



‘Me, (my) French and I’: Exploring Native Speakerism in French as an Additional Language (FAL) teaching in the United Kingdom.

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Abstract

In the last two decades, research on language teacher identity has become an important topic of inquiry in the applied linguistics community. Language teacher identity is a critical aspect of second language teaching, the classroom teachers around the world are the connections between different cultures and peoples and it is paramount stakeholders such as policymakers, teacher educators and teachers themselves understand how one's identity impacts their decisions and practices. Similarly, the labels 'native' and 'non-native' teachers have been ascribed to teachers around the globe often without questioning their origins but most importantly the implications on teachers' identities as users and teachers of the languages they were born into or had to learn. Labelling being a political act, power dynamics in language teaching are influenced by these labels and there is often a misconception that 'native' teachers are better teachers than 'non-natives' due to their superior linguistic abilities and authentic cultural knowledge. This preference is called native-speakerism.

Research has been conducted mainly on teachers of English around the world due to its international reach, but little has been done to study other languages such as French. This research being motivated by personal experiences and a need to address the hyperfocus on knowledge being produced in English about English, this study sought to investigate the extent to which teachers of French in the United Kingdom are affected by native-speakerism, specifically how their identities and practices are defined by or in spite of the preference for native-speakers. To seek out answers, an initial survey was shared online asking teachers of French (n = 91) to report demographic informational, beliefs about their linguistic and cultural knowledge of French and French-speaking world, information about their professional situation and how they taught French. This was followed by semi-structured interviews (n = 11) conducted online to explore in depth the topics of identity, language teaching in the United Kingdom and the labels of 'native' & 'non-native' teachers of French. Qualitative and quantitative data sets collected in the process were analysed and data triangulation was conducted to offer new perspectives on this research topic.

The study's findings indicate that teachers, regardless of their labels, do not operate differently and share a wide range of beliefs. Their practices are modulated by external pressures rather than their 'native' status. Nonetheless, native-speakerist ideologies remain pervasive in language teaching in the UK and native-speakerism manifest itself in shapes more intricate and dynamic that go beyond the preference for 'native' speakers. Still, most interviewed teachers show predispositions to move beyond simple dichotomies and harmful labels. The implications for future research, theory and pedagogy are discussed at the end of the dissertation.

Keywords: native-speakerism, language teacher identity, mixed methods, language teaching, trans- perspectives, United Kingdom

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1: Starting points

During my employment as a language assistant in a relatively small international independent school, ideologies surrounding language learning became apparent on several occasions. One specific comes to mind. During a lesson with A-level students after their written mock exams in which they had to write short essays regarding a film they had studied. A student asked my 'non-native' colleague why they had marked a sentence as being clumsy and grammatically incorrect before questioning her abilities to speak French as they wouldn't know what people who speak French say in France. After challenging the pupil and having to justify my colleague's linguistic abilities and teaching skills, a question was raised: why would the student question the skills of their own teacher when in fact they are qualified and competent. After some research and reading, it became apparent that both incidents were a result of native-speakerism (Holliday, 2018) in its simplest and common form: the belief that 'native' speakers (teachers or not) are better users of a specific language in comparison to their 'non-native' speaking counterparts.

1.2: Aims of the dissertation

This dissertation will aim to explore to what extent native speakerism affects teachers of French in the United Kingdom with a specific focus on their identities and practices.

Chiefly, this project will aim to use mixed-methods to interpret reported beliefs and practices whilst also triangulating data from participants to redefine native speakerism and other ideologies surrounding language teaching. This project will also be an attempt at studying native speakerism in the UK in one of the main languages being taught across the various composing nations and at most level of education. As a result, it might be possible to expand the research field of native speakerism to other languages than English and redefine native speakerism as this will allow other perspectives to inform researchers at the crossroads of multiple applied linguistics strands.

The dissertation will be structured as follows: first, a literature review will provide definitions for key terms and expand on the existing literature to adapt it to our context;

then the methodology chapter will present the research questions and how this project was conducted; next, quantitative and qualitative results will be presented before triangulating the data at different levels. Finally, the discussion section will provide answers to each individual research question, consider the limitations of this project before offering some tentative conclusions with implications for teaching practices, research and theory.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This concise literature review will provide an overview of relevant theory and research on the multiple topics overlapping in this dissertation: identity, native speakerism, and language teaching. Suggestions for how to consider native speakerism using a trans-disciplinary approach will be given to start research in contexts such as the present one. First, it is important to contextualise this research project as it is the first one (to the best of my knowledge) set in the UK context mentioning native speakerism in French language teaching. This will be done by providing an overview of language teaching in the UK in terms of perceptions and systemic failures, and then detail the concepts of 'identity' and 'language teacher identity'. Next, terms such as 'native speakers' and 'native speakerism', this will be done by providing a short historiography of the term 'native' speaker and reviewing various forms of native speakerism and their articulations, but also possible solutions.

The literature regarding native speakerism mainly surveying the English linguascape, an effort will be made to address the few studies which are closely related to this project even if in other contexts.

2.1: Context of the study

Pupils in the United Kingdom (UK) do not receive mandatory language lessons as part of their instruction past the age of 14 (the reality is different in each of the nations due to devolution of educational policies to the local government but for the argument's sake this will be generalised). This creates a strong disinterest for language learning and instigates a 'vicious circle' (Collen and Duff, 2024; Language trends England 2024) of further disinterest and dehumanisation of language subjects and any related knowledge in society. This common misconception that British pupils and the society at large are 'bad at languages' influences various spheres of UK's international relevancy (trade, security, foreign affairs...), but also at the national scale where achievement is often compared to European standards where pupils receive mandatory education in another language (Lanvers, 2017). The author also highlights how devolvement means that across

the 4 nations provisions are different and create different perceptions of language learning depending on the region and even at school-level. There is a significant drop in entries for languages post the compulsory stages as these subjects are seen as elitist, lack access in higher education and do not offer a large offer of future opportunities compared to other subjects such as STEM subjects. Lanvers reports that the decrease at secondary level is due to a sense of repetitiveness in learning and perceived lack of progress and that additionally geographic inequalities, socio-economic factors, gender bias, early exposure conditions and Brexit are cited as the major problems affecting language learning in the UK. These factors therefore exclude and marginalize specific groups of pupils from learning languages and reproduce the 'vicious cycle'.

Yet, French remains the most taught language in the UK (Collen and Duff, 2024). The researchers having surveyed a wide range of schools throughout the 4 nations and exposed some of the systemic issues in their findings. At primary level, teachers are often unqualified, feel little support to provide quality language teaching and the guidelines provided are often too unclear and generic. When thinking about the transition from primary to secondary school, transition is often amorphous as links between schools have diminished over the years and that teaching provisions are widely different from one establishment to another, forcing the secondary system to palliate for any inconsistencies in pupils' knowledge and motivation. At secondary level, teachers view harsh grading standards as a massive deterrent to language learning and 64% of the surveyed respondents reported that the new specifications for languages would have no positive or negative effect on uptake. The same respondents claim to have similar number of entries at GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education – age 16) but that entries at A-level (Advanced qualification – age 18) have slowly been decreasing in the last decade. Still, teachers seemed to have a positive outlook on language learning in the UK. Watts (2004) explained that at university level, students who studied languages at secondary level often not elect to carry on due to a negative judgment of their language skills, a lack of interest in the culture of the countries associated with the language and a negative school experience. Whereas those that choose did so to distance themselves from falling victims of stereotypes of the monolingual British and gain an international outlook and greater opportunities (Yashima, 2002). However, "cold spots" at tertiary level

in England are appearing. A 'cold spot' is to be understood as a physical region where no language programmes are offered at tertiary level (Muradás-Taylor & Taylor, 2024) and in the last 2 decades, in England but admittedly in the other nations too, their number has been increasing especially in universities deservng local populations with low-entry requirements. Languages as sole subjects are becoming rarer, and most institutions have had to reconsider offering languages beside another subject (either a STEM or humanities subject) except prestigious institutions which continue to attract numerous candidates. This decrease in provisions therefore diminishes greatly the number of people becoming skilled in languages and becoming teachers down the line; 60% of secondary schools in England reported having issues recruiting qualified teachers (Collen and Duff, 2024), a trend that sees targets for teacher recruitment fall short every year (only 974 of 1986 spots were filled in the 2023/2024 cycle)

Regarding policies, at school level, 63% of 998 schools recently surveyed had no school-level written policies relating to language(s) (Forbes & Morea, 2024), implying that each school and its staff were in charge of the policies they wanted to implement. After analysing qualitatively, the policies that existed, the researchers found that they often reinforced standard ideologies related to the English language, conceptualised other languages (French as a subject or community languages) than English as commodities that can benefit the learners if skills can be transferable, thus hierarchising languages and not valuing them as resources but more like auxiliary objects. These policies or lack thereof may create tensions and contradictions in practice. Languages if unsupported or under a regime of conservation and 'policing' (Cushing, 2020) then cannot be promoted in a way that will benefit the children and motivate them to learn languages (French or not). From a more generic point of view, policy regarding languages in the UK are described as 'hidden' (Humphries and Ayres-Bennett, 2023), this way of incorporating language(s) into law or processes then create caveats affecting language provisions beyond education with detrimental effect on attitudes and national cohesion. Languages are therefore a ghost component of life, and this masking reinforces the 'normative monoglot ideologies' in the country (Blommaert et al. 2006). Lastly, to respond to the fractured language (teaching) landscape in the UK, efforts are made to decolonize perceptions of languages and go beyond the "English is enough" mindset (Ford and

Santos, 2022). The authors judge that efforts made have fallen short of deconstructing hierarchies and monoglossic philosophies of language in the country as they have just attempted to diversify materials but have not questioned power dynamics or how they came to be. This relegates languages which are present in the UK like Polish and Urdu, in favour of French due to its perceived prestige and historical and economic ties to the country. These tokens of decolonisation are therefore reproducing the ideologies they set out to subvert. The researchers warn stakeholders to not 'jump on the bandwagon' (Moosavi, 2020) and put projects that are collaborative and longitudinal at the forefront of the policy agendas.

Overall, it is possible to observe that the UK is in a crisis-like situation (Bowler, 2020) when it comes to language learning and teaching, however just like any crisis, it can be averted and even reversed. To mitigate the crisis, it is critical that the discourses surrounding English and other languages pivot to more fluid definitions; thinking that 'English is enough' is a dangerous statement that plays into trope of linguistic exceptionalism and 'others' people that either do not speak English or do not speak it in a certain way. This mentality is one of the causes behind the low motivation to learn languages in the UK, but it is also necessary to question the other factors. Without a multifaceted approach (Lanvers, 2017), then a shift cannot happen to change perceptions, systemic failures and unclear policies.

2.2: Identity & Language Teacher Identity

2.2.1: Defining identity

In the poststructuralist philosophy, Norton (2013) defines identity as how a person understands their relation to the world dependent on the time, whether past, present or future, and the space they are situated in. This means that one's identity is internally constructed but also externally; the world influences the individual and the individual influences the world. Pennington and Richards (2016) in their definition of identity as 'unique 'to an individual overlook how if relative to others' perceptions and characteristics, then it is possible to share characteristics with others depending on how they define themselves. De Costa and Norton (2017) reinforce this argument by saying that one's identity is the result of a process or processes which are dynamic in nature, relational to the world and others but also (de)constructed consciously or unconsciously. In their design of investment in language learning, which can be applied to language teaching, Darvin and Norton position investment at the crossing of identity, capital and ideology (Darvin and Norton, 2015). In their model following the Bourdieusan sense (Bourdieu, 1991), capital can be understood as the value attributed to a trait belonging to a person in comparison to benchmarks already existing in a specific context. Ideologies are defined as power-laid sets of beliefs influencing one's perception of the world as dynamic and multifaceted (Montgomery et al., 2024). Under this model, identity needs to be understood as the result of lived experiences in negotiating a position in a context defined by ideologies and structures.

2.2.2: Defining language teacher identity

Language teacher identity is two-fold: it is the combination, negotiation and construction the teacher's identity as a language user and a teacher. This indicates that defining language teacher identity needs to be a project interested in observing evolutions, (de)constructions, interactions and tensions in context. Identifying a language then becomes a process of translating trajectories in and out of the classroom as experience reinforces the identity construction processes. Pennington and Richards (2016) negotiate their identities to provide quality teachings, be perceived as good teachers and maintain their wellbeing. They also insist on how the background and previous learning influence teachers to come into their identity which they then modulate to grow or change and therefore perform to the expected standards of a language teacher. Ajayi (2011) found that teachers' professional and personal identities, specifically their ethnic and social backgrounds, intertwine in the classroom, impact each other, influencing teaching methods and beliefs as a result. This reinforces the need to study identities at the intersection of personal characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender, and language background. This intertwinement means that tensions can appear when attempting to align imagine identities with expected identities in the classroom (Kayi-Aydar, 2019). Therefore, analysing the context in which a teacher presents their knowledge, beliefs and practices seems critical in attempting to identify them.

Teachers in the UK being multilingual and having multiple identities therefore call to approach identity research in a holistic and multileveled manner (Douglas Fir Group, 2016). This research will therefore consider observed and reported identities through translingual (Dovchin & Lee, 2019) and transnational lenses that go beyond bounded conceptions. Im and Park's duoethnographic study into their own identities led the researchers to conclude that through a translanguistic approach, it is possible to obtain critical understandings of teachers that have multiple languages in their repertoire but also teachers who have taught in various linguistic and cultural contexts wherein perceptions may have differed (Im & Park, 2024). The researchers found that through that lens, teachers are able to situate themselves on the local and global scales but also across labels such as 'native' and 'non-native'. The transnational lens needs to be used

in concordance with a translingual perspective (Canagarajah, 2020) as they are connected in a globalised world which constantly redefines bounded definitions of language, nation and identity. Gallardo (2019) found that teachers' identities are heavily influenced by their transnational experiences as they complexify and question their previous self and externally identities.

2.3: Native Speakerism

2.3.1: Defining the 'native speaker'

In theoretical linguistics, a 'native' speaker is often as "an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech community, who knows its language perfectly" in the Chomskyan sense (Chomsky, 1965). In applied linguistics, Davies listed the characteristics of a 'native' speaker as follows: it is the first language acquired during childhood that defines one's nativeness, a 'native' has a perfect command of the language and can judge what is correct or not, they can speak and write fluently, are able to translate fluently or create comparisons for other languages in their first language (Davies, 2003). These definitions have been challenged ever since as they are reductive, unrealistic, harmful and vague (Cheng et al., 2021) and they also disregard categories which embrace multilingual perceptions of one's repertoire such as bilingual or heritage language learner. In the theoretical definition, no operationalisation of the terms are offered and their absolute nature ignore many facets of language such as modalities of communication, diversity and evolution of the linguistic codes. For the applied linguistics definition, most of the characteristics can be achieved by 'non-natives' and are blurry. Both definitions, reinforce monolingualism as the norm and are imbued with power dynamics creating two supposedly different groups. Kiczkowiak attempted to 'demythologise' labels 'native' and 'non-native' to show how much features are covered by these often in an absolute manner, without being critically questioned or a reflection the linguistic realities (Kiczkowiak,2020). Importantly, both definitions forego aspects

which are intrinsically linked to a language: their environment, agency and cultural background.

From a historiographical point of view, the first mention of the 'native' speaker as the ideal language model appears in Dutch and French textbooks in the 16th and 17th centuries (Kött and Vogl, 2023). This mention preludes modern native speakerism as the authors predict that this ideology gained more traction with the apparition of nation-states and unified peoples as 'imagined communities' in the following centuries (Anderson, 2016).

2.3.2: Defining native speakerism

Holliday coined the term native speakerism to define the belief suggesting 'native' speakers as the better users and models for language teaching and learning. (Holliday, 2006;2018). This belief separates therefore the imagined categories of 'natives' and 'non-natives'. The researcher exposes the limitations of this separation based on linguistic grounds as it devalorises 'non-native' teachers and defines them as deficient and reduces their abilities compared to 'natives' by strangely describing them for what they are not, thus alienating them (Dewaele,2018). Native speakerism also puts Western methods and systems as superior to the ones from the non-Western world, imbuing racism and discrimination in the differentiation which affect employment opportunities of the 'non-native' teachers not originating and meeting the expectation of a Western teacher. This definition is similar to Phillipson's 'native speaker fallacy' (Phillipson, 1992) as the 'native' speaker benefits from this by gaining more professional opportunities and a reinforcement of the differences rather than an empowerment of the skills and identities of the 'non-native' teachers. Holliday cautions against separating the two groups during research as it is a way of accidentally reinforcing native speakerist ideologies and calls for a move from mimicking supposedly 'native' superior ways to embracing other ways of languaging whilst being critical of epistemological and praxis stances.

This definition can be criticised as it suggests that the Western and non-Western worlds are monolithic concepts but also that the two groups of teachers are uniform. It

also misses the concepts of agency, the influence of context and if native speakerism manifests itself in only one way at the different levels in which the teachers evolve. The focus is also set on English as the language of instruction and questions arise if one were to consider other languages.

To provide an alternative, Houghton and Rivers, in their monograph situated in the Japanese context, coined the term post-native speakerism, a more nuanced perception of the phenomenon as it can also affect 'native' speakers negatively (Houghton and Rivers, 2013). Still this understanding of native speakerism as a result does not provide a full picture of the processes which create the differentiation. Aneja (2016) provides a solution by defining the process by which 'nativeness' is defined and ascribed to individuals, therefore positioning them in either group, as process based in historical, political, linguistic and racial dynamics affecting practices and identities. To provide an alternative to these processes and labels, Hiratsuka et al. (2023) propose the framework of trans-speakerism, which would empower all teachers in the present and future by ignoring past conceptualisations of 'nativeness' as they are harmful. This would allow more flexibility and openness to different worldviews and conceptions of language, increase awareness and value individuality.

