another study on the effectiveness of blended learning in French Intermediate Grammar courses at Indonesian University. In this mixed method study, data has been taken for one semester of 37 students taking a French intermediate grammar course. In this study, it shows that students were more independent in developing their creativity, autonomy and innovation in managing blended learning, hence the learning outcome was achieved. Therefore, blended learning was able to maximize the quality of students learning.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

This study is rooted the theory of VIE by Vroom & Deci (1970) and also Winke's (2005) motives for learning French as a foreign language. The framework is scaffolded from Vrooms' and Deci's (1970) VIE main themes of (1) Valence, (2) Instrumentality, and (3)

Expectancy. These themes are then supported by Winke's (2005) (a) Preactional, (b) Actional and (c) Postactional motives presented in Figure 2 below.

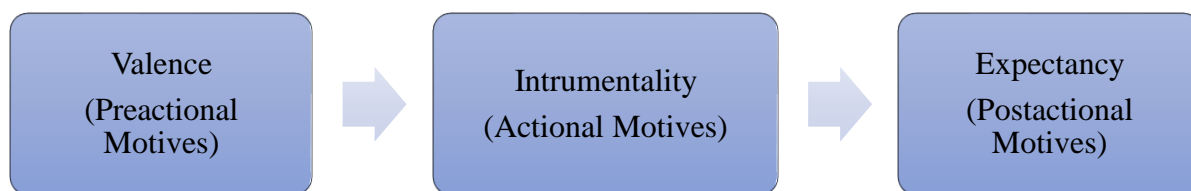


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework of the Study

3. Methodology

This quantitative study is done to explore the expectancy theory as motivation for learning French as a foreign language across gender. The instrument used is a survey with four sections. Section A looks at the demographic profile, Section B looks at Valence, Section C looks at Instrumentality and Section D looks at Expectancy. A total of 170 learners responded to the survey. 44 of them were male learners, while 126 were female. Data is analysed using SPSS version 26 to reveal percentage for the demographics and mean score for the variables.

In addition to that, a t-test is conducted to investigate if there were and significant differences in the variables across gender. A score of < 0.05 shows that there is a significant difference ;while a score of > 0.05 shows there is no statistically significant difference.

4. Findings

4.1 Introduction

This section presents the findings of the data in the form of pie chart for the demographics. Mean scores were presented in the form of bar charts.

4.2 Findings for Demographics

Figure 3 below shows the distribution of gender in the study. Male learners made up 26% and female learners made up of 74%.

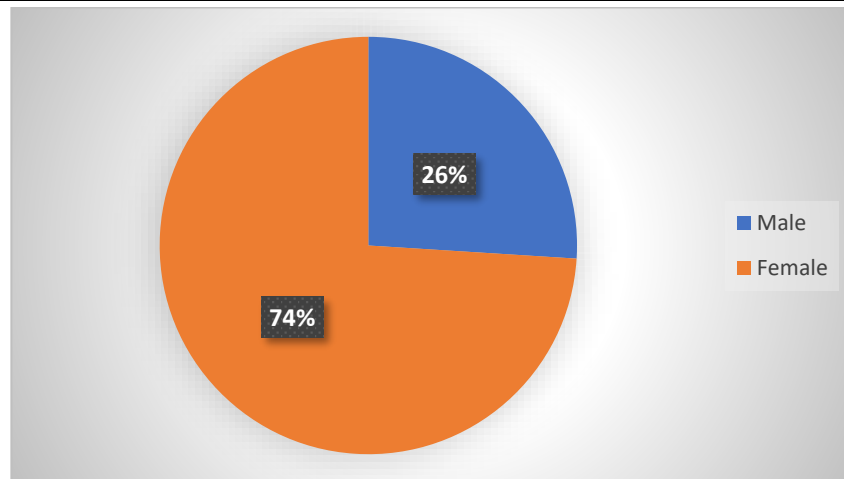


Figure 3: Percentage for Gender

4.3 Findings for Valence

This section presents the answer to RQ 1: How is Valence portrayed in motivation to learn French across gender?