2.3.3: The impacts of native speakerism on identity

Native speakerism affects teachers in different ways in their career. When it comes to employment discrimination, Selvi (2010), Maganaka (2023), Ruecker & Ives (2014) found that in the English language teaching industry 'native' speakers were favoured in most contexts as they are perceived to be better assets than local language teachers in Asia, Africa or the Middle East, with mention of the applicant's 'native' status as key recruitment criterion. If not on linguistic grounds, it is possible to understand these preferences to also be based on gender, nationality, race or education/qualification level. However, even when employed, 'non-native' teachers may face discrimination in other forms such as lower salaries or more administrative work. In our context, it will be noteworthy to observe if such discriminations based on 'nativeness' is felt by the

participants as the Equality Act of 2010 ensures employees cannot be discriminated against based on their protected characteristics such as race, gender or nationality and that (in the state sector at least) it is mandatory to have a teaching qualification to join a school.

Non-native teachers are often delegitimised when it comes to their linguistic abilities compared to 'native' teachers, yet this is more than often based on their (self-)perceived abilities rather than their actual language proficiency (Badrinathan, 2020), which may cause them to feel anxious or succumb to the 'impostor syndrome' (Bernat, 2009). Yet, conclusions where teachers perceive their abilities in a positive light have been reached (Gonzalez, 2016) while still admitting their limitations and imperfections. These confessions prove that 'non-native' teachers need to be empowered to avoid them belittling themselves or constraining their abilities against the model of the 'native' speaker. This differentiation is heightened through discrimination based on one's accent (Lippi-Green, 2012). Accentism is the judgement and assigning activity of power dynamics between different expression of people's identities and characteristics such as age, race or sexuality. 'Native' speakers are often associated with a perfect or neutral speech, therefore marking 'non-natives' as having deficient accents. This discrimination and hierarchisation of speakers can also be based on one's race and co-construction of race and language abilities (or lack thereof) through raciolinguistics lens (Flores and Rosa, 2015) and the conception of the 'aesthetic labourer' (Ramjattan, 2019), implying for the language teacher to be considered 'native' and efficient must possess aesthetic criteria such as skin colour, gender, accent and physical appearance. By 'aestheicising' the ideal teacher, native-speakerism gains a sensory dimension on top of a linguistic one, and it is therefore impossible to study this ideology without considering the intersection of teachers' personal characteristics belonging outside the linguistic realm. This can lead to the tokenisation 'native' speakers as mere artefacts of idealisation and discarding of their abilities as mere results of their birth, voiding their agency and individuality (Hiratsuka et al., 2023). In other contexts, such as bilingual education in the USA, some 'native' teachers expressed how their 'nativeness' was perceived as a 'burden' maintaining monolingual ideologies and elitist perceptions of how to use a language (Cioè-Peña et al., 2016). Lowe and Pinner (2016) articulated how authenticity as an

adjective attached to 'native' speakers gives them authority plus ownership of the language but also positions the West as the learning object, thus reinforcing native speakerist ideologies and processes of discrimination and erasure.

From the angle of learning materials design, Kiczkowiak (2022) surveyed English textbooks and the authors in charge of creating the learning resources and found that most writers and editors were White and 'native' speakers, hence inadvertently enforcing by design a native-speakerist perception of the world. Block and Gray (2017) in focusing on French textbooks came to the same conclusion as textbooks are ideologically laden artefacts facilitating a specific view of French, 'Frenchness' (the state of being French) and the wider French-speaking world.

On the identity construction processes, Valmori and De Costa (2016) emphasize how perceptions of a good language teacher are still influenced by a 'non-native' speaking teacher bias and that macro and popular conceptions still favour 'native' teachers of a language. Motha et al. (2012) stressed the importance of considering the translingual histories of teachers beyond 'native'/'non-native' speaking divides as they allow teachers to balance their identity. Aslan (2015) and He (2021) observed that multilingual teachers have competing and clashing speakerhoods in their identities but also their practices, highlighting the need to go beyond reductivist dichotomies which harm teachers in their professional and personal lives, this could be done by valuing and empowering all teachers in giving them more agency and using self-reflexive methods (Lowe & Kiczkowiak, 2016). Proxies to claim or be defined as 'native' have been observed by Piller (2002) in which participants 'passed' for 'native' speakers willingly or not in the eyes of external stakeholders, thus disrupting conceptualisation of 'nativeness' as finite prove that agency and perceptions but also other modalities than speaking are important defining factors of defining one's identity. In the Canadian context, Wernicke (2017) explained claims to be 'Francophone' or 'Francophile' as proxy for claiming 'native' speakerhood of French and that French from Canada is considered a 'bastard' version from the standard and prestigious French from France variety; Eurocentrism prevails over celebrating local varieties and cultures. Similarly, Byrd Clark & Roy (2022) spotlight how trainee teachers of French in Canada have difficulties positioning themselves in terms of racial identity and citizenship but also how French fits into their lives and is used as a tool

for these trainees to construct their identities but also how they consider reaching native-like proficiency possible using lived experiences from people in their lives. Yuan's review of 22 papers looking at 'non-native' English-speaking teachers' identities concluded that the social connections of teachers, the conflicts at various levels and the retention-issue are factors affecting 'non-native' teachers' identities (Yuan, 2019). This review also highlighted how methodologically narrow research in this area was as the focus of the field was mainly set on researching 'non-native' teachers at the detriment of 'native' teachers but also how the methods used are only qualitative in nature through semi-structured interviews or artefacts and with microscale sample sizes (between 2 and 12 participants).

These restrictions will be addressed in the next section of this dissertation where mixed methods will be used to extend the knowledge regarding the impacts of native speakerism but also create innovative approaches in an understudied context.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1: Overview:

This chapter will present the methodological planning of this dissertation by listing the research questions, the profiles of the participants sought after, the recruitment process and the ethical considerations. Then, the methods and instruments to collect data will be presented before explaining how qualitative and quantitative data sets will be coded and analysed before being triangulated. Limitations will be discussed in the Discussion section of this dissertation.

3.2: Research questions

The main research question (RQ) motivating and justifying this study is:

How are French language teachers in the UK impacted by native-speakerist attitudes?

To answer that question, it was decided to focus on 4 sub-questions exploring potential effects of native speakerism:

- To what extent are French as an Additional Language (FAL) teachers aware of their own and others' native-speakerist attitudes? (RQ 1.1)
- To what extent do native-speakerist attitudes impact their personal identities? (RQ 1.2)
- To what extent do native-speakerist attitudes impact their professional identities? (RQ 1.3)
- To what extent do French language teaching practices reflect teachers' beliefs and native-speakerist ideals? (RQ 1.4)

3.3: Research design

As a mixed-methods study using a questionnaire to collect quantitative and demographic data and semi-structured interviews to collect qualitative data, the design of the study will enable the researcher to triangulate data items to either confront or support observations from each method used whilst increasing the rigour of the study design (Flick, 2018). Additionally, by using a mixed-methods design, it will be possible to explore different layers and interweave findings from each method together to analyse beyond the dichotomy and attempt to observe native speakerism in action at different scales and how it impacts individuals differently. This design will use Riazi & Candin (2014) definitions of triangulation to corroborate and compare reported beliefs and practices collected in the survey and then the interviews and at the same time be complementary in the sense of exploring different levels affecting one's life: societal, organisational and personal. Layering different levels and sets of data can be beneficial as Turner et al. (2015) observed in organizational sciences studies exploring several interconnected research questions.

3.3.1: Participants

Who ?

This study aims to look at how teachers of French as an Additional Language (FAL) perceive themselves and others through the lens of native speakerism. Consideration was given as to the operationalisation of the term 'FAL teachers' for the purpose of this study. This umbrella term considers all situations in which one might be teaching French: this includes secondary teacher in various school types across the UK, private tutors and teacher-trainees but also covers all levels of expertise including French secondary specialists, and non-specialists, such as primary school teachers who may not have qualifications to teach French but are still required under the regulation provided by the Department of Education's National Curriculum.

Experience was not defined to be a critical aspect of the definition of FAL teachers as the study expects to include participants with varied experiences of teaching and different levels of attachment to the French language, which this study is trying to explore.

Two inclusion criteria are stipulated: (1) the respondents and interview participants must be over the age of 18 to provide informed consent, and (2) must have experience teaching French as an Additional Language in the UK. A preferential characteristic is that the teaching was done in England in the last few years as this is the context most familiar to the researcher and the one that sparked this research project, as it is here where institutionalised programs are most likely to reproduce or expand on native-speakerist ideologies through exam boards, recruitment practices or teaching methods. However, in the objective of gaining as much insight as possible into native speakerism, it was decided to open the project to as many different geographic and demographic profiles as possible.

This choice raises the question of transposing the questionnaire answers into comparable data and equivalents, to that end, before doing statistical analyses there will be a comparability file to ensure everything will be coded accordingly (e.g.: teaching certifications from continental Europe carry the same credits as a PGCE in the UK and comport similar modules and time spent training). This transposition means that research will be needed to code textual answers into numerical values and that aggregating labels will be chosen people reporting being White European or White British will be reported to be belonging in the same category as White.

Sample size

For the quantitative side of this research, it was decided to not set a maximum threshold of respondents to ensure as much ecological validity but also to maximise the recruiting numbers and increase the reach of the questionnaire. It is the hope of the researcher to reach around 100 respondents at least, with ideally a balanced number of 'native' and 'non-native' speaking teachers of French responding. This number would allow for statistical analyses to produce results which can be interpreted and expanded to the wider population of teachers with the threshold of $p < .05$ to reach significance according to field standards (Field, 2018) This also serves as census and benefits from the high number of answers.

For the qualitative side of the research, the hope of the researcher is to reach a balanced sample of 10 participants for the semi-structured interviews: 5 'native' speakers and 5 'non-native' speakers. This number was set in line with previous research where the number of participants was relatively small but still high enough to draw conclusions from a variety of testimonies. This number also allows the researcher to maintain a level of feasibility in the time allocated to the research project and not skew the results by only extracting data from limited perspectives.

Demographics

It is hoped that a variety of teachers of French will answer to this research and resonate with its objectives, however it is important to consider how there might be bias sampling through recruiting online and through snowball sampling, as uninterested potential respondents might not feel comfortable to participate. This is one of the limitations of the study and it shall be explored in the 'Discussion' section of this dissertation.

3.3.2 Recruitment and sampling method

Recruitment

Participants were recruited in two stages. An online questionnaire acting as a survey was disseminated online to increase the reach and shareability of the research project on specialised pages on social media, teacher training providers or institutional mailing lists after establishing contact in a first instance and reaching an agreement with responsible and interested parties. After reading the information sheet and the consent form, participants can start the questionnaire questions. Then, at the end of the questionnaire, respondents were invited to supply an email address if they had any interest in participating in follow-up online interviews on Teams to expand on the topic. If an email address was supplied, willing participants received an automatic email with the online interview consent forms and information sheet to return to the researcher. Once these were signed and received, the researcher made arrangements to establish a convenient time for the participant to take part in the interview.

Selection

This research project did not use any specific selection process as its main aim was to be as inclusive and global as possible to enable comparisons to be drawn. 2 exclusion criteria were used to siphon out any potential unrequired answers and checks were conducted manually to delete any response that did not meet those criteria. For the interview section, voluntary participation was the key selection element as there was no imposition. This is one of the limitations of this research project as this could be seen as self-selection and there is no means to understand why some eligible participants would not want to participate further.

3.3.3 Ethical considerations

CUREC

Data was collected, transferred, stored and used in accordance with the University of Oxford's Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC) data protection policies. Ethical approval was granted in March 2024 (Appendix 1). Informed consent was sought before answering the online questionnaire and before signing-up for the interview for willing participants.

Research design considerations

This research project explores sensitive topics such as race, class, ethnicity, and discrimination. To ensure that no involved party feels uncomfortable, all the questions throughout this project are optional and participants can elect to not provide an answer if they deem it unaligned with their beliefs or feelings. Response rates will be considered during the data analysis and gaps will be discussed.

To ensure the anonymity of the respondents of the online questionnaire, no personal data was collected and only email addresses for willing participants were required. If an address was provided, the interested respondents were sent an automatic email with more information about the research project without the researcher having

any involvement in this process. Initial contact with the interview participants was made only if they reached out to confirm their interest and take part after reading and signing the information sheet and consent forms.

A codebook allowing the researcher to store as a safety measure correspondences between answers and identities was created to store separately questionnaire answers and interview participants pseudonyms to avoid any potential bias during the interview stage of the research project or breach of anonymity.

Participants were reminded before the interview that their answers would be transcribed and anonymised to protect their anonymity and any personal information they might disclose would be recoded or redacted accordingly to guidelines set during the coding process. A withdrawal policy was established, and each participant was informed at every stage of the project that they were able to withdraw before the deadline set on the 16th of July 2024 at noon by contacting the researcher or their supervisor and that their information would be discarded or redacted.

3.4 Methods

Pilot testing

The questionnaire and interview questions were shared to two former colleagues (1 NS and 1 NNS) after approval as a way of testing the data collection instruments and ensure their clarity and make sure they meet their intended purposes. Several changes were made to the wording of the questionnaire items (e.g.: “I relate to my students” was reworded to “I relate to the process my students go through when learning French”) and interview questions were created or modified to have a more neutral tone and not induce or force specific answers after practice interviews were conducted.

Instruments

This study's online questionnaire on Microsoft Forms was created using the literature as a basis to direct certain questions towards specific aspect of native speakerism, however questions did not mention implicitly native speakerism to avoid priming the respondents. The questionnaire was composed of four sections. Likert-scaled questions were all designed using 5 points: 'Strongly Disagree'; 'Disagree'; 'Neutral'; 'Agree' & 'Strongly agree'. The neutral option was included according to Mariano et al. (2024) which recommend using it as a measure of indifference, a lack of knowledge on a specific concept or hard-to grasp/judge idea. They also suggested to be careful when aggregating data points such as 'Strongly agree' and 'Agree' together as it could impact results, however it is the stance of the researcher to understand agreement whether strong or simple to be an endorsement or admission from the participants. Therefore, agreement and disagreement stances will be aggregated for data analysis, this will also replicate the simple dichotomy often assumed through the lens of native speakerism where absolute ideological stances are often considered instead of embracing nuance and multidimensional approaches to beliefs and practices. Lefever et al. (2006) discuss the advantages and limitations of surveys conducted online just like in this dissertation. In our case, the advantages far overweigh the limitations in that response rates being low were taken into the design during the creation of the survey and designated as an option in the information sheet available for the respondents to read, and that the sample population was targeted during the dissemination of the questionnaire.

Questions were either replicated from previous studies (e.g.: David, 2000) or designed from pilot testing or created from personal experience. They were based on the need to collect personal beliefs and practices from the participant linked to the realms under study: the linguistic profile, the cultural one, the demographic dimension as moderator and the professional environment. There was 39 individual questions and 4 sub-questions to specify some information (e.g.: onset age of learning if the respondent described themselves as 'non-native'). Most questions were text boxes that participants were at liberty to fill in in as much details as they felt appropriate. These answers were reviewed by the researcher to ensure continuity in coding and validate any answers before conducting statistical analyses

Section 1 included 6 questions relating to the respondent's demographic profile (age, gender, ethnicity, nationality & level of education). These questions were designed to collect generic data and observe any potential bias in the sampled population of teachers of French.

Section 2 is concerned with establishing the linguistic profile of the respondent. It was made up of 2 open-ended questions, question regarding the respondent's speakerhood and 5 Likert-scale with disagree/agree statements. Questions looked at how the respondent would describe their French linguistic skills.

Section 3 asked for respondents to provide more information about their teaching experiences and teaching environment. There were 20 main questions and 3 specify questions. There were 10 Likert-scale (dis)agree statements, 5 open-ended questions and 5 tick-the-boxes questions. Questions concerned the teaching qualifications, practices, experience, potential tensions and current employment location of the respondents.

Section 4 only included 4 Likert-scale question with disagree/agree statements and looked at how respondents felt about their cultural knowledge and connection to the French-speaking world.

Semi-structured interviews were decided as the best option for this study as they enable both parties to be flexible about the topics at hand whilst allow having the freedom to focus the conversation on a certain experience or belief (Dörnyei, 2007). They also enable the redistribution of the agency between both parties to negotiate and explore the phenomenon of native speakerism at the personal, institutional, and societal levels. The interview questions were adapted from David (2000): 7 questions were used as the basis for all the interviews, using similar topics as in the questionnaire, and a further list of extension question was curated to direct or expand on participants' answers (Appendix 2). This interview format was in line with the exploratory optics of the research in that it allowed both parties to be self-reflexive and welcome the other's perspectives on a phenomenon that often affects teachers without their knowledge whilst also creating a discussion with open-ended directions depending on the interviewee's responses. Interviews were conducted either in French or English depending on the

participant's preference communicated on the signed information sheet. The interviews were recorded on Microsoft Teams and transcribed manually before being checked and translated into English if necessary.

3.4: Data collection

Data collection was conducted over two periods with separate cut-off dates (to assess the reach and success of the project) to allow for the questionnaire to reach a maximum amount of people and therefore gather more momentum for the recruiting of interview participants. The first wave gathered 57 responses and 15 interested interview participants which converted to 7 of the final interviews before the 17th of June. Due to the low amount of questionnaire responses, the project was promoted through new channels (social media such as Facebook or teacher training providers). The second wave closed on the 2nd of July to allow for the two-week retraction deadline to be reached and gained 34 more replies and 10 interested parties which converted to 6 interviews.

After approval from the Ethics board was given, the questionnaire remained open online for several weeks until the 2nd of July and interviews were conducted on a first-come basis as the timeframe for data collection paralleled the school holidays and the national period of examinations.

Interviews were conducted either in French or English depending on the participant's preference communicated on the signed information sheet. The interviews were recorded on Microsoft Teams and transcribed (see Appendix 3 for an exemplar transcript) manually before being checked and translated into English if necessary. They lasted between 45 to 60 minutes with some participants accepting to continue the conversation past the hour mark.

Interview participants were informed that they would be able to withdraw completely or partially if they desired to so by the 16th of July at the latest. No participant withdrew from the process or contacted the researcher or their supervisor. Two interview recordings were corrupted and were discarded from the subsequent data analyses.

3.5: Data analysis

Quantitative data

In conversation with their supervisor, the researcher conducted Chi-Square tests of association to measure differences based on the 'native' status of the respondents and see if one's 'native' status impacted their perceptions under the native speakerism lens and (dis)prove the assumptions that teachers of different 'native' status are to be considered two separate populations.

Likert-scale answers on a scale of 5 categories ('Strongly Disagree', 'Disagree', 'Neutral', 'Agree' and 'Totally Disagree') were then coded binarily (see explanation in Quantitative aspect in the next section of this dissertation)

Qualitative data

Questionnaire text box answers:

Data from these items of the questionnaire were coded using a codebook to transcribe qualitative answers from the text boxes into numerical values and aggregated nominal values (e.g.: respondents reported the languages they teach or used to differently and it was necessary to generalise answers)

Semi-structured interviews data:

Data was coded using a hybrid inductive-deductive thematic analysis approach over different stages using Xu and Zammit (2020) as a procedural inspiration. After a close reading of the data, themes were extracted from the transcripts and compared to previous themes used in similar research projects. Using Sims and Cilliers (2023) staggered coding process to create various outcome spaces as part of the analysis process, 3 rounds of coding were conducted.

They were coded after the previous one ended and depended on the collection of the interviews.

Round 1 was randomised online using random.org and was ordered as follows: Transcript 2 > 6>8>7> 9>11>1>3>5> 4>10; this means that the process had to be paused until the final interview was conducted.

Round 2 was conducted directly after the first round and used an ascending order (Transcripts 1 to 11).

Round 3 was conducted in a descending order (Transcripts 11 to 1)

As the interviews were coded throughout the process on different occasions, a genealogy of the codes was created to maintain consistency and compare retrospectively the researcher's observations and selected themes. A coding protocol was written before and during the interview process to (1) maintain consistency at the individual researcher-level and (2) allow to use an inter-coder reliability test by providing the protocol and comparing outcomes. Guidance was also sought from the researcher's supervisor and the coding process tried to take into considerations the points raised by Elliot (2018) and Adamson (2004) to take into account the importance of context and dynamics of the interview coding stage.

3 codebooks emerged as outcome spaces and yielded 95 codes that were refined into 8 themes. Anecdotal codes were filtered, and some were ignored in the following data analyses protocol. Some unique codes were conserved as they were meaningful to answer the research questions and expand the literature on native speakerism.

Specific codes were coded multiple times and overlapped in multiple themes depending on the coding round results, indicating of biases in the process and the benefits of the staggered approach. To observe the quality and continuity of the coding protocol, an intra-rater average and inter-rater averages were calculated. The intra-rater was low (67 %) over the first two rounds but increased to 83 % when comparing the last two rounds. 3 external raters were asked to code 45 excerpts following specific coding guidelines with a list of themes. 2 were applied linguists and one was a family member of the research with no research background. The two applied linguists obtained a high inter-rating average of 93% overall, whilst the lay person agreed on 73% of the codes. This proved that the protocols and guidelines were clear and that findings could be considered accurate.

Data triangulation

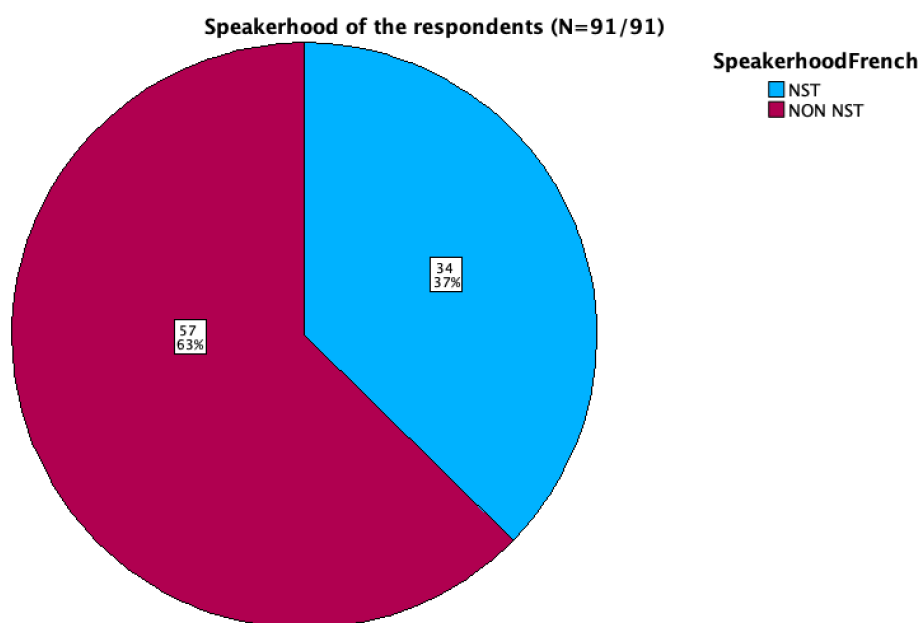
To expand on the need to triangulate data and go simplistic understandings of native speakerism, it seems important to triangulate data at the cross-section and individual levels. The two collected sets of data allowed the researcher to explore commonalities and differences between the interviewees and the questionnaire respondents, but also between interviewees and amongst interviewees themselves. This method provides more nuanced understandings of reported beliefs in the questionnaires and delves into the limitations of the current understandings of native speakerism. Reconstructing ideas and interweaving testimonies were also made possible by triangulating data.

Chapter 4: Findings

91 questionnaires were analysed after eliminating 8 answers due to incompleteness, duplicates and answers from the piloting with former colleagues.

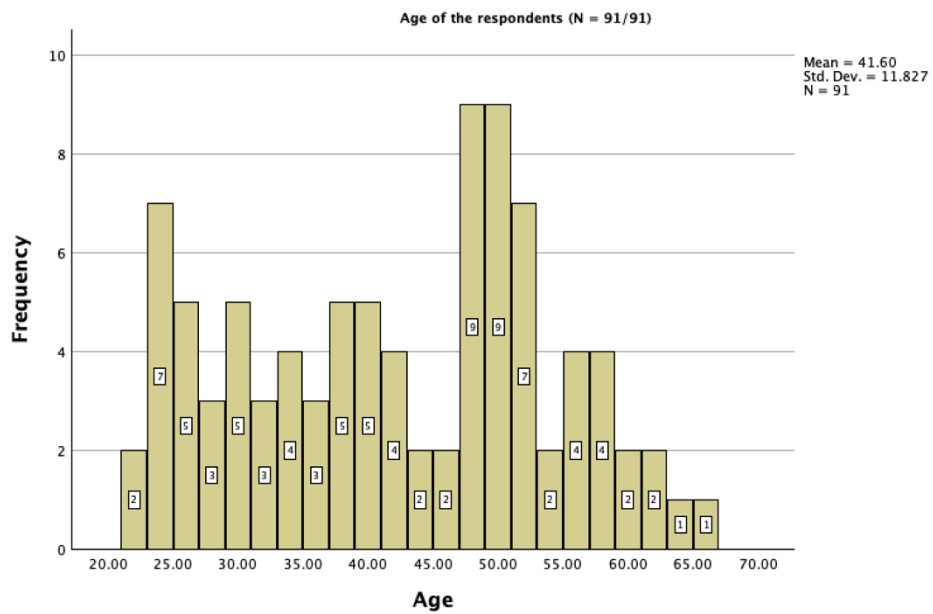
4.1 : Respondents of the questionnaire

Figure 1: Graphic representing the distribution of 'native' speakers and 'non-native' speaker' in the respondents (N=91)



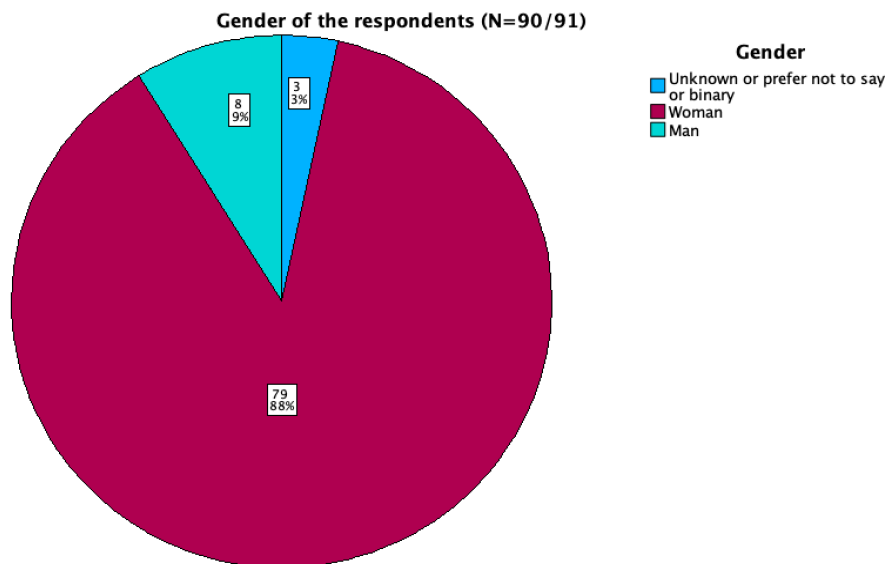
Off the 91 responses included in the data analysis, 34 respondents identify as 'native' speakers of French whilst 57 identified as 'non-native' speakers of French. It is important to understand that they self-identified under their own understanding of the term 'native' speaker and no option was provided to mimic the binary dichotomy often accepted as the truth by lay people. It was hoped that a balanced sample would be achieved in numbers of the two groups, this may cause bias in the perception of native-speakerist ideologies from the point of view of 'non-native' speaking teachers.

Figure 2: Bar chart representing the age of the respondents (N = 91)



The study included teachers aged from 22 to 65 with a majority between the ages of 25 and 50, and a mean age of 41 years old.

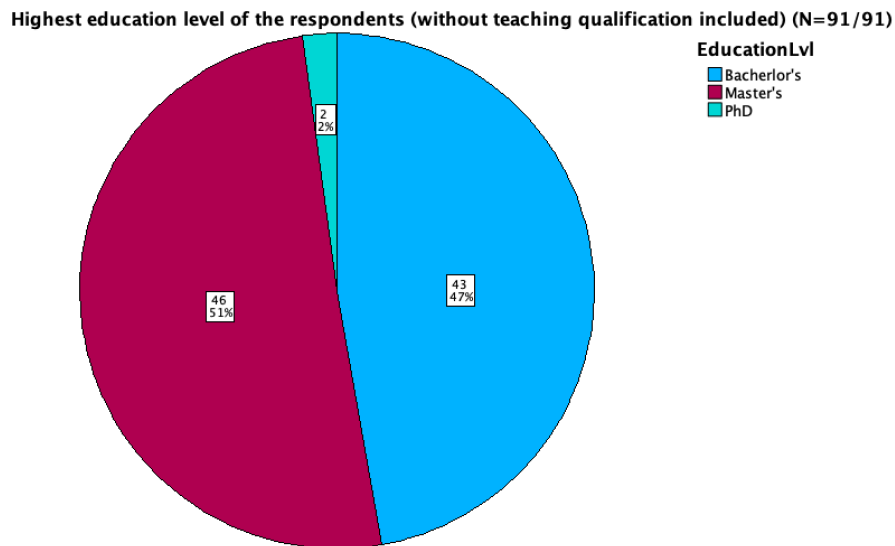
Figure 3: Graphic representing the gender distribution of the respondents (N=91)



88% of the respondents identified as women whilst 9% identified as men and the remaining respondents' gender is unknown. This sample is biased towards reaching more female teachers than the latest statistics provided the government which stated that 76%

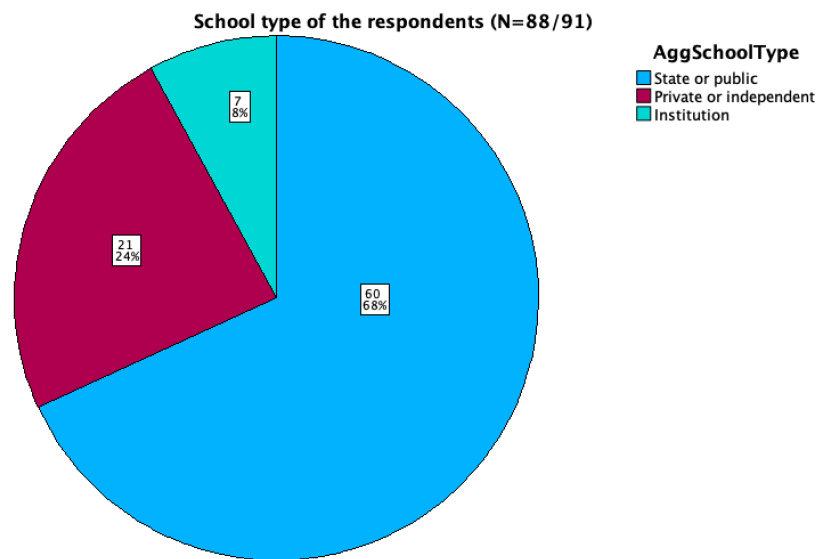
of teachers in state-schools located in England were female. This may reflect gender bias in teaching experiences, interest in research or reaching male language teachers.

Figure 4: Graphic representing the highest achieved education level of the respondents (N=91)



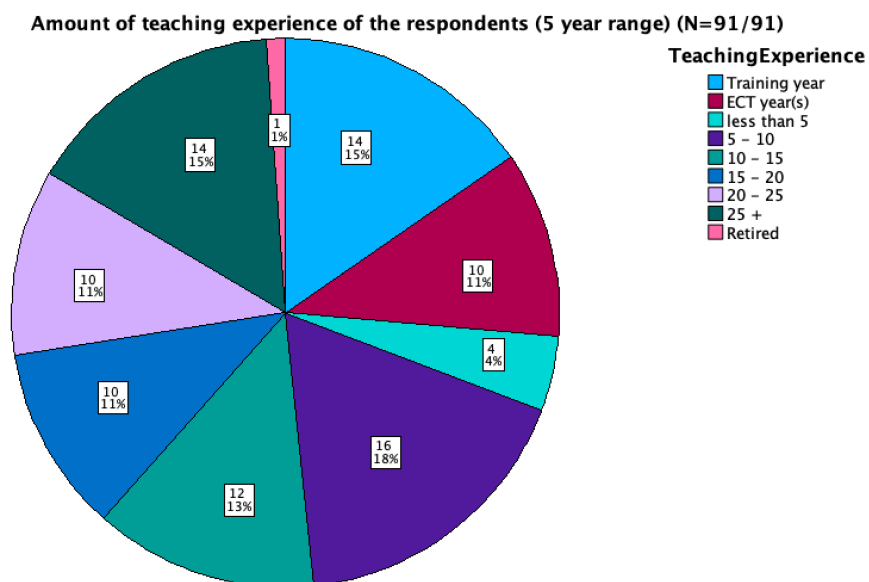
51% of the respondents have a bachelor's degree whilst 47% reporting having a master's degree and 2 people reporting earning a PhD. It is important to know the distinction that was made in the formulation of the question as often master's degrees in France or other European countries act as teaching qualifications whereas in the UK a teaching qualification can be achieved directly after a bachelor's degree and is of a master's degree level. Noticeably in terms of patterns, 'native' speakers mostly have bachelor's degrees in English or other academic subjects involving social sciences and humanities, with master's degrees in FLE (French as Foreign Language / Applied Linguistics) and then obtained a teaching qualification in the UK. For 'non-native' speakers they seem to have obtained bachelor's degrees in modern foreign languages with French often in combination with another language or subject which they then supplemented by a PGCE.

Figure 5: Graphic representing the current type of workplace of the respondents (N=88)



68% of the respondents work in state or publicly maintained schools, which educate around 93% of the pupil population in England. 24% of the teachers work in private or independent schools. 8% work in what has been aggregated as institutions like the French Institute, private language schools or self-employed teachers.

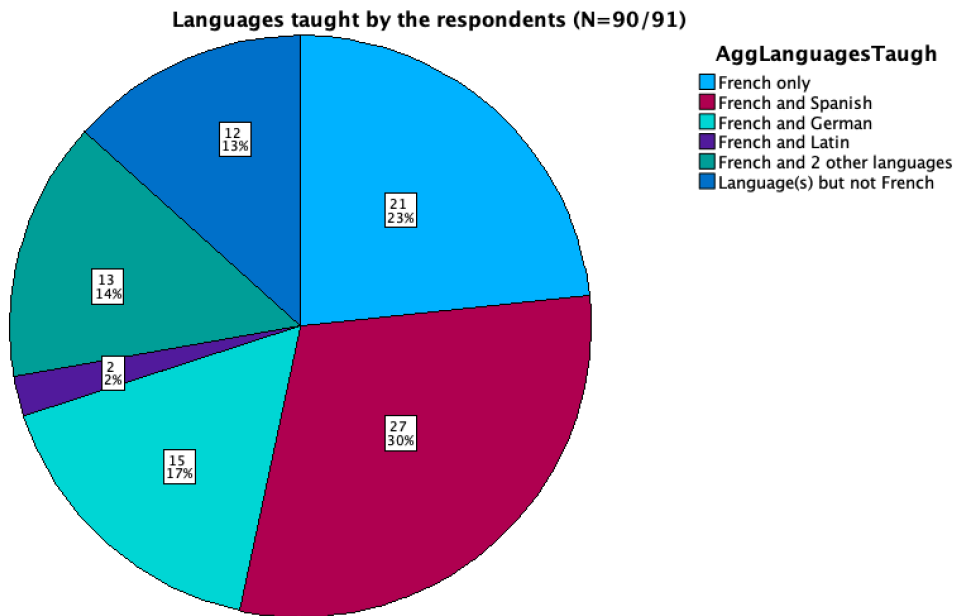
Figure 6: Graphic representing the teaching experience range in years of the respondents (N = 91)



The surveyed teachers had various amounts of experience: 30% had less than 5 years of experience and made their debut into the teaching profession, whilst the rest of the sample had over 5 years of experience. It is important to note that there was an

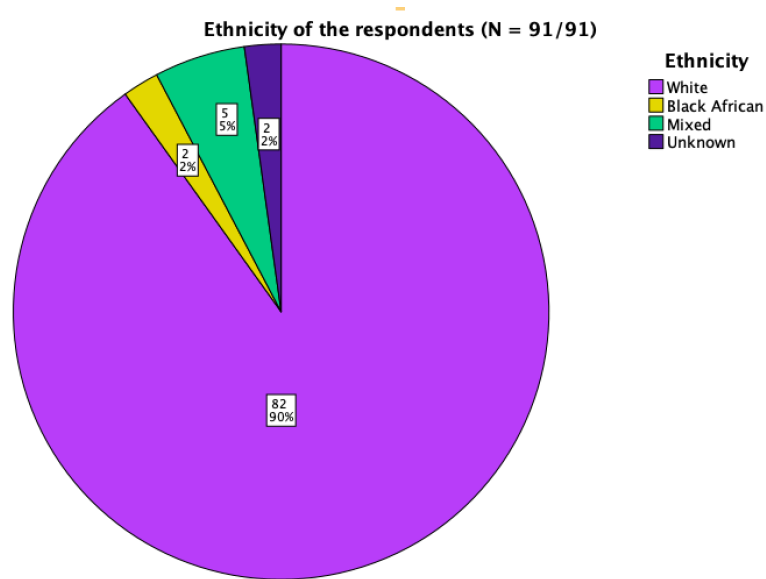
important to note the significant correlation between the age of the participant and their experience.