Table 1: ANOVA Table for Valence

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
MPAQ1films * Q1Gender	Between Groups (Combined)	.717	1	.717	.666	.416
	Within Groups	180.789	168	1.076		
	Total	181.506	169			
MPAQ2FINANCIA * Q1Gender	Between Groups (Combined)	4.355	1	4.355	4.204	.042
	Within Groups	174.021	168	1.036		
	Total	178.376	169			
MPAQ3NOTREQUIRED * Q1Gender	Between Groups (Combined)	7.666	1	7.666	6.689	.011
	Within Groups	192.545	168	1.146		
	Total	200.212	169			
MPAQ4ENJOYOUTSIDE * Q1Gender	Between Groups (Combined)	.511	1	.511	.612	.435
	Within Groups	140.365	168	.836		
	Total	140.876	169			
MPAQ5BORADENVIEW * Q1Gender	Between Groups (Combined)	.014	1	.014	.019	.892
	Within Groups	124.510	168	.741		
	Total	124.524	169			

Table 1 above shows the results of t-test for each item. Two items show p value of < 0.05. The first is for the item (0.042) "I am learning French to understand films, videos, or music". The second is for the item (0.011) "I would take French class even if it is not required".

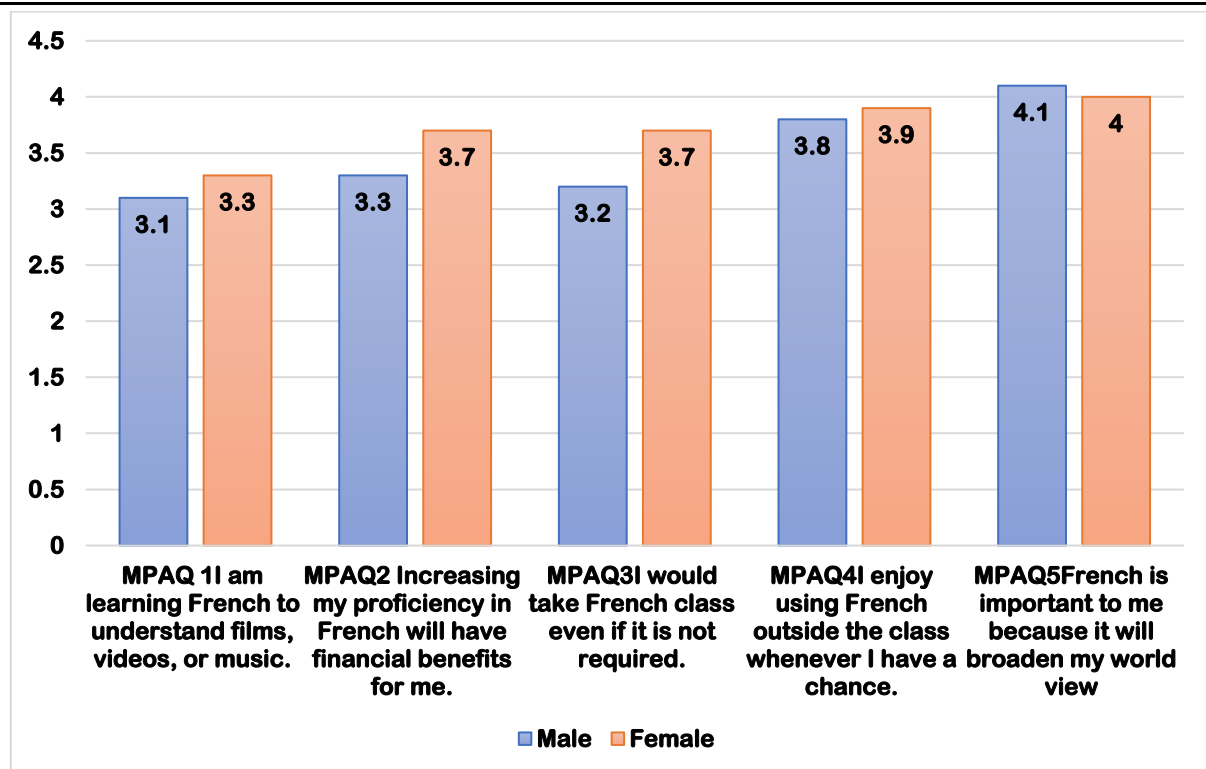


Figure 4: Mean score for Valence

Figure 4 shows that most of the respondents believe that French is important to them because it will broaden their worldview be it Male (4.1) or Female (4). Both gender, Male (3.8) and Female (3.9) also find themselves enjoying using French outside the class whenever they have a chance. However, there are distinct opinion differences in taking French class even if it is not required between Male (3.2) and Female (3.7). Besides that, most Female respondents find that increasing their proficiency in French will have financial benefits for them (3.7) meanwhile only (3.3) Male respondents find so. Even so, both respondents categories, Male (3.1) and Female (3.3) do not ultimately learn French to understand films, videos, or music.