Figure 7: Graphic representing the most common language combinations taught or previously taught of the respondents (N = 90)



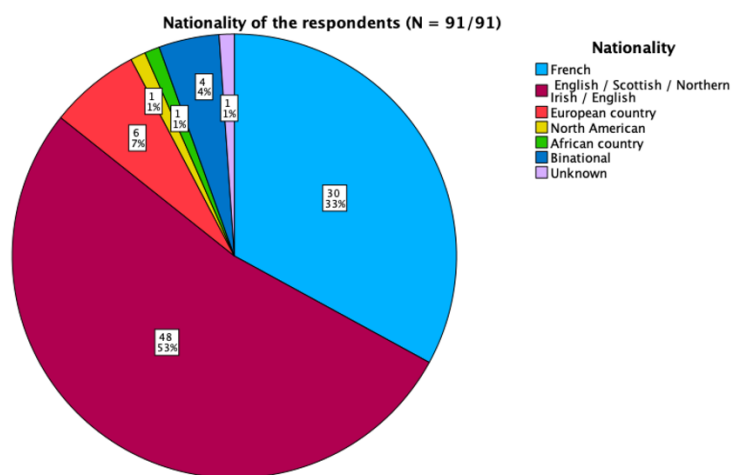
23% of the teachers who filed out the questionnaire said they were currently teaching French only, whilst 63% indicated teaching French and at least one other language. Curiously, 13% of respondents who are teachers of French currently do not teach French. This is in line with teacher training provisions in languages where most trainees specialise in one language but still train to teach both.

Figure 8: Graphic representing the ethnic identification of the respondents (N=91)



A majority of the participants (90%) reported to have White background, whereas only 7 (7% of the sampled population) of them claim to be racialised as non-White and 2 respondents did not share that information. This is an important element to consider when analysing data as this maybe a reflection of ‘Whiteness’ in language teaching; the racialisation of a subject to replicate racial hierarchies and ignore other racial groups’ worldviews or experiences in favour of the White ethnic populations.

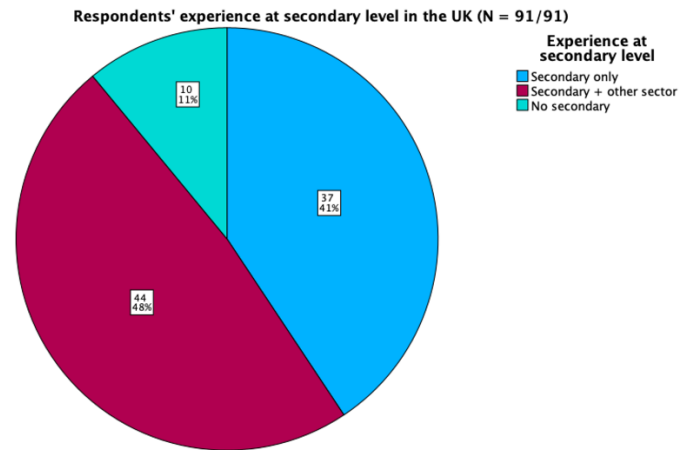
Figure 9: Graphic representing the nationality of the respondents (N=91)



30 participants reported having the French nationality and this number highly correlated with their ‘native’ speakerhood. Just over half of the population (48 participants) declared having a nationality from the UK isles and this number highly correlated with the number of people defining themselves as ‘non-native’ speakers. 13 participants reported coming

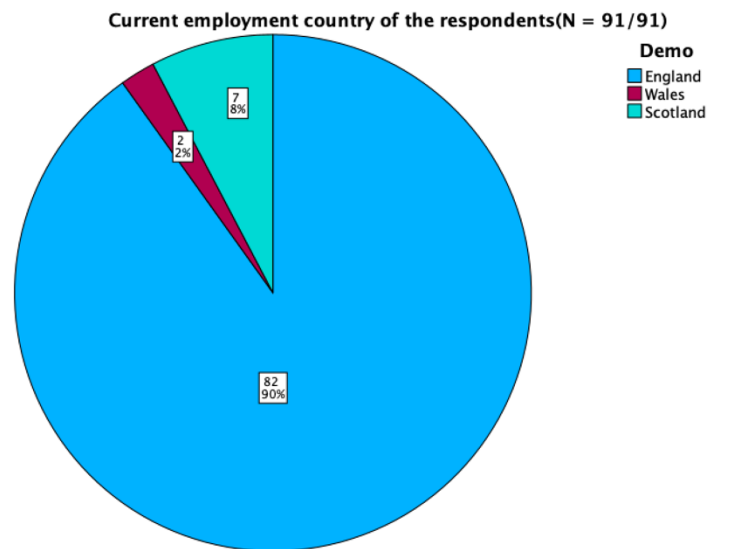
from various countries around the world, most of them having a large Francophone community (e.g. : Belgium for Europe, Cameroun for Africa or Canada for North America); in this smaller section all the binationals had French nationality.

Figure 10: Graphic representing the sector(s) in which respondents have experience in (N=91)



Roughly 90% of the teachers surveyed reported having had experience at secondary level or with secondary level students, with 48% of them (N = 44) having also experience teaching in other sectors, whilst the other 10% of the sampled population had experience in other sectors (private language tutoring, primary schools or national institutions).

Figure 11: Graphic representing the current country of employment of the respondents (N=91)



82 teachers are currently working in England, 7 in Scotland and 2 in Wales. This representation is skewed but reflects the reality in terms of general population in the sub-

nations of the UK. Importantly the results will need to be localised to England and interviews will therefore probably explore experiences from within the English system.

4.1: Quantitative aspect

Using the questionnaire items as a way of collecting the respondents' beliefs and practices, Chi-Square tests were conducted to see if there are differences in perception between teachers based on nativeness/speakerhood. Association tests between speakerhood and reported beliefs or practices were conducted based on 5 categories: linguistic profile, professional situation, teaching practices, cultural profile and incidents of tension. Results are reported in the following sub-sections based on the questionnaire items and the sections they were attached to. Although originally scaled out of 5 points Likert-scales, beliefs and practices were then recorded into binary sets (positive and negative, yes or no) to reflect the answers under the assumption that neutrality was neither positive nor negative and that each group has supposedly different beliefs due to their speakerhood. Answers to the questionnaire items being optional, these null data points were automatically excluded by SPSS and the 'Neutral' answers were recoded to null points. The hypothesis underlying this thesis is that native-speaking teachers and non-native-speaking teachers of French are affected equally by native-speakerist ideologies and therefore report similar beliefs and practices (even though to some degree of variation), the testing hypotheses are as follow:

H0: Native-speaking (NSTs) and non-native speaking (NNSTs) teachers of French do not report differently on this [item].

H1: Native-speaking (NSTs) and non-native speaking (NNSTs) teachers of French report differently on this [item].

If significance is reached, then results could be interpreted as a proof to show that the two groups of teachers report different lived experiences due to their speakerhood.

The association tests were conducted again with the same dependent and independent variables with other layer variables such as demographic information (years of

experience or ethnicity) or other beliefs (the effects of speakerhood layered with belief in proficiency on the measure of belief of use of target language only in the classroom).

Linguistic profile: 6 reported measures

To the item “I believe I am proficient enough to teach French”, 95% of the 90 respondents (54 of the 56 NNSTs and 32 of the 34 of the NSTs) reported feeling proficient enough.

To the item “I feel confident in my accent and pronunciation”, 97% of the 88 respondents (53 of the 54 NNSTs and 32 of the 34 of the NSTs) expressed confidence in their oral abilities.

To the item “I feel confident about my linguistic knowledge”, 94% of the 89 respondents (53 of the 55 NNSTs and 31 of the 34 NSTs) showed confidence in their linguistic knowledge.

To the item “I believe I am a good linguistic model for my students”, 96% of the 90 respondents (56 of the 57 NNSTs and 30 of the 33 NSTs) believed they were good models for their students to mimic.

To the item “I believe I am proficient enough in French to interact with other French-speaking people”, 93% of the 89 respondents (51 of the 55 NNSTs and 32 of the 34 NSTs) held positive view about their abilities to interact with other French-speaking people (‘native’ or ‘non-native’).

To the item “I believe languages are important”, 98% of the 91 respondents (56 of the 57 NNSTs and 33 of the 34 NSTs) believed languages as important school subjects and objects of knowledge.

Table 1: Results for tests of association for Section 1: linguistic profile

Questionnaire item	χ^2 value	df	N	p-value (2-sided)	Significance
“I believe I am proficient enough to teach French”	0.27	1	90	0.63	No
“I feel confident in my accent and pronunciation”	1.07	1	88	0.56	No

“I feel confident about my linguistic knowledge”	1.07	1	89	0.37	No
“I believe I am a good linguistic model for my students”	2.65	1	90	0.14	No
“I believe I am proficient enough in French to interact with other French-speaking people”	0.07	1	89	1	No
“I believe languages are important”	0.14	1	91	0.93	No

When it comes to describing their linguistic abilities and profiles, native-speaking teachers and non-native-speaking teachers hold similar views, which tend to be on the positive side in almost every teacher sampled. After running the Chi-Square tests, the analyses revealed that there were no significant different associations in how both groups of teachers perceive themselves linguistically.

The exact same tests were conducted whilst simultaneously adding layering variables, the results also remained non-significant but as layers were added, significance varied thus indicating that as we complexify / humanise the data to reflect the complexity of the individual trajectories of the respondents then we obtain varied results. Statistically, both groups are not affected differently, this does not mean that they reproduce native-speakerist ideologies but that if they did it would be in similar manner.

Professional situation: 3 reported measures

To the item “My school/organisation supports language learning”, 91% of the 75 respondents (43 of the 45 NNSTs and 25 of the 30 NSTs) felt that their place of work supported language learning in a positive fashion.

To the item “I believe the student body holds positive opinion of language learning”, 68% of the 65 respondents (28 of the 39 NNSTs and 16 of the 26 NSTs) reported that the student body at their current or former place of work had mitigated opinions about language learning.

To the item “French is a popular subject at my school/organisation”, only 53% of the 68 respondents (22 of the 41 NNSTs and 14 of the 27 NSTs) conveyed the feeling that French is a popular subject at their workplace.

Table 2: Results for tests of association for Section 2: professional situation

Questionnaire items	X^2 value	df	N	p-value (2-sided)	Significance
“My school/organisation supports language learning”	3.18	1	75	0.108	No
“I believe the student body holds positive opinion of language learning”	0.75	1	65	0.43	No
“French is a popular subject at my school/organisation”	0.02	1	68	1	No

In their professional environment, native-speaking teachers and non-native-speaking teachers of French do not hold significantly different perceptions. This section of the questionnaire however highlights the current climate surrounding language teaching and learning in the UK whereby support does not translate into an increase in uptake, need to question the efforts made and see their efficiency on the longitudinal aspect

No significance results were observed when layering with other demographic information given or other item responses. Additionally, when looking at places of employment, no group seem to be overrepresented in any of the three categories of school types, indicating that there is no bias in employment location affecting the perceptions of one’s situation

Teaching practices: 6 reported measures

To the item “A teacher should only use the target language in class”, 71% of the 75 respondents (36 of the 46 NNSTs and 17 of the 29 NSTs) showed their disagreement with that statement, thus the target language (in our case, French) should not be the only medium through which to conduct teaching.

To the item “The programs represent the diversity of the French-speaking world”, 83% of the 70 respondents (34 of the 43 NNSTs and 24 of the 27 NSTs) thought that the national

curriculum and the schemes of works on offer represented the diversity of the French-speaking world.

To the item “I relate to my students” (learning French), 97% of the 85 respondents (53 of the 54 NNSTs and 29 of the 31 NSTs) said that they can relate to their students learning French.

To the item “I believe ‘native’ speakers are better teachers than ‘non-native’ speakers”, 80% of the 68 respondents (36 of the 41 NNSTs and 18 of the 27 NSTs) disagreed with the generic statement that native-speaking teachers are better than non-native-speaking teachers.

To the item “I feel confident in my abilities to teach French”, 98% of the 91 respondents (55 of the 57 NNSTs and 34 of the 34 NSTs) seem to display confidence in their teaching abilities.

To the item “I believe learners should aim to speak like ‘native’ speakers”, 65% of the 69 respondents (30 of the 43 NNSTs and 11 of the 26 NSTs) agreed that the aim of language learners is to speak and sound like ‘native’ speakers of French.

Table 3: Results for tests of association for Section 3: teaching practices

Questionnaire items	χ^2 value	df	N	p-value (2-sided)	Significance
“A teacher should only use the target language in class”	3.31	1	75	0.12	No
“The programs represent the diversity of the French-speaking world”	1.13	1	70	0.35	No
“I relate to my students” (learning French)	1.22	1	85	0.55	No
“I believe ‘native’ speakers are better teachers than ‘non-native’ speakers”	4.45	1	68	0.06	No
“I feel confident in my abilities to teach French”	1.22	1	91	0.53	No
“I believe learners should aim to speak like ‘native’ speakers”	1.04	1	65	1	No

Regarding the teaching practices of teachers of French in the UK, except on the aim of speaking like a ‘native’, the sampled teachers seem to share similar beliefs regardless of their speakerhood. Analyses of the Chi-Square tests show that on all 6 measures of that section of the questionnaire there was no significant difference in the pattern of answers. Layering does not show significant differences between both groups as they become more individualised, this means that there are no differences between the two groups in how they teach or what they feel are the objectives of their teaching no matter how their individual experiences may affect their teaching.

Cultural profile: 4 reported measures

To the item “I believe I am knowledgeable about the French-speaking world”, 95% of the 82 respondents (49 of the 52 NNSTs and 29 of the 30 NSTS) described themselves as knowledgeable about the French-speaking world.

To the item “I believe I am a Francophile/ a Francophone”, 94% of the 65 respondents (31 of the 35 NNSTs and 30 of the 30 NSTs) considered themselves Francophile and/or Francophone.

To the item “I believe I am a great ambassador of the French-speaking world”, 96% of the 72 respondents (43 of the 46 NNSTs and 26 of the 26 NSTs) considered themselves as a good cultural ambassador of the French-speaking world.

To the item “I believe I am up to date about the current affairs in the Francophone world”, 78% of the 60 respondents (29 of the 39 NNSTs and 18 of the 21 NSTs) expressed that they thought themselves as in touch with current events in the French-speaking world.

Table 4: Results for tests of association for Section 4: cultural profile

Questionnaire items	χ^2 value	df	N	p-value (2-sided)	Significance
“I believe I am knowledgeable about the French-speaking world”	0.4	1	82	1	No
“I believe I am a Francophile/ a Francophone”	3.65	1	65	0.12	No
“I believe I am a great ambassador of the French-speaking world”	1.78	1	72	0.55	No

"I believe I am up to date about the current affairs in the Francophone world"	1.04	1	60	0.51	No
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For the cultural dimension of language teaching and language teacher identity, teachers of both groups do not differ in how they apprehend the French-speaking world at large. Statistical test results lead us to understand that there is no significant difference in how both groups perceive their knowledge and French-related identities, however the questionnaire does not provide answers on the underlying processes. Layering still does not have an impact on how teachers perceive their culture knowledge and awareness of the French-speaking world, indicating that 'nativeness' has no direct observed effect and that this probably comes down to experience and personal efforts.

Incidents of tension between the teachers and other actors/individuals: 5 reported measures

To the item "My abilities to teach French have been put into question by students", 8 teachers (4 NNSTs and 4 NSTs, representing 9% of the sampled teachers) reported having had incidents where their teaching abilities had been put into question by their students.

To the item "My abilities to teach French have been put into question by colleagues", 2 teachers (1 NNST and 1 NST, representing 2% of the sampled teachers) reported incidents where colleagues questioned their teaching abilities.

To the item "My abilities to teach French have been put into question by training providers", 3 teachers (2 NNSTs and 1 NST) reported how their teaching abilities were questioned during their training year by either mentors or faculty.

To the item "My abilities to teach French have been put into question by family members and friends", 2 teachers (1 NNST and 1 NST) recorded having a member of their entourage question their French teaching abilities.

To the item “My abilities to teach French have been put into question by French-speaking people”, 4 teachers (3 NNSTs and 1 NST) recorded having had fellow French-speaking people interrogate their abilities to teach French, their common languages.

Table 5: Results for tests of association for Section 5: incidents of tension

Questionnaire items	χ^2 value	df	N	p-value (2-sided)	Significance
“My abilities to teach French have been put into question by students”	0.6	1	91	0.47	No
“My abilities to teach French have been put into question by colleagues”	0.14	1	91	1	No
“My abilities to teach French have been put into question by training providers”	0.02	1	91	1	No
“My abilities to teach French have been put into question by family members and friends”	0.14	1	88	1	No
“My abilities to teach French have been put into question by French-speaking people”	0.27	1	91	1	No

Incidents where the abilities of teachers of French are questioned seem to be rare for both groups but it is interesting to notice that the most reported incidents where with people not involved in education, there is no significant difference in reporting incidents of questions from all actors of the teachers' lives between the NNSTs and NSTs.

It is important to note that teachers may have reported potential incidents as no definition was provided, the aim being that they answer instinctively as micro-agressions or arguments may be dismissed or forgotten. There are also no reports of frequency which limits the potential conclusions drawn from this section.

Conclusion quantitative data analysis

Overall, 'native' and 'non-native teachers' did not report in different patterns in any items of the questionnaire. This disproves the common assumption that the two groups teach or perceive themselves differently based on one's nativeness.

Layering does not provide more information – so if we decide speakerhood is the most influential trait then there is no difference between how the two groups perceive themselves and their practices. Maybe other factors have bigger influences such as experience, school type, yet, if there were to be statistical differences on certain measures such as “support for language learning in my organisation”; we would have to be careful because each organisation has different goals and environments; for example respondents working at the French Institute all felt language learning was supported whereas respondents working in public state maintained schools offered a wide range of interpretations, which come down on the individual organisation and not a national trend as it wouldn't be ethical or factually to make this tentative conclusion based on the sample size and without interpreting the statistical tests hypotheses.

4.3: Qualitative aspect

8 themes were kept for the final analysis of the qualitative data provided by the semi-structured interviews. Each was associated with the relevant sub-questions(s) they helped answer.

Table 6: RQs and their associated themes (T)

Theme	RQ1: awareness of ideologies	RQ2: impact of personal identities	RQ3: impact of professional identities	RQ4: reflection of ideologies in practice
T1: Instances of native speakerism	X	X	X	X
T2: Accents and accentism	X	X	X	X
T3: defining the good French language teacher	X		X	
T4: defining the 'native' speaker	X	X		
T5: teaching philosophies and practices	X		X	X
T6: teaching environment	X	X	X	X
T7: (un)becoming a teacher of French	X	X	X	

T8: (un)becoming a French- speaking person	X	X		
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Theme 1: Instances of varied forms of native speakerism

Throughout the interviews, participants expressed views or recalled anecdotally events which were permeated by native-speakerist ideologies.

The most recurrent perception was that being ('non-)'native' was a double-edged sword: 'natives' are more comfortable using the target language whereas 'non-natives' can explain the rules of the language and relate to students in the learning process. In contrast, some participants revealed that a native-speaking teacher remains the preferred model by students and parents, and that the general opinion prevails over apparent qualities that may be of the individual teacher; this is better articulated by Participant15 who said that "if all things were the same in terms of qualities, people would still choose the native teacher". A few participants expressed the view that 'native' teachers are advantaged as they can use their connections to the country and its people, whilst also being able to provide authentic linguistic and cultural input that 'non-native' teachers may lack as they have not 'lived' in the right setting (Participants 2, 4, 6 & 8). Three participants expressed the opinion that one's nativeness has no advantage or disadvantage, participant 7 made the case that teachers are all qualified and what matters most is that you keep on learning and try to improve your teaching. Participant 7 also expressed that no teacher is all-knowledgeable using the example of her assistant brings her new knowledge and that colleagues often help each other to improve as a whole department as "it is more important to be a good teacher first". For the participants that did not work in the school system but instead in language institutions or as private tutors, they noticed how being 'native' was an advantage as it seen as a marketable trait which answers a demand. 7 participants and the researcher mentioned how often students or even other colleagues have stereotypical views regarding France or French

people which either diminish the 'native' teachers' identities as mere artefacts of a country or that 'non-native' teachers are clearly different from the expectations attached with their subject. Although mostly referred to as innocent concepts, several teachers expressed the need to refute certain stereotypes but also to embrace some as they can bridge cultures and spark interest. For example, participant 9 reminisced on an incident in which she was teaching about discrimination and a student said that France was an Islamophobic country, to which the participant replied that it was not all true for all French people, she felt like she was acting as an "ambassador" trying to combat negative perceptions. Three 'non-native' participants said they felt their knowledge was limited and had declined compared to their 'native' colleagues, creating an 'imposter syndrome' in some of them; this feeling was shared by 'native' teachers when teaching other languages than French.

The anecdotal codes are probably the most interesting ones as they display that the dichotomy 'native' against 'non-native' does not always affect the groups as separate, meaning that 'non-natives' can discriminate against people in their own speakerhood group, the opposite for 'natives' is also true.

Participant 5 reported that she felt appalled at the lack of grammatical knowledge British students had in English, saying that she had a better mastery than 'native' speakers of a second language; this a case of inverted native-speakerism where the bias is directed towards 'native' speakers of a language

Participant 10, on her year abroad in France as a language assistant, felt that her colleagues' level of English was "really poor" and said that this had a negative effect on the students as well, this instance of native speakerism could be defined as visiting native speakerism where a 'native' speaker of a language located abroad judges the abilities of 'non-native' speakers in their local context.

Participant 3, in her function as Head of Department, admitted she discarded someone's application for a teaching position as she deemed her French was 'too Scottish for my taste'.

In terms of promotions and managerial positions, Participant 11 thought that 'native' speakers were preferred and majorly occupied these positions.

Participant 1 perceived the French Academy as a normative institution in charge of ruling ‘what is correct French and make the language evolve’.

Participant 2 recalled a conversation with colleagues around the football World Cup in 2022 where they made remarks about the French players ‘not being French’ and that they should play for their home nations, it was perceived as a micro-aggression considering the participant is Franco-Algerian and therefore manifesting native-speakerist ideologies using race as a proxy.

Participant 4 retold the story of how she had to sit down her friends who constantly mocked a ‘native’ French speaker from Lebanon. Her friends judged his French and imbued anxiety into that person, but when confronted with the fact that the only ‘mistakes’ or ‘differences’ which existed were only due to regional variation, the friends understood their misjudgement but kept on joking about how the Lebanese friend was in a situation of ‘insécurité linguistique’; this could be considered ‘native on native discrimination.’

Participant 11 mentioned how one of her colleagues said that French teachers “do not actually know how to speak French” in her facility as examiner, leading the participant to comment on how recruiting ‘native’ speakers could solve the recruitment crisis and improve current provisions.

Participants 8 and 10 when teaching German and French respectively, recalled how native-speaking students of these languages have objected or questioned their teaching about grammatical points or cultural concepts that the students had other memories of or more authentic appreciation of; the two also mentioned how these students were more likely to call them out on mistakes and may show disinterest or misbehave in class.

Participant 10 expressed the view that ‘native’ teachers are not automatically good as some have no knowledge of the language or how to teach and that they rely on their instincts which are more than often wrong.

Participant 10 spoke about the curiosity students displayed when a French-Congolese trainee was present in the classroom during her PGCE as the school is predominantly deservng white students in a rural area.

Theme 2 : Accents and accentism

Accent as the parameters of a speaker's aural performance was the most cited element throughout the interviews as a way of identifying and positioning a person in a category. Accentism is the discrimination process where bias is created when judging a person's accent. Under different formula but with the same intent, the 'native' and 'non-native' interviewees claimed that 'natives' do not have accents, that natives' pronunciation is "perfect" (Participant 7) and "real" (Participant 10) and that accents which belong to 'native' speakers are the best and better than accent from 'non-natives' (Participant 5).

When talking about 'non-native' accents, participants showed some leeway towards accepting specific accents depending on their "markedness" and if "they belonged to the Francophone world or not" (Participant 1). This markedness is an important factor as it could confuse students and potentially fossilize into wrong pronunciation practices later, there was also mention of the abilities of students to understand and differentiate marked accents.

Students expect a standard 'native' accent from their teachers as it is the default setting of their perceptions, and the most common accent represented in listening materials. This expectation reinforces the learning objective of sounding like a 'native' and the lack of accent diversity which may not reflect the teachers' accents (Participant 2).

Teachers who came to England to practice highlighted their difficulties to understand the local English accent and attempted for most to erase and "perfect" their accent as depending on the level of "French accentedness" they displayed people would often recognise they had one and either judge or modify their speech. These "remains" of accent may cause a devaluation of the teachers' professional practices or identities, like Participant 6 who was mocked for misarticulating the words "scrap paper".

Although accents are used indicate a geographical or social origin according to some participants, Participant 7 argued that in France accents do not matter as much as they do in England and Participant 5 expressed that as long as "the accent is authentic" even if not the standard expectation from France, then teachers still have credibility.

As accents are used to identify if someone is 'native' or not, they remain evasive as Participant 4 highlighted when identifying the researcher as 'native' speaker instantly but said that if she had never encountered an accent this might be a more difficult process. Alternatively, Participant 3 described a German colleague passing for a 'native' speaker because she did not have an accent and rarely made mistakes when speaking, noting that it would be hard for everybody to achieve that feat.

Theme 3: Defining the good French language teacher

When asked "how would you describe a good teacher of French?", most participants listed characteristics and rarely explored what they meant when using specific concepts or adjectives.

Here is an exhaustive list:

- pedagogue
- patient
- willing to make the time
- charismatic
- wanting to do well
- passionate and enthusiastic about French and the Francophone world
- able to make the language come alive
- able to put themselves in the position of the learner and adapt
- able to talk about France and the Francophone world
- able to keep up to date with developments in the Francophone world
- having a command of grammar
- being able to build relationships with the students
- having a good accent
- being reflexive
- being creative
- having a qualification and being willing to expand professional knowledge

Interestingly, no participants mentioned directly the speakerhood of the teacher, but it is possible to see that some characteristics are personality related (patience, creativity...), other qualities expected of any teacher (being qualified, willing to make the time....) and other related specifically to the subject (command of grammar, knowledgeable of culture....). Yet, some aspects are often linked with being more of a certain type of teachers, 'native' speakers often are attributed to have authentic input (see Theme 1) when it comes to accent and cultural knowledge whereas 'non-native' speakers are often said to be able to relate to students in their learning process of French, which both commonly attributed characteristics come up in the codes

No participant directly said they were a good teacher of French unless they were asked to or managed to provide an example of a 'perfect' teacher, there is a possibility to say that they described themselves indirectly, still show preference for a 'native' speaker and that most of them said there is 'no' perfect teacher

Theme 4: Defining the 'native' speaker

As a follow-up question to how participants would define a good FAL teacher, I asked them "how would you define a 'native' speaker?" and most mentioned with some degree of systematic similarity that a 'native' speaker was someone who was raised with French as "a first language"/ "their mother tongue" / "the first language acquired during childhood"/ "with one parent speaking it at home". Most of them also mentioned the fact that the person needed to speak naturally and have cultural knowledge of France / "their home country where French is spoken".

When asked as a direct follow-up question, if their definition of a 'native' speaker is absolute, participants offered more nuances answers showing the limitations of this binary definition.

Participant 2 remembered how their PGCE tutor described these labels as "colonialists" due to their historical significance and origin.

Participant 4 said that 'native' speakers are individually different and that there are hierarchies when it comes to accents or varieties and that one needs to consider how

and why French was the first language but also that even ‘natives’ discredit and disregard other ‘native’ speakers (see ‘Native on Native discrimination’ anecdote in Theme 1 table).

Participant 6 attempted to quantify how long it would take for someone in immersion to be considered or achieve ‘native’ level; interestingly she is also starting to question the concept of ‘nation’ as a homogeneous and immaterial entity.

Participants 6 and 7 also used the examples of their respective children to challenge the status of ‘native’ speaker as they have some abilities and knowledge but there is the question of “would other French-speaking people consider them ‘native’? Maybe not.”

Participants 3, 8 and 9 add the layer of multimodality validation to know if someone is ‘native’ or not: speaking is not enough, can they read and write but also display cultural awareness and sensibility. As examples, they provided specific cases with former or current native-speaking students or bilinguals in their classes who displayed abilities but could only be considered ‘half-natives’ or on a spectrum of being ‘native’ in some respects but not others.

Curiously, Participant 10 said that no one can disprove you are ‘native’ if the language comes naturally and fluently unless they are given external information or they contradict you.

Overall, most participants offered the universally accepted definition of a ‘native’ speaker however when asked to delve deeper into what it actually means they presented nuanced and contrasting answers to add layers of complexity but none said that the labels were ultimately to disregard (except participant 2) which also proves there is still an inclination of the ideal ‘native’ speaker born and raised in France and that if you do not meet these characteristics then you would not automatically be considered a ‘native’ speaker and you would to (dis)prove assumptions about your linguistic and cultural nativeness.

Theme 5: Teaching philosophies and practices

Use of the target language:

Whether participants were ‘non-native’ or ‘native’, they all highlighted the use of the target language in the classroom as one of the main key teaching points impacting the outcome

for the children. The typical pattern is to use French all the time except when explaining a grammar point, giving instructions or when regulating behaviour. Most admitted that ideally, they wanted to use French more because they want children to get as much input as possible as to improve their listening skills but also to provide good pronunciation model. However, discursively participants reported wanting to use French 'as much as possible' and English 'as little as possible' differently whilst also wanting to increase the amount depending on the level of the students whilst also being conscious of not losing them or making mistakes. There is a clear influence on departmental policies and experience. Participants 1, 4 and 5 reported that in their respective experiences using only French in the classroom in 'a recipe for disaster' as it is unfair and ill-adapted for all circumstances when Participant 2 reported that her using only French has proven to be successful and said that compared to other colleagues she is not as "extreme" in a positive manner.

Participants reported using English as the 'linguistic bridge' when needed to ensure students understood or even asking more able students to translate instructions.

It seems from these interviews that there is no consensus on how much French to use and especially 'what' French even though reported patterns differ on the individual level and not based on if the participant was 'native' or not. The only reported differences were on the quality of the target language output. Some 'non-native' speakers expressed being very careful about teaching pronunciation and making a conscious effort to make "no mistakes" whereas all the 'native' speakers mentioned it came to them naturally and therefore just needed to adapt to not use unknown language or expressions in front of the students.

Teaching objectives:

When asked about the objective of teaching, participants regardless of their 'native' status provided a wide range of answers that mainly focused on being able to communicate on various subjects of daily life and broaden their cultural knowledge. These goals were moderated by the level of the students as they had more instruction, they should be able to be more independent and critical but most reported that due to the finality of the courses being exams, they felt like they had to "teach for the exams" and teach exam techniques at the cost of language or culture themselves and with the

progressive disappearance of French use by the teacher. Participant 1 said that trying to reach 'native' level could create anxiety and that the aim should be to improve language proficiency. Participant 3 said that her goal was for the students to reach 'native' and be able to communicate and if possible "to become bilingual but not everybody can do it". On the other hand, Participant 7 said that reaching 'native' level as a learning goal at secondary school was impossible as there is not enough contact time, and the materials are not adapted for that objective, whilst Participant 9 said it was impossible for the reason that the onset stage learning (around 11) to acquire the language and culture is too late unless you live in France for an extended period of time. Participant 4 has recently been questioning her previously set objective of making her tutees reach 'native' since you cannot teach the full breadth of Francophonie (here understand cultural and linguistic varieties) and so the aim should be for the learners to independently interact with all the range of 'natives' no matter the situation. Participants 6 and 10 even reported that after a certain number of years, some teachers, including themselves, lose their initial spark to teach and become dull to teaching as students are uninterested because of the low appeal of the subject. Participant 6 reported that there is a framed approach to teaching which is binding and controlling and Participant 9 concurred and felt that she "wasn't teaching French the way people use it and not always relevant". Participant 6 recalled the fact that her son-in-law was not able to communicate with her family even though he had achieved the top grade at GCSE, and she rhetorically asked, "what are we teaching them?" to the researcher. Participant 7 said that her objectives were to "make them not hate French" and concluded that with the way language teaching is set-up and valued nowadays communication even at the basic level is not achievable due to the feeling it feels like a tick-boxing exercise more than the actual use and purpose of a language. Participant 8 extended her objective of being able to communicate in daily life and linguistic and cultural knowledge to themes such as citizenship, creating a sense of community and multilingualism. Participant 10 that her teaching objective is focused on translation rather than communication since teaching to the exam only allows for that and that even if the students can't speak naturally maybe they can get by and carry on learning at a higher level without hating the subject.

Representation of the programs:

To varying degrees, teachers expressed views about the representativeness of the French programs and textbooks regardless of their speakerhood status.

Participant 1 described how at the start of the lesson she introduces an aspect of Francophonie (either linguistic or cultural) to demonstrate to students that French is not only spoken in France and felt she would be “lying to them in some fashion” to not do that. Participant 2 reports talking about Francophonie “as much as possible” because some of her students have a narrow understanding of how and why French is spoken around the world and not just in France and when using diverse and update resources or when being able to access resources created by fellow teachers, she feels they are “refreshing”.

Participant 4 considered that because France is defined as the centre of Francophonie, it therefore creates a hierarchy of what to teach and therefore puts other Francophone varieties and cultures aside. Participant 6 confessed that when there was an activity on another Francophone country teachers saw that as an “extraordinary” activity, but this could have been because teachers themselves were not able or aware of their limitations when it should be an active effort backed by good intentions and not tokenistic objectives. To remedy that problem, the participant created her own resources and expanded her knowledge of Francophonie before sharing it to her network online. Participant 9 also made the point that there were efforts to incorporate more diversity in the new qualifications and textbooks to “put things into perspective” and reflect reality more as she noticed that some textbooks did not mention countries where there is not a majority of White people.

Multiple participants highlighted how talking about Francophonie was seen as part of the good teacher of French toolkit; it shows knowledge and open-mindedness.

Planning, marking, source and scheme:

Interviewees mentioned how on certain occasions 'native' and 'non-native' teachers may have different insights and opinions on how to plan, mark, find resources create schemes of works.

Participant 2 found it ludicrous that one of her 'non-native' colleagues does not use the target language at all and focuses heavily on reading and writing activities to teach French. She said there was a "dissonance" between them and that this created tensions between the two as she questioned if he was jealous of her use of French because she was a 'native' speaker. She even reported that he felt she was too "nice" and "not teaching right" when it came to exams.

Participant 8 described how sometimes 'native' speakers can appear harsher when it comes to marking when it came to productive works as they felt students met the criteria or made mistakes.

Some native participants reported that to find resources often qualified as "authentic" or "local" it was easier for them as they could "just go" online or in shops in France but non-native teachers did not report it being hard, it just took time and effort to create.

Participant 9 retold the story of her former native Head of Department behind erratic and wanting to change the scheme of works every year to "change things up because we can" and how it created tensions in how the department had to adapt and repurpose marking schemes and resources to meet the new yearly expectations.