4.4 Findings for Instrumentality

This section presents the answer to RQ2: How Instrumentality portrayed in motivation to learn French across gender?

Table 2 below shows the ANOVA table for Instrumentality. T-test reveals that none of the items are significantly different across gender.

Table 2: ANOVA Table for Instrumentality

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
MPPOSTQ1FUTURE * Q1Gender	Between Groups (Combined)		1.289	1	1.289	1.561	.213
	Within Groups		138.688	168	.826		
	Total		139.976	169			
MPPOSTQ2SOCIALSTAUS * Q1Gender	Between Groups (Combined)		.822	1	.822	1.162	.283
	Within Groups		118.825	168	.707		
	Total		119.647	169			
MPPOSTQ3INTERACT * Q1Gender	Between Groups (Combined)		.126	1	.126	.193	.661
	Within Groups		109.222	168	.650		
	Total		109.347	169			
MPPOSTQ4CULTURALGR OUP * Q1Gender	Between Groups (Combined)		2.716	1	2.716	3.028	.084
	Within Groups		150.696	168	.897		
	Total		153.412	169			
MPPOSTQ5SELFCONFIDE NCE * Q1Gender	Between Groups (Combined)		2.324	1	2.324	2.527	.114
	Within Groups		154.529	168	.920		
	Total		156.853	169			

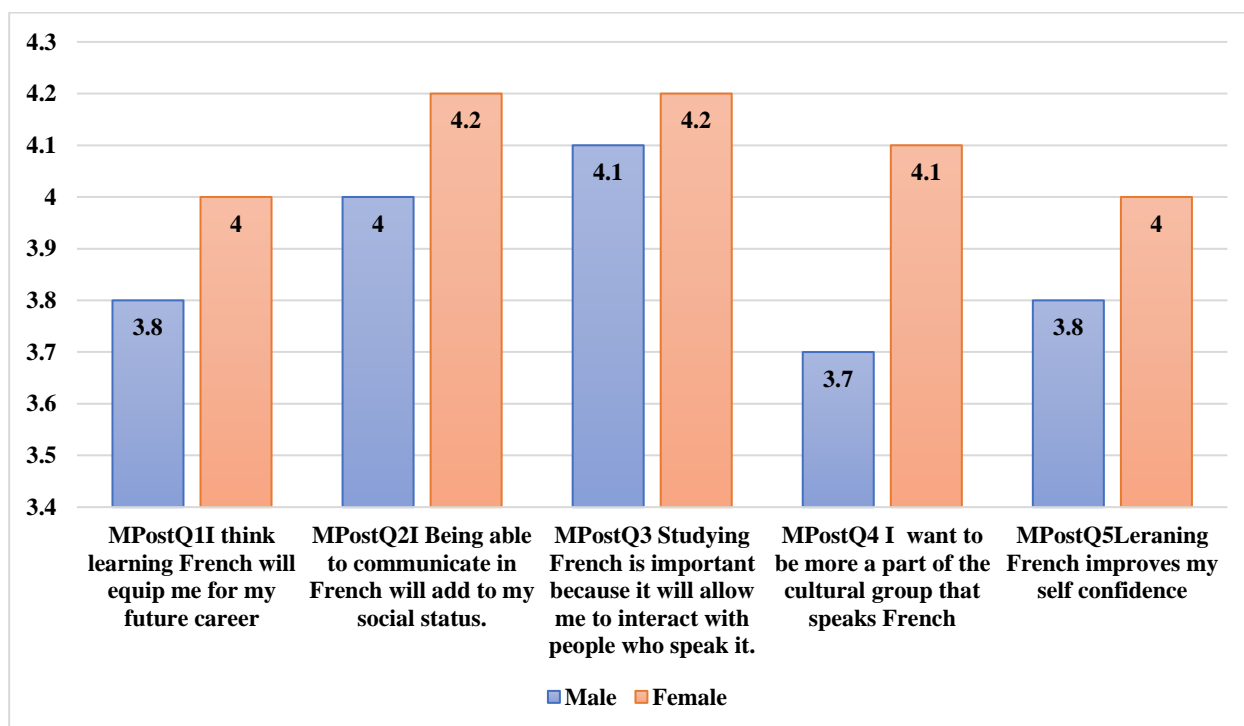


Figure 5: Mean for Instrumentality

Figure 5 shows that most of the respondents believe that Studying French is important because it will allow them to interact with people who speak it, Male (4.1) and Female (4.2). The same result, Male (4) and Female (4.2) find that by learning French will help them to communicate in French and will add to their social status. (3.8) Male and (4) Female believe learning French will equip them for their further career. The same result (3.8) Male and (4) Female think that by learning French can improve their self-confidence.

4.5 Findings for Expectancy

This section presents answer to the RQ3: How is Expectancy portrayed in motivation to learn French across gender?

Table 3: ANOVA Table for Expectancy

		ANOVA Table					
			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
MAQ1GRAMMR * Q1Gender	Between Groups (Combined)		1.777	1	1.777	3.198	.076
	Within Groups		93.335	168	.556		
	Total		95.112	169			
MAQ2VOCABULARY * Q1Gender	Between Groups (Combined)		.291	1	.291	.719	.398
	Within Groups		68.085	168	.405		
	Total		68.376	169			
MAQ3ACTIVITIES * Q1Gender	Between Groups (Combined)		.026	1	.026	.072	.789
	Within Groups		62.097	168	.370		
	Total		62.124	169			
MAQ4ASKQUESTIONS * Q1Gender	Between Groups (Combined)		1.317	1	1.317	3.628	.059
	Within Groups		60.972	168	.363		
	Total		62.288	169			
MAQ5FEEDBACK * Q1Gender	Between Groups (Combined)		.710	1	.710	2.229	.137
	Within Groups		53.502	168	.318		
	Total		54.212	169			
MAQ6LISTSPEAK * Q1Gender	Between Groups (Combined)		.236	1	.236	.660	.418
	Within Groups		60.211	168	.358		
	Total		60.447	169			

Table 3 presents the ANOVA table for expectancy. T-test reveals that none of the items had a score of <0.05. SO, none of the items show significant difference across gender.

Figure 6 shows that both Male and Female students find that listening and speaking should be an important focus in the classroom Male (4.5) Female (4.5). Both gender, Male (4.4) and Female (4.6) find it is important for the teacher to give immediate feedback to ensure they are correct in class. Another same result Male (4.4) and Female (4.6) believe that they should ask questions if they have not understood a point in class. Male (4.4), Female (4.5) agreed that activities in this class should be designed to help them to improve their abilities to communicate in this language. In addition, Male (4.3) and Female (4.4) think that vocabulary should be an important focus in the class. However, both respondents had the lowest figure that the grammar should be an important focus in the class, Male (4.1) and Female (4.3).