Participant 8 said that her department had more loose approaches to planning and that even though there were centralised materials, teachers were invited to create new resources or derail from what their other colleagues were doing to be more comfortable in their teaching and adapt to the students' levels and interests.

Participant 11 planning more and being more focused on her lessons than her 'native' colleague.

These aspects were mentioned to a lesser frequency than the use of French in the classroom and similar reports were done to appreciate how these differences may come due to experience or personal beliefs rather than speakerhood as Participant 10

articulated but also to departmental policies and the context in which the participant is working or have worked. Some of them used examples from previous workplaces to highlight differences with their current one.

Transparency as the best policy:

Participants 3 and 8, both 'non-native' teachers, expressed the philosophy of what could be described as 'transparency is the best policy'. This is prevalent when they both recalled occasions where they didn't know the translation of word or couldn't answer a question they couldn't answer, taking the decision to admit to the students they didn't have the answer now, but they could search together or come back later with an answer. This contrasts with 'native' participant 2 who said there is a very small chance there would be a question she couldn't answer on the spot. In the same vein, Participants 5 and 10 mentioned how with their knowledge and in their position, learners would not be able to question or ask questions that couldn't be answered by the teacher. Participant mentioned that the only instance where students might ask a complicated question or challenge them is when 'native'/bilingual students are present, otherwise most students value and appreciate the teacher's knowledge.

Making the language come alive:

Half the participants mentioned arbitrarily and often unprompted the notion of "trying to humanise the language" (Participant 7) or "make the language come alive" (Participants 6,9 &10). These attempts involved using songs, hosting third-party events like plays, participating in exchanges with pen pals, going to exhibitions, going to university open days, creating extracurricular clubs, having external speakers come in, watching movies, celebrating a languages week, recruiting a language assistant, roleplaying and most cited: organising trips abroad. When asked why they were doing these activities, interviewees said that this was essential to familiarise students with the Francophone world outside the classroom which often seems distant or foreign to them. They also cited how these events were appreciated by the student body but required a sustainable amount of work and preparation but were always worth the trouble (Participants 3 and 8).

Theme 6: The teaching environment

During the interview process, participants mentioned how the environment (in the larger sense of the term) surrounding languages, education and worldwide events affected their practices and beliefs.

6 participants noted that due to changes in education provision, specifically since languages became optional at GCSE level, number of entries have dropped significantly for French and made most of them switch to a more balanced teaching schedule becoming less teacher of French but more teachers of French and other languages. They have also expressed the fact that Spanish has overtaken or is overtaking French as the most studied 'traditional' language as there has been a shift in perception whereby French is regarded as a 'difficult subject with harsher marking than any other subject' and Participant 8 describe exams as "formalities" for 'native' speakers, but in reality some still struggle to get top marks and skew grade distribution thus impacting entire cohorts of learners, this impacts other learners as they compare themselves to other students and lose confidence and interest in language learning altogether.

Multiple teachers provided without prompting that the demographics in their school or organisation type create expectations or pulling and pushing forces when teaching French: one has to adapt if they teach in a school which mostly serves White British working-class children in a rural setting or in an independent school in the south of England; all mentioned that teaching could be more diverse and that issues such as race or linguistic variety might be easier to introduce in London schools due to its superdiversity.

Participants reported that programs and national curricula were often too restrictive and prescriptivist, making teachers feel stuck in teaching a subject disconnected from reality and contrary to their beliefs or wants. Participant 6 reflected on the tensions she experienced with her superiors as she was deemed to teach through mediums deemed inappropriate for the language classroom. Participant 5 confessed her move to teaching primary level was a refreshing change allowing her more flexibility to spark passions for languages and curiosity, which according to her experience attending a seminar on transition from primary to second level was paramount to promote language learning and

that the language element can be amended easily. This is in line with several reports that mention how students show no interest in learning languages at secondary level as their passion has seemingly “been killed before it got even interesting, and they were able to appreciate the subject/language” (here intellectually and culturally Participant 5).

Extramural events (meaning happening outside of the classroom) such as Brexit or Covid-19 have had severe consequences on the pupils’ mindsets as participants reported an increase in the secular mindset often attached to British culture and people through the mentality “why learn a language? Everybody speaks English anyways” thus adding another layer of motivational block to language learning in the country. With Brexit, international engagements have been reduced or hard to put in place due to the legal workload teachers must maintain, making it harder to make the language alive through trips or hosting language assistants.

Technology has made its way in the language learning classroom and some teachers show reticence and fear it might affect negatively student and dehumanise the process and reinforce the disconnects and tensions already existing in terms of motivation, content and representation. However, a few participants mentioned that if framed and regulated, technology could be beneficial to students (positive influence of Duolingo) and teachers (workload reduction) if used correctly and appropriately to the situation.

When asked about gendered views of languages and if their gender had affected their careers, most participants explained that the stereotypes are still pervasive in the sense that languages are seen as feminine subjects and that may affect the teaching pipeline down the line with less boys taking languages at university and training to be language teachers.

Several teachers and the self-employed participant complained that (language) teaching had become like a business in the neoliberal sense and a market wherein performance is often valued over purpose through league tables, competitions, awards, exam-focused teaching and constant benchmarking, predictions, reports and inspections.

On a practical level, language classes were described as overcrowded and support for English as an Additional language or Special Educational Needs and Disabilities kids is often insufficient or minimal in the language classroom due to staff numbers or budget

cuts compared to other subjects. They also reported recruiting shortages and the belief there is a “crisis” in language learning and teaching in the UK. Two participants described their jobs as an administrative job rather than a teaching one due to the workload that has shifted in nature but also “due to behaviour issues “and the relationship with leadership team, which resulted in professional reconversions or moves.

Theme 7: (un)becoming a teacher of French

When asked ‘What triggered your interest to become a teacher of French?’, answers were diverse. Some saw it as a calling “I always knew I wanted to teach, I didn’t know if it would be English in France or French in England” (Participant 7), others saw it as a continuation of their studies and others did it out of other options. Although in this profession for different motives, not a single participant expressed any regrets in choosing to become a teacher of French; this doesn’t mean they never felt it was difficult or always enjoyable, but they all seem to have a positive outlook on their decision. Often without prompting, several participants mentioned how specific teachers left an imprint on them and represented role models to follow years later when themselves becoming teachers, these memories were not always positive but they all forged to some extent the now teachers and it is possible to perceive how some try to emulate or recreate the feelings/experiences they had as learners themselves.

When asked to judge their teaching abilities and if they believed they were good role models linguistically and culturally, all the participants said they believed they were because of their qualifications and knowledge, but some added that they brought good results, were better than colleagues, had responsibilities and good reviews from parents and students alike. Overall, they showed humility and said that to answer that question they needed multiple factors even though they believed themselves to be good role models.

Regarding professional qualifications, ‘non-native’ teachers and ‘native’ teachers alike reported the importance of having a teaching qualification as it provides a strong basis to start a career in education and the first criteria when it comes to employment opportunities in the public state-maintained sector. The self-employed teacher

(Participant 4) reported that her lack of qualification may have hindered her at the start but now after years of practice she does not feel like there would be a difference in abilities. Participant 1 said that sadly not all qualifications were equal and that some teachers were unprepared or were not proficient enough to describe one as a good teacher of French, she compared how Master's done in France to teach French as a Foreign Language might be more adapted and more rigorous than American master's in education.

Participants who are also teachers of other languages and whose time teaching French has been reduced or where the circumstances have changed displayed feelings of attrition when it came to their proficiency or knowledge of the Francophone world. They also said that this created a sense of insecurity when teaching French as they believe they had become less able than before and that it was hard to keep up and maintain these expectations due to external conditions often out of their control.

'Native' teachers of French who had no experience teaching in the British system expressed how they had to adapt to the current system, with varied degrees of difficulty, over their training period or first years of teaching as they came into the profession with the French system as the reference when it came to the workings and objectives but also the perception of education.

Anecdotally, Participant 4 declared she had to develop a "teaching persona" to establish a relationship with her students but also to separate the teacher from the speaker, they were two different users of the same language.

Theme 8: (un)becoming a French-speaking person

Most teachers displayed emotional attachment to the France and the French language, and all described themselves as Francophones and Francophiles without hesitation even if for different motives. 'Native' teachers of French maintain connections with the French speaking world mostly through connections and trips with their families whilst 'non-native' teachers reported using trips and other resources such as conversation evenings or materials in the language. Still, regardless of their speakerhood, they all expressed some attrition in the sense that they are not always of the developments of the French language (example of new slang words), political ones (results of the elections) or

cultural ones (music trends). 'Non-native' participants claim that having this additional language helps them have a "different outlook on the world at large and access to other cultures" (Participant 3) whilst also being critical of their own culture and language. Although subject to stereotypes whether directly or indirectly, interviewees say that they are proud to say that they are French-speaking. All without exception mentioned that their experiences abroad (in France, England or USA), working or studying had had positive impacts on their lives, going as far as to say the most important years or decisions of their lives in hindsight, even the trigger to become teachers of French for multiple participants.

When it comes to the private sphere, depending on the entourage, most 'native' speakers attempt to pass on the language and culture to their children recreating "a little piece of France" or by trying to emulate a French-speaking environment and 'non-native' teachers attempt to pass it on as well but there is a more general approach to languages in general instead. Still dependent on the entourage, French is often balanced as a language of the private sphere and its use constantly evolves in synchronicity with the teacher's life.

Conclusion qualitative aspect:

Through these 8 themes, it is possible to observe how French teachers have been affected or are affected by native-speakerist ideologies directly or indirectly during their teaching experiences. Their practices and beliefs, especially surrounding accents, whether theirs or others', reflect pervasive native-speakerist understandings of language ideologies. Regardless of their speakerhood, teachers described the good language teacher based on characteristics not dependent on one's birth circumstances, meaning that these attributes can be cultivated and are dynamic. When it came to defining a 'native speaker', without always being conscious of it, interviewees showed the limitations of the two-fold understanding of language speakerhood. Practices and philosophies of the two groups may be affected by one's speakerhood but when digging deeper at the individual and anecdotal levels, it is clear personal experiences and external concepts affecting their professional and personal trajectories have more

impact. The last themes prove how overlapping construction processes and apprehensions of one's personal linguistic identity and professional identity crossover and weave into each other. It was also interesting to observe how different forms of native speakerism affect teachers in their various languages as they may reproduce or resist deficient ideologies in different patterns.

4.4: Data triangulation

A cross-section of the data from respondents (N =91) was drawn based on the interview participants (N = 11).

At the cross-section level

There was a homogeneous pattern in this sub-sample in terms of beliefs compared to the overall sample, most interviewees agreed on their linguistic abilities, cultural knowledge and teaching practices. The same tests of association were ran again in the same manner as with the whole sample, and similar results were obtained. The significance of these is to be considered critically as the sample size was diminished but it would have been interesting to observe that individualising even more the data would provide different results that might have been washed on a larger scale sample.

At the individual level

Interviewees have shown contradictions at the sentence level such as Participant 2 who said that speaking like a 'native was not the goal', just a few seconds later to say that they should be pushed as much as possible to have an authentic pronunciation as they can copy her. Similarly, participants reported beliefs in the questionnaire differed from what they declared during the interview: Participant 10 was the only interviewee to answer positively to the statement that 'native' teachers are better, when during the interview her stance was more towards favouring 'non-natives' as they could relate to students, still she mentioned that training could neutralise these differences to say either groups can have the same efficiency.

No interview participants reported having had tensions or any incident with colleagues, students or parents regarding their teaching abilities, yet Participant 2 reported having

been a victim of a micro-aggression from her colleague, Participant 6 with her departmental colleagues on her teaching methods, Participant 3 and 5 with former 'native' or bilingual students or even Participant 8 when parents doubted her ability to prepare their child in advance for her admissions test at Oxford. Probably due to the wording of the question, it is nonetheless important that when asked to explore their experiences in depth, teachers will recall specific incidents that marked them whilst reporting that such events never occurred in the questionnaire. These tensions evoke various aspect of native speakerism and were important in the qualitative analysis.

Contradictions are important to consider but evasive answers or confirmations (as they are self-explanatory and in-line with questionnaire answers) are also key element of this study. Regarding evasive answers, when talking about gender disparities or race, some participants did not provide answers or provide idealistic answers. When asked if a teacher who was non-White would enjoy a career in teaching in the UK, some participants said that they would maybe face difficulties but would thrive in diverse London when this was not the point of the question.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1: Summary of findings

The primary aim of this dissertation was to question if teachers of French as an Additional Language in the United Kingdom are affected by native speakerism, and if yes, to what extent would it affect their personal and professional identities but also their practices. The literature on this topic is scarce regarding French and non-existent in the UK context, compared to the Canadian one or even English around the globe. The project aimed at filling the gaps in the literature but also integrating new frameworks into already existing understandings of native speakerism to bridge but also critic previous conclusions and perceptions.

- To what extent are French as an Additional Language (FAL) teachers aware of their own and others' native-speakerist attitudes? (RQ 1.1)

FAL teachers have displayed native-speakerist ideologies to varying degrees playing into tropes that have been studied before such as the 'natives' can't relate to students learning the language or 'non-natives' possess marked accents. Awareness levels displayed by the interview participants varied greatly when it came to discussing their own biases, contradictions were observed on multiples levels often favouring the 'native' speaker in terms of accent and cultural knowledge. Regarding others' attitudes, participants seemed to express the absence of any tensions in the questionnaire, yet, when asking interview participants, these tensions became clearly apparent but downplayed or justified on grounds often external to one's linguistic profile.

- To what extent do native-speakerist attitudes impact their personal identities? (RQ 1.2)

Respondents and interviewees had clear cut stances about their personal identities as users of the French language. The interviews showed how these identities were dynamic and multiple. Patterns of attrition and trying to keep links with the language and the

country were the most recurring patterns of identity (un)building processes. All participants considered themselves Francophone, but 'natives' assumed it was automatic whereas 'non-natives' had to prove and pass for Francophones as they were not automatically members of that community. As language teachers in the UK have in most cases the need to teach other languages, they seem to balance languages in their different spheres of life and compartmentalise them to their functions and values. French remains the dominant language in all 'native' participants as they try to recreate French spaces in their personal lives whilst 'non-natives' try to mix their cultures to distance themselves from their monocultural peers. The 'monolingual mindset' can be observed as languages are separated in the participants minds and how they present themselves. Participants displayed patterns of self-reproducing native-speakerist ideologies in the other languages in their repertoires; this means that regardless of the participant's 'nativeness', they tended to set the 'native' speaker as the ideal model in the other languages they spoke and taught, said they lacked 'authentic' experiences or even commented on the quality of their linguistic output, chiefly their accent.

- To what extent do native-speakerist attitudes impact their professional identities?
(RQ 1.3)

From the questionnaire, all participants provided positive answers regarding their professional attributes. To understand the reasons behind this positive outlook, interview answers provide meaningful insights. All interviewees described themselves as qualified and efficient regardless of their 'nativeness' but how they discursively built their arguments was different. 'Native' teachers highlighted how they had gone through teacher training and wanted to enthuse learners through the French language whereas 'non-native' teachers highlighted how they could relate to the learners' process of acquiring an additional language and attempted to be good linguistic models for them. Teacher training seems to align teachers regardless of their 'nativeness' as they acquire another facet to their identities, as they gain agency in using and sharing their knowledge and gain firsthand experience. Training is also essential as obtaining a qualification is

perceived as a validating way for 'non-natives' to gain credibility and for 'natives' to transpose themselves into an educational system which they may not be familiar with. When asked to define a good language teacher of French, interview participants listed various qualities that were either personal or relational but none of the interviewees mentioned how one's 'nativeness' was a factor affecting that concept. This is in contrast with the pervasive native speakerism expressed in the questionnaire and the interviews where the preference for 'native' speakers was expressed more often than how in practice someone was a good language teacher. This indicates that teachers interpret their practices differently from their ideological stances, hence the contradictions or misalignments in the answers given. This also reinforces the idea that the two 'kinds' of teachers are inherently different when judging from the descriptions given, yet individual characteristics trump over one's 'native' status. The expectations of a good language teacher affect their overlapping personal and professional identities as they are used to defined one another. External factors such as performance valuation and curriculum design affect how teachers perceive their practices and therefore their linguistic profile. Power dynamics were also observed through the interviews, either withing-groups or between groups, indicating that hierarchies are created on multiple scales (personal, school-level and national), therefore affecting teachers' professional identities. Validation of the professional identities were internal through self-belief in abilities but also external through seeking other people's approval or through exam results.

- To what extent do French language teaching practices reflect teachers' beliefs and native-speakerist ideals? (RQ 1.4)

Competence in French was expressed as the main goal for most interview participants. Yet, attempting or failing to reach a 'native-like' level was also expressed as the ultimate goal by most when several teachers expressed that this was impossible for most. Differences in practices are often due to individual experiences and beliefs rather than belonging to any specific group of teachers based on their speakerhood. One can understand therefore that the environment in which teachers evolve influence greatly their practices and identities. This observation can explain how the vicious circle observed in the UK may reinforce native-speakerist ideologies

in language teaching as exam results are the main goal and the materials accentuating power divides and favouring one vision of the French language and the elements attached to it; then language learning is delinked from the language and the people speaking it, glorifying the 'native' speaker as the model. The designed approach to Francophonie is clearly blinding teachers and pupils alike to real situations and centring French on a specific variety and on a specific cultural bubble, in this case a focus on French spoken by French people. This duplicates ideas about how the 'ideal' 'native' should sound like, look like and act.

Even though it is possible to conclude that native speakerism does impact teachers of French in the UK, interviews showed that most participants, whether consciously or unconsciously, to have dispositions to stop the vicious cycle and go beyond native-speakerist conceptions of language learning and teaching. Participants demonstrated inclinations to go beyond and across the labels asserted to them either by individuals or institutions, therefore exercising their agency. Questioning of how to define a 'native' speaker and the characteristics of a good French language teacher prove that teachers can be critical and reject determinist and absolutist definitions that may be ascribed to them or others. Although the trajectories recorded are different, at the core of every participant's motivation is a want to be a good teacher and share their passion and knowledge with students (admittedly to different degrees). Anecdotally, participants rejected native-speakerist ideals and made efforts to become more knowledgeable and progress. Efforts including attending professional development events, embracing new technologies, bridging language barriers or adopting reflective practices are indications that meaningful and lasting changes can be made to reject native speakerism and move past monolithic ideologies, making the case to use the approach of trans-speakerism advanced by Hiratsuka et al. (2023)

5.2: Implications for research and theory

This study has shown that research of native speakerism in a variety of contexts can be beneficial to gain a better understanding of this phenomenon. Its pervasiveness is accrued in the current context as it is not always explicitly perceivable or articulated through proxies in an environment that has been designed to fail by default and favour a vision which enables English to remain the dominant language in the country. Research and theory must now focus on how best to enable the UK to embrace its multicultural and multilingual opportunities. This would hopefully result in a better understanding of language learning in the country and result in a mindset shift that could solve the observed problems such as low motivation, low recruitment and retention of teachers and 'English as the sole language' philosophy. There also needs to be a shift to study the supposedly separate groups of teachers in tandem to not reproduce power dynamics often reinforcing supposed deficiency of 'non-native' teachers.

Theory should aim to enhance a transdisciplinary approach to identity research using different frameworks to understand how time and space are critical but also how external and internal dynamics influence the various processes of identity (de)construction. Efforts should be made to link practices and identities as contradictions and validations often co-occur, making interpreting data harder as often it is disconnected from the participant's trajectories. Attempts to generalise and quantify native-speakerist ideologies should be made as often conclusions are drawn from qualitative findings only, thus rendering them very specific and potentially unapplicable in other contexts, with other populations or timeframes.

5.3: Limitations

Recruitment procedures and numbers:

For this study's findings to be more significant, a larger number of respondents would have been necessary, critically it would have benefitted from reaching a more varied population rather than reaching mostly White women. This means the variety of testimonies would have been greater and would have allowed more complex trajectories to be compared rather than having highly similar ones. Arguably, this could also be considered a strength of the study, as this allowed the intersection of gender, race and native speakerism to be explored in a context where most schoolteachers are women.

Questionnaire design:

The questionnaire acted as a survey and recruitment tool, but its design could have been improved to include more items directed to ideologies and practices. The wording of some items may have been misunderstood or interpreted in a way that was not intended, thus potentially explaining the higher proportion of neutral answers to some items. The items being short statements forced respondents to take stances that probably are more nuanced in reality, thus biasing the subsequent coding into two data sets that discarded neutrality. The recoding of the quantitative data into of binary sets was justified as a replication of native speakerism as a dichotomising ideology that is rarely nuanced, however by following that principal nuance was lost and results could have been different if neutrality and the range of answers had been explored. Moreover, response patterns were discernable: measures in sections were often similar no matter the item, therefore losing nuance and raising the question if participants did not just auto-pilot their answers.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to question if teachers of French as an Additional Language in the UK were affected by native-speakerist ideologies and if, yes, how this affected their identities and practices and if they were aware of their dispositions and that of others. Findings show that teachers' identities are indirectly affected by native-speakerist ideologies and that manifestations of this phenomenon are prevalent in their practices, often without them realising they are reinforcing them. Quantitative results showed that both groups do not report different beliefs or practices, questioning the validity of considering teachers as different based on their 'native' status. The pervasiveness of native speakerism in the study's context can be attributed to the systemic failures of the language learning provisions, the wider societal context and the teachers' personal beliefs. Throughout this study, it was possible to observe how 'nativeness' is a supple concept which pushes teachers to conflate and compound ideologies into their projected identities and practices as a result. France and its citizens remain the model and put Francophonie on the sideline as an immaterial concept, reinforcing a centred and negligent image of the reality of the French-speaking world and peoples. Still, interviewed teachers have shown predispositions to question labels and practices, indicating that raising critical language awareness and supporting teachers in their process of (un)becoming teachers of French as a whole can be beneficial for the field and the wider society as it could prove to be a solution to end the vicious cycle observed in the UK. Methodologically, the use of mixed methods proved to be innovative as it offers the ability to reconstruct articulations of native-speakerist ideologies and their resistance or reinforcement on multiple levels and through different modalities. The interview approach should remain the standard approach as researchers are able to explore lived experiences and perceive evolution and contradictions at the individual and group levels and can observe the different manifestations of native speakerism and advance further the superficial core understanding of 'native' speakers as superior users of the language to match the often more complex realities in which teachers of French evolve in. There remains much work to be done in other contexts and other languages to decentre knowledge production regarding native speakerism and language teaching from the Anglocentric and Western viewpoint.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Research ethics approval

**SOCIAL SCIENCES & HUMANITIES
INTERDIVISIONAL RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
DEPARTMENTAL RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**

Department of Education
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Pierre Mézière
Department of Education, Social Sciences Division
University of Oxford

6 March 2024

Dear Pierre,

Research ethics approval

Research title: 'Me, (my) French and I': Exploring Native-Speakerism in French as an Additional Language (FAL) teaching in the UK.

Research ethics reference: EDUC_C1A_24_080

The above application has been considered on behalf of the Education Departmental Research Ethics Committee (DREC) in accordance with the University's procedures for ethical approval of all research involving human participants.

I am pleased to confirm that, on the basis of the information provided to the DREC, ethics approval has now been granted for this study.

Please note the following:

Personal data: It is the responsibility of the PI to ensure that all personal data collected during the project is managed in accordance with the University's [guidance and legal requirements](#).

In-person activities: Any data collection involving in-person interactions with participants must have an up-to-date fieldwork risk assessment in place; further guidance is available from the Safety Office's [website](#).

Amendments: Please notify the committee if you intend to make any amendments to the information in your ethics application as submitted at date of this approval, as all changes must receive ethical approval prior to implementation. The amendment form is available on the [SSH IDREC webpage](#).

We welcome feedback on your experience of the ethical review process and suggestions for improvement. Please email any comments to staff.curec@education.ox.ac.uk / student.curec@education.ox.ac.uk or ethics@socsci.ox.ac.uk.

Yours sincerely

Dr Gary Snapper

DREC member

cc: Dr Anna-Maria Ramezanzadeh

Appendix 2 : Semi-structured interviews questions list

Opening question : Can you introduce yourself ?

Content starting questions

1. Could you describe your relationship to the French language?
2. Could you explain your life as a multilingual person/ teacher?
3. How did you first become interested in teaching French? What triggered your interest?
4. Please tell me about your teaching experience thus far.
5. Please describe what you feel are the most important characteristics of a good teacher of French?
6. What do you think affects the most your teaching practices ?

Final question: I do not have any more questions. Is there anything you would like to mention, add or ask ?

Extension questions:

- *Could you expand on what you mean by ?*
- *Can you tell me more about this ?*
- *How do you make sense of ?*
- *Do you think this influences your ?*
- *Do you think this true of all ?*

Appendix 3: Exemplar transcript

Researcher 0:04

This is interview number X and it's the 4th of June today. My first question is: would you mind introducing yourself in terms of the French language ?

Participant X 0:25

I started learning French at school, my grandfather spoke French so I always had an interesting in languages from a young age. One grandfather was French and the other was Austrian

So French and German were spoken in my family.

I did well at languages at school.

I decided to do them at A level and decided at university to do fifty-fifty undergrad and then lived in both countries and then decided to do my PGCE I have been teaching for fourteen years in the school where I'm working now and then I was three years in a girl's comprehensive state school.

For three years prior to that, and then I did some work in Cambridge schools for a year before that. So I've been in the independent sector for a long time. It was predominantly girls private school. But eight years ago, we turned mixed.

And we've just had more primary school French being introduced in the last two years from the age of two, which has been a really interesting project to be a part of.

Researcher 2:00

OK, perfect. Thank you.

So you mentioned that with some of your family members being bilingual, I assume so you grew up around French and German.

Participant X 2:15

I did, but I would say not within the House that I lived in. So it wasn't like.

My parents spoke the languages.

I mean loosely, but not they didn't study them at school.

I didn't. I certainly didn't grow up with, like academic books in both languages. It wasn't really until I was doing my A levels that interest.

Was sparked.

Researcher 2:46

OK. And now could you describe your relationship to the French language? So you mentioned your family members, you are a teacher of French, obviously. And now do you feel about the language.

Participant X 2:58

So I'm married to a Belgian.

And his mum is Belgium.

So.

We go to France.

Probably two or three times a year.

I have French close friends.

Obviously family friends, I watch a lot of French TV and films. I read in French a lot.

Both novels. Fiction.

And news.

Yeah, I I.

Researcher 3:43

Yeah. So you would say French is a part of your life outside of the classroom?

Participant X 3:47

Definitely, yeah.

Researcher 3:48

OK, OK, good. And how would you describe your life as a multilingual person and teacher? Like, how do you balance the languages? How is there like maybe a dominant language over the others?

Participant X 4:05

Yeah, definitely French out of out of French and German. I mean, I teach both French and German to a level.

But we've just had one student who's like who? I prepare the MLAT for, and she's got her place to study Oxford, Oxford for French. And I would say she's probably the first one.

Where?

Like academically, she's been the most challenging student, I would say. Does that is that the right answer is that the kind of thing you need?

Researcher 4:39

Yeah, yeah. I mean, you sort of answered it anyways because then these are these questions are just introductory questions. It's just for them, me to sort of get, you know French, because the questionnaire is sort of like evasive, Oh my. But yeah, good. When you say challenging, what do you mean by that?

Participant X 4:46

OK.

OK.

So I think that the A level French curriculum at the moment.

We use AQA.

It's very broad in terms of like contemporary issues and being able to debate and everything, but she always I felt like she needed more than that.

In sorry, yeah, apologies in terms in terms of challenge for her, I felt like the curriculum at a level needed to be.

I would say the independent research project was probably.

Researcher 6:18

OK.

Participant X 6:20

The area where she could be stretched and challenged, the rest I felt like in terms of the vocabulary she already had that access to it.

She was, but she is bilingual, by the way, so that's probably.

Researcher 6:33

Oh, OK.

Participant X 6:37

Yeah, that's probably the the.

Not difficulty. It's not a difficulty. It's difference, yeah.

Researcher 6:47

Yeah, it's just like how do you cater to that? Students' needs when the curriculum is sort of like limited?

Participant X 6:55

Exactly. Yeah, that is. Yeah, that's it. Yeah. So I was stretching all the time with.

Researcher 6:56

Is that what? Yeah. OK.

Participant X 7:04

Like for example, when we were looking at racism and integration, I said to her, have you read Camus' 'L'Etranger'. And she said no. So I said right, well, how about you read that and then that could be like, you know, a potential practise for your IRP. So I was always trying to.

Further her reading, I suppose. I mean, she was an avid reader anyway.

Researcher 7:29

Yeah, yeah, I see. I had the same situation with two bilingual twins and sometimes it was hard with like the normal programme to just, you know, go beyond, go beyond the expected knowledge.

Participant X 7:44

Yeah, yeah.

Researcher 7:45

OK.

Now this is might be like really look into the past, but like how did you first become interested in teaching French specifically? You can also mention German. That is fine by me, and if there was a specific moment you remember or like a specific person that you know inspired you to start teaching French.

Participant X 8:09

Sadly, looking back, my French teachers weren't very inspiring.

It was the German and Italian teacher who was.

I have a real memory for. She took us on quite a few trips we did home at home. Stays.

There was an exchange with a school in Ulm in Germany and.

It was just brilliant and the family that I was living with.

My father was really interested in astronomy philosophy, and they weren't a family like I'd lived with.

Researcher 8:50

Mm hmm.

Participant X 8:51

And so I think that was probably a key moment. French, A level I remember reading at the state college that I went to, which was mixed. I was in a small class.

And I was probably one of the most interested students, students.

But the novel that we were reading was 'le blé en herbe'.

Researcher 9:18

OK.

Participant X 9:18

Which is really uncomfortable in a way about, yeah, a young boy's relationship with a middle-aged woman, and I just didn't. It didn't resonate with me as a 17 year old girl.

And I found it. Yeah, I just found it quite painful to read.

And I suppose still today, in a way, literature lessons that I teach, I'm always quite aware of making it engaging. And how to, you know, how to create act like short exercises on the chapters. And yeah, that's still something that I'm personally developing myself.

Researcher 9:58

Yeah. OK. Thank you.

Now you mentioned like your your teachers and your French teachers not being the most inspiring people. I'm sorry to hear that but.

What do you think are the most important characteristics of a good French teacher or a good language teacher overall? Like if you were to describe like someone and you would know they were good, what would be the striking characteristics you would be looking for?

Participant X 10:21

This.

Yeah.

OK, so it's a really interesting question. And if I think back, I I don't think that they weren't good. I just don't think they were inspiring. They were very good like the way that they taught grammar, I think.

Researcher 10:37

Oh.

Hmm.

Participant X 10:44

I'm I'm in, you know, I'm. I'm very grateful to them for drilling all of the songs of the verbs and the grammar exercises that they must have made us all do because, you know, somewhere in there.

It all. When I went to university, I could. Yeah, I knew it and and was able to to have a strong basis.

So consistency, reliability.

Positive.

Probably charismatic and a bit of a presence, I think is important like.

They want to get to know you and and you feel like they want you to improve.

Researcher 11:35

Yeah. OK. Do you again? This is my research project, so that might be like a dive into what we're going to discuss later on. Do you think that them being native or non-native or bilingual had an influence on it, if they were, you know?

Participant X 12:03

One of them did.

But I don't think I found out anymore kind of cultural stuff from her than I did from the others who weren't. I mean, the German and Italian teacher that I had. She spoke both languages. She was not.

She was not native of either of them.

Yeah. So I'd probably say no in that respect.

Researcher 12:35

No, no, no, that's that's good. That's good.

Participant X 12:37

University, I think possibly different cause a lot more were native speakers. And I think that was that was important at that stage.

Researcher 12:49

Do you think that would be a key, maybe component of a good teacher at university?

Participant X 12:59

And I suppose it depends on the element that they teach.

Participant X 13:03

I think ultimately it comes down to your knowledge in the area.

Whether you're native or not.

Yeah, I'd. I'd probably say no. Yeah.

Researcher 13:14

OK. No, I I agree. I agree. It's just because what I'm looking for is I'm what I'm researching. So actually is native speakerism . And so the assumption that native speakers are better language teachers.

And what you are telling me basically is that it's a bit more complicated than that. It depends on what they teach and when you mentioned what a good teacher should have as their qualities. You mentioned like personality and like some sort of pedagogy, right, being positive?

Participant X 13:42

Yeah, yeah.

Researcher 13:44

So again there, there is no element of like, oh, you were born speaking French, so you are better than another teacher. That wasn't for example. So again, we're having to come back.

Participant X 13:52

Yeah, yeah. See other qualities? Yeah.

Researcher 13:56

That's what I'm trying to, you know, get from my interviews. But thank you.

Participant X 14:01

OK.

Researcher 14:03

Now, what do you think affects your teaching practises when you're teaching French, and by that I mean is it your past experiences?

For example, your experience as a learner.

The programmes and like the expectations, preparing students for exams.

Or is it the students and their needs and their, you know, passions or likes? Or is it a mix of, you know, a bit of everything?

Participant X 14:39

Yeah.

What? So we don't do the ebac where I am, we get them to select.

In year nine, whether or not they want to continue, so most of them should be motivated at GCSE and A level.

They're quite stretched with their time and the subjects that they do.

Participant X 15:08

In the UK curriculum, not so much at a level, but then a level. I feel like other things get in their way, like driving relationships.

They're they're very focused, even in year 12 on what universities they're going to go to and what they need to produce in terms of personal statements for that. So sometimes I think their foot goes off the gas a little bit on their academic work.

In that year, which is not ideal 'cause, that's the year when you really want them to cover a lot of things. Cause Year 13 is always so short in any case.

With the exams being on earlier and earlier.

It becomes quite difficult to improve their spoken language before the GCSE speaking

exam and the A level one as well 'cause. We tend to do those in March, April, which doesn't really leave that you know you have to embed that time for them to be able to improve their spoken language. But I'm lucky that my class sizes are small, so that helps.

Those are probably the main challenges.

Researcher 16:32

Yeah.

So that's the main change. OK. The main change you say and like you personally like, what do you think?

When you look at the programmes, do you feel like there are representative and like there are?

Uh, they cover quite a lot of ground and that they, you know, I wouldn't say speak to the students but like, are they interesting for them? Do you think that sometimes?

Participant X 16:59

Right. So we we have as our one of our mottos is like be, you know, be innovative and feel like you can be creative within the framework of the national curriculum, obviously so. But we're moving from AQA to Pearson for the pure reason that we like the modern, more fresh kind of materials that they have. But not just that.

Participant X 17:25

Like everything from celebrity culture to.

Like cultural events and the input of festivals and traditions like we just feel, it's more up to date.

And.

We're not teaching with textbooks anymore. It's just it we're spending so much time creating booklets because the textbooks are either too expensive or not.

Inviting the wrong word. You know what I mean? Appealing to young people.

Researcher 18:01

Yeah.

I feel like sometimes it's a bit repetitive over the years and you know.

Participant X 18:06

Yes, absolutely, yeah. And that's why I think so many don't choose languages because they're bored by year nine of talking about school and their holidays.

So we have to try and cover what we need to, but in a in a slightly different way.

Yeah, I didn't think there's enough.

Effort. Emphasis put on transactional communicative language that you would have when you're on holiday buying train tickets you know.

That sort of well placed stuff that's in the GCSE. It then gets lost at a level which is a bit of a shame.

Researcher 18:51

Yeah, that's true. Yep.

Talking about a level, do you feel like it's a bit because the emphasis is really on the, like, cultural aspect of learning a language? Do you feel like sometimes it's

Too narrow into French from France centric.

Participant X 19:11

Yeah, we've had to spend a lot of time being able to broaden our Francophone world knowledge. So there was a website called MFL News.

Participant X 19:23

She's changed it now it's something else. I got an e-mail from her the other day. Actually, she's setting up a new website, but her her input was so helpful because once a month we used to get a low down of news, current news. And it had, like, sometimes it had activities afterwards. And a word list.

And having that monthly bulletin was really helpful.

I mean, yeah, news just changes all the time, doesn't it? So you you need to keep up with everything yourself and and and embed that into your lessons.

I think we try to do for 10 minutes every week. We try to get them.

To summarise, a piece of news that has interested them.

Normally from news and slow French or Francine 24 or even there's that other one,

BFMTV, something like that.

Participant X 20:27

Which is fine, yeah.

Researcher 20:29

Hmm.

OK. And do you feel like that you yourself are, you know, well aware of the like, you know, the Francophone world and what's happening around the world?

Participant X 20:45

Yeah, I mean, I'd, I'd so I was talking about the, you know, the the crisis in Nouvelle-Calédonie only today.

Researcher 20:52

Yep.

Participant X 20:54

Yeah, I mean I I I definitely do. But they don't. Even the student that I had.

Who's in? You know, she's a brilliant.

Bilingual student. I don't, I don't. I was all we were both quite within our team. Quite surprised by.

And how little they read the news. I just think. I don't know. I I don't know how to to to improve that apart from setting them a piece of homework.

To, you know, find something every week.

Researcher 21:32

Yeah, you know, because that's also another aspect of what I'm researching is sometimes they're like.

The narrow mindedness of like the the programme, for example, like when you look at the textbooks. It's very French centred and then sometimes the students you know like telling them like friends as overseas territories are like what?

Participant X 21:48

Yes.

Yeah.

Researcher 21:56

And so. But you know, but it shouldn't be your job yourself as the teacher, because you are already doing so much to, like do that. So that's why I'm asking the question, you know, because that's another layer of work you have to do, but.

Participant X 22:11

The only place where I have found it to be quite useful is on AQA on the speaking exam they have in the Examiner notes after the speaking cards.

Possible content.

Participant X 22:27

And those have, like cultural references. And that's the only place where I have sought help to build points for our pupils outside of what we already know within our team. And like we do quite a lot of collaborative work, you know of how would you answer this question or because it's always that question, isn't it? And what else do you know about music in the francophone world? OK well.

Participant X 22:56

Don't even you know, as a 17 year old, do I know about a French thing and let alone a Belgian or, you know, an Afro pop or something? So yeah.

Researcher 23:09

Talking about that.

You mentioned earlier.

That.

Your student, the bilingual one.

Because she's bilingual, was there ever times where there were maybe tensions?

Tensions when teaching her.

Participant X 23:36

No, never at all. No, not at all. I do have one. Who is German and she did. So she spent some time in Switzerland. And funnily enough, there were definitely tensions with her.

Participant X 23:51

And because when I taught her, this is when she came in at year 9.

Obviously I was. I had her in my class alongside other year nine children whose German was not as good, and tailoring what she needed with what they needed was challenging.

And I think what happens with linguists is sometimes we get put, we get children put in our classes, whose knowledge of the language is way above everybody else's.

So they're bored, so you have to individualise it for them. But you also have another rest of the class. So it's. Yeah, but with the bilingual at a level, there were never any tensions at all. She was so interesting to work alongside. She's a very good student, you know.

Very conscientious.

Participant X 24:48

Do you mean not related to her behaviour or because I was nonnative and she's native?

Do you mean that?

Researcher 24:54

Yeah, but I'll give you the example that made me ask the question he's like. So I was a French assistant for two years. That's the short story. And one time I was sitting in an A level lesson and the bilingual twins I mentioned, the boy was he had a strong character. I'll put it that way. And he, like, he kept on challenging me and my colleague who is non-native. But at some point he had to go for 15 minutes to her about, like, how she wasn't born in France.

Researcher 25:22

So how could she know? And then I had some incidents with him like he said. How do you know I'm like, well, you know, I know because I am French, but he's also because I read, you know, like your textbook your textbook. So I sort of get it, you know, I've got the knowledge and it's not because, you know.

Researcher 25:39

So I was thinking about that as well, but.

Participant X 25:42

Yeah, so funnily enough I have one I I I do actually have a pupil at the moment who?

Researcher 25:43

Yeah.

Participant X 25:48

Is, so she's she's current year 10. She's just sat her French GCSE exams a year before and she has been at school. She was at school in Paris. She's only been with us for a year and her behaviour is quite challenging at the best of times. But I remember quite early on me having a conversation with her and just being like I know you've come from Paris School, but this is the way that we do it here. You know, I've been working here for X amount of years.

I know what I'm doing.

So if you can work with me and listen to my advice, then I can get you that a star. If you don't, then you're going to get an A. Maybe you might get A-B and then I found like with her it was like, OK, maybe I should just do my work because she's just really lazy. She didn't. And sometimes I find that with bilinguals as well is that they don't want to put any effort in because they feel like.

Sorry, that's a really hasty generalisation. Possibly, but from the ones that I've taught, it is sometimes like, particularly at a level, sometimes they choose the subject because they think they're going to do well at it, and they're not going to need to do much work.

Participant X 27:06

But it's been really interesting sometimes, like they start to work really hard when they realise we had last year a student from Cote. D'ivoire and her spoken French was amazing, but Oh my goodness, when she started to write.

I realised that she'd never actually studied French grammar or done any creative writing, so it was almost like being with.

Oh my goodness. Like a year, year seven-year, right?

Yeah.

Researcher 27:39

Yeah, and this is what I mean by attentions is it doesn't have to be like you know conflicts like times where teaching is not exactly going as smoothly as possible, either because the of the students or other things. But like, yeah, OK. And do you think? Yeah.

Participant X 27:52

I think the text as well. You know the literature texts and the films.
Like they need updating right? Then they the the variety that we have is great.

Participant X 28:04

But still.
I yeah, I'm hoping that the new GCSE as that's been changed will then.
Obviously it's going to move a change to the A level I imagine.

Researcher 28:23

OK. Yep.
So from what I gathered like there, there is no particular events where there was tensions or conflicts. As I said, based on you being a non-native, it's more you know just behaviour wise.

Participant X 28:38

Yeah. Yeah, I I think so, yeah.
Probably the Swiss German girl that I was telling you about, that's probably the one been the one where there's been the most tension, because I think there was that preconceived notion of, oh, she's English, she's not German.
You know, why is why am I going to have? I am now the only.
Staff member of my team that teaches German.
Before there were three and she got timetabled with me and I think she was like why have I got her and not the other two who were teaching GCSE and a level at the time?
Now, obviously things are different because I've had more years of it, but I think when she first arrived.
There was that there was that tension, yeah.
But I think as long as you're, you know, I think if there's transparency and at some point, it feels like it's the elephant in the room, then if you address it, it will go away.
Or at least it's out in the open somehow.

Researcher 29:43

Again with the bilingual, boy like my colleague, you know, laid it into him that, you know, she had like, 2 Masters, spent years in France and that, you know, he, you know, he had. No, I wouldn't say legitimacy because obviously it was. But like, you know, sometimes just because you are born in a place doesn't mean you are by default, you know.

Researcher 30:08

The authority in the language at least.

Participant X 30:09

Yeah, exactly. That's it. And I always try to say like that's so you know, that's a really interesting question. Oh, let's have a look or, oh, let's see. What would a synonym on word reference be or, you know, how else could we tackle that translation? Like, I suppose it's the way I like. I've always approached teaching with that sort of.

Participant X 30:31

We're in it together type thing.

Researcher 30:36

'Cause I remember team teaching with uh, all the teachers, and sometimes he would look at me and be like, do you know, I'm like, well, not really, you know, I mean, I've got, I've got a pretty good base of knowledge, but doesn't mean I know everything about you.

Participant X 30:49

Yeah, and the translations are, yeah, they're they're translating is tricky, isn't it? So yeah.

Researcher 30:55

Yeah, even on the cultural things, like, uh, you mentioned, like Francophone artists. When we go to the chapter with our A level, I was like, well, good question. I'm I'm curious too.

So.

Participant X 31:09

Architecture too, and it's interesting how they they have. Some of them are like, no, I don't want to do that. I don't. I'm not interested in talking about buildings. And then you talk to them about like passive house or how to be more sustainable. And they're like, actually, yeah, I can get on board with that.

Researcher 31:46

Just, you know, like oh, you know, I'm native. I'm better than them or I'm non-native. So like I could they teach. Has there ever been that in your experience or maybe not and then that's even better but you know times where you know philosophies didn't exactly align and that was probably due to the fact that people were native on the native.

Participant X 31:58

Huh.

OK, so so probably possibly some of the.

People I work with.

Can some that the native ones can sometimes come across instantly as harsher markers in terms of like creative writing or essays on the cult on the novel and the film? So when we do our moderating sometimes?

Researcher 32:20

Yeah.

Participant X 32:37

They would, yeah, they would go for a lower band.

Researcher 32:41

Yeah.

Participant X 32:41

On accuracy of language, so that happens, but we tend to talk about it. We try, we try to count up how many times that you know the mistakes have appeared.

I'm always. I'm always an advocate of. Have they attempted the passive or the subjunctive in in some way?

So to what extent can we?

Praise not praise them.

Give them a mark for that.

Tensions within the department.

Researcher 33:16

Do you want me to give you an example or might be you know?

Participant X 33:20

I've got a one that that was from me. That was from years ago of a of a foreign language assistant.

Researcher 33:26

That's that's fine. Yep.

Participant X 33:27

Yeah. So.

I it was a bit, it was, it was unfortunate.

The her approach was very much during speaking lessons, so preparing GCSE and a level students as soon as someone made a mistake, she would interject and correct it, correct them, which was some I think is great.

No, not great. OK, but for others, it can crush their confidence.

So yeah, within about a couple of months before the speaking exams, we had some parental complaints about it and it was, it was kind of like.

Discussing with her about ways that we can, you know, give more fruitful feedback.

So.

We went down the line of we, we practised the exam and then at the end we give the feedback.

And.

Yeah. On that the the same one, I remember there were being there were times where.

You know how you prepare, you get your students to prepare answers for the questions on the A level topics.

Participant X 34:49

And so sometimes people are more.

They mark every single word and as if it's like a written exercise. Whereas if it's preparation for speaking.

Sometimes you can't.

It's not. You don't need to be that detailed, but.

It it it's? Yeah.

Researcher 35:11

It needs to be natural as well, cause in the mark scheme you know you've got that.

Participant X 35:16

Exactly.

Researcher 35:16

I think I see our point. We had the same issue as well with a colleague.

Participant X 35:23

But otherwise, no, I mean, we've always we're we're just we're quite open I think as a team.

I think the problems that do arise are more related to a lack of time to be able to.

Just like, sit down and be like these topics are working, these aren't and developing our own internal curriculum.

And that's probably the most the most challenge.

Researcher 35:55

OK.

Well, it's good to hear that you know, there's not that many challenges based on, you know.

Labels attached to one's.

Language.

Participant X 36:07

Yeah, yeah.

Researcher 36:07

You know nativity, I guess if you can say that.

Again, it's probably relevant to you all, but like we had, like I remember a department meeting where a native and non-native teacher and the French department went, you know, had quite different views on how to approach the speaking exams for a level and that's why I'm asking the question because I feel like it was based on like the classic, the non-native sees.

The perspective of the students in learning the language was that the native is like aiming for you know top Marks and they should be able to do that so.

Participant X 36:37

Yeah.

Researcher 36:47

But that what? That's the origin of the question talking about exams.

I'll refer to question might be better. What is the objective you have in mind when you teach your GCSE students and your A level students?

Participant X 37:16

Oh, I'm obviously improved their linguistic.

Researcher 37:21

Hmm hmm.

Participant X 37:22

And cultural knowledge. So vocab, grammar, culture being a better person, being more community driven.

Researcher 37:24

Hmm.

Participant X 37:36

Diversity. Multiculturalism, you know?

And I probably I.

Going to be honest, I probably talk too much about.

Like my fears of far right presence and in Europe currently, and that kind of thing. Sorry, I don't know if that answers your question.

Researcher 38:01

Yeah, that's fine. That's fine. Also, I think you're off here is justified that that's my personal opinion. It's not. That's not going to be put in the product. But you know feel especially when you teach AQA. I'm sure you also have a chapter on like, you know, immigration and.

Participant X 38:08

Yeah.

Researcher 38:15

Also I I feel like this chapter is not updated but that's not here and or there.

Participant X 38:19

Yeah. Yeah, true. Yeah.

Researcher 38:21

Sorry, bit of a danger, but no, I see what you mean because I asked that question and I'm not trying to trick anyone, but like sometimes people say, oh, it's to obtain the better marks. It's to sound like a native. Would you agree with those objectives?

Participant X 38:23

Yeah.

Researcher 38:34

Of like, oh, if you take Frenchies to get an A* or something or.

Participant X 38:39

I just think it's so hard to now get an A star in a language at a level. It's the the grey

boundaries are and the exams are just so far removed from what they're actually able to achieve at that level. Even, you know, like this candidate that I had, who's bilingual.

Participant X 39:01

Yeah, there are a lot of reading and listening exercises that definitely challenged her, particularly that 5 mark for accuracy on the way that you've written your answers, your summary for the reading and listening.

They're trying to get the content.

Let alone the language and and. And weirdly, she actually said in terms of timing, how she was quite strapped for time. And if that's someone who's completely bilingual, both parents of both.

Participant X 39:34

So our French speakers at home I was quite surprised by that. So it just goes to show how how difficult the exams are at a level.

Researcher 39:44

Hmm. And as a question we'll we'll come back to the teaching and the exams afterwards. How would you define a native speaker? For example, would you say you're a student is a native speaker, for example.

Participant X 40:02

Yeah, I think that one was, yeah.

Researcher 40:04

Yeah.

Participant X 40:06

The one I had.

The one I had last year from the Ivory Coast.

That's a really interesting question. At what stage you become native 'cause? It depends

on the skill, I think.

Would she write like a native? Both of them? No, because they weren't schooled in a French speaking country or not France.

Researcher 40:37

Hmm.

Participant X 40:38

So the the written.

The written French wasn't as accurate as it probably would have been had they been in a French school.

Researcher 40:49

Hmm. And yeah, but oftentimes when you meet someone, you don't really see their like.

Participant X 40:51

Maybe.

Researcher 40:57

Like written productions, right? So obviously with that in mind, you know, like there is some other like elements coming through it. But if you take out the written element, which would tell you, you know, maybe they are not native, would you have, would you still have said that they were native? I don't know if that makes sense. My question, yeah.

Participant X 40:59

Yeah.

Yeah, I think so, because they were always able to talk about a topic they didn't necessarily have.

Cultural knowledge or or I don't know, facts or whatever to back up their opinions, but.

Yeah, they were. They were able to sort of get by.

Researcher 41:35

Yeah.

K.

So now if I ask you, we've already had the conversation. Now how would you define a native speaker?

Instinctively, like it doesn't have to be a long definition, but like, how would you define it instinctively?

Participant X 41:55

Comfortable to talk on about arranging a a wide range of topics and.

Researcher 42:01

Hmm.

Participant X 42:02

Able to manage.

Living in the country of the target language.

Researcher 42:11

OK.

Participant X 42:12

As a young adult, yeah.

Researcher 42:14

OK.

But do you think sometimes people

Consider natives as like perfect. And do you think it's possible to be a perfect native or non-native for that matter? Or is there limitations?

Participant X 42:29

Yeah, I think so. And I think that's one of the, that's one of the reasons why we don't get children studying the languages because they're worried about.

You know, let's say, for example, Sam, who speaks fluent French. So I'm never going to get better results than Sam and Sam's always going to be the one talking and our a level class. So no, I'm not going to pick that. I'm going to pick psychology. Oh, and also, I know that, you know, it's really difficult to get an A and an A star. And I want to go to X

Russell Group University where I'm going to need X grades so.

Yeah.

Researcher 43:07

Yeah. OK. Because that's also another aspect of why I'm searching is that, you know, there is this like, I don't know if they exist or not. That's also part of the research. But like these idealised French speaker, I'm not. I'm not them. You're not them by the way, but like, you know, the ideal French speaker always goes really of, well, everything doesn't make mistakes.

Participant X 43:30

Yeah, exactly. Yeah, yeah, yeah. And some of the references like, yeah, yeah.

Researcher 43:34

You know.

Yeah.

No, I'm like, I'm the, I think my my French is not ideal. I don't know everything.

Participant X 43:48

And also like I think it depends on like where where they've come from and like what like like the words that they that you use like in some parts of France would be people would be more comfortable with it than others or.

Researcher 44:05

Hmm.

Participant X 44:08

Yeah, that's just like the the interesting bit about how language develops. In some words, just go away or change. And yeah, I mean, I had a situation today. I don't know if this is relevant so much, but it was a Nigerian boy calling an Indian boy a '**racial slur**'. And it was like the conversation that we were addressing about how, you know, we don't like that word is pejorative. You can't say and like that comes up in.

Researcher 44:35

Hmm.

Yeah.

Participant X 44:40

You know and.

The whole thing of *** and and and everything, you know, like those sorts of things they need on picking and like the context around a word. And so yes, I think like it depends where.

Where a native is from.

Researcher 45:03

No, I agree. We had the same issue with again not that many bilingual students, but the the twins like.

There were, like they were surprised that in French people, when they call someone, you know, someone with black skin or like brown skin, a black person literally translation.

And that in English it doesn't, you know, translate that well.

You know, maybe some teachers, they go in with their knowledge and assumptions and then, you know.

It's not met with the same reception when teaching.

Participant X 45:43

Yeah, I think as well sometimes I I have to step back myself and be like, gosh, they're 13-14. Like they don't know about, you know, I mean, you ask them when was the first and Second World War? Well, I mean, that's interesting. So, yeah, it's the. Yeah, the level of kind of knowledge.

Participant X 46:08

And also I think the whole thing of like.

The Ivory Coast actually last year. I remember. Like the perception of women and marriage. And those were really interesting conversations I had with her about her cultural background.

Like the place of the woman.

Participant X 46:32

In marriages and.

And I pedagogy in schools and yeah, it was. It was enlightening, yeah.

Researcher 46:45

So I'm conscious of time, so I'm going to ask some questions. You don't have to, you know, get into as much details.

So how would you like so you teach French and German?

Participant X 47:02

Mm hmm mm.

Researcher 47:02

How do you you evaluate your teaching abilities?

Participant X 47:09

Number one, it's the results that I get, I think.

Researcher 47:11