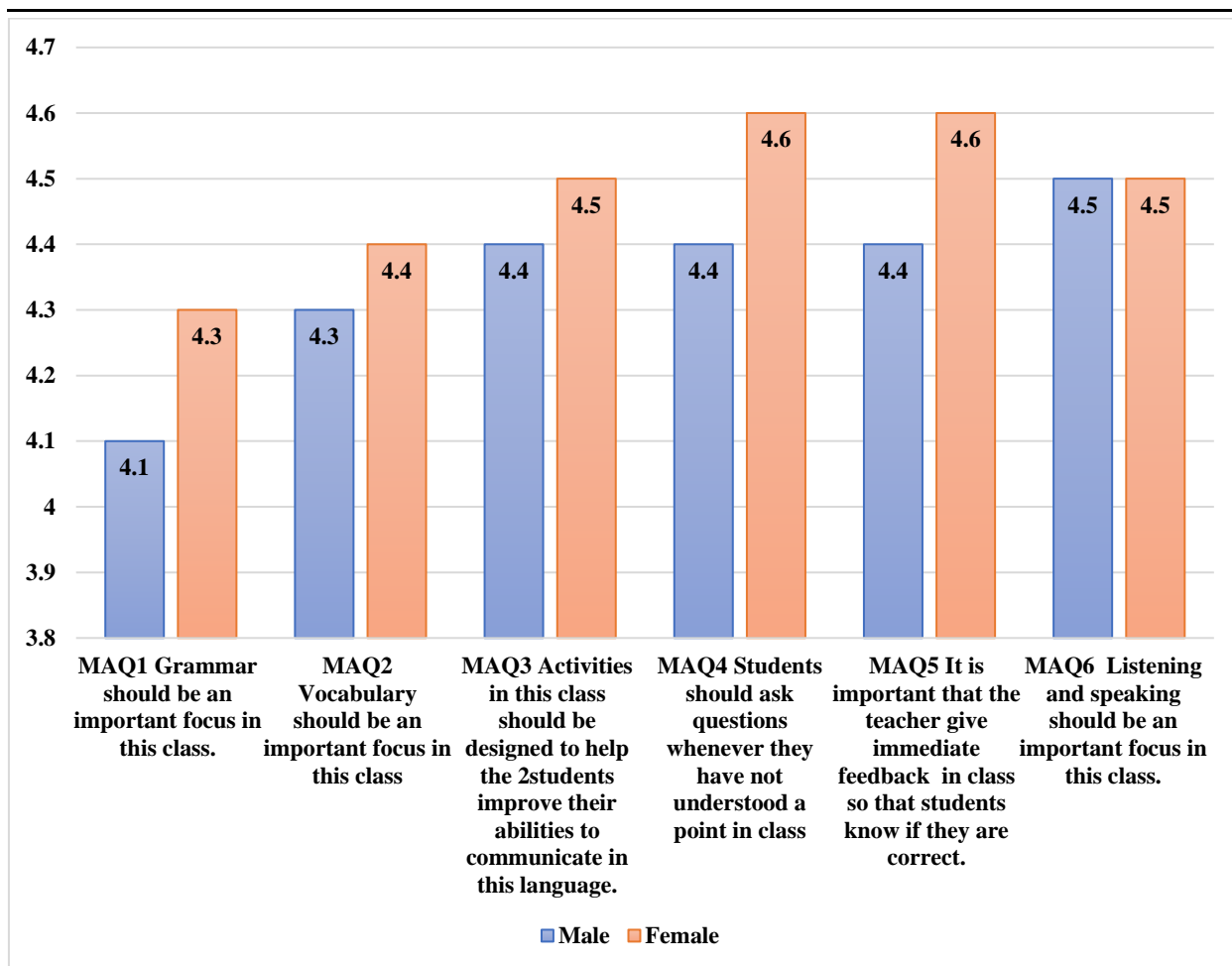


Figure 6: Mean for Expectancy

5. Conclusion

5.1 Summary of Findings

Two items show p value of < 0.05 . The first is for the item (0.042) "I am learning French to understand films, videos, or music". The second is for the item (0.011) "I would take French class even if it is not required". Both items showed that female learner had higher mean than their male peers. Similar findings were also reported by Ruyffelaert & Hadermann (2012) who found that male learners were motivated by instrumental reasons while female for social reasons. Female learners would learn a foreign language for their personal and social needs. In addition to that, Yu (2021) also found that female learners do not favour online learner. This explains why Gtowka (2014) also reported that male learners were found to be more engaging during online learning. Male and female learners had different motives for learning a foreign language. Sadly, the pandemic has brought all language classes online and male learners were found to be more engaging than their female counterparts.

5.2 Pedagogical Implications and Suggestions for Future Research

Teachers could design different courses for different genders. According to Yu (2021), For females, teachers could design courses in need of more engagement and patience, while for males, teachers could provide courses in need of advanced technical skills and learning strategies. For those mixed with males and females, the teacher could strike a balance by providing various kinds of courses and tasks to attract their attention and improve their learning outcomes. Future research could explore more differences in the way learners respond to online learning of foreign languages.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interests.

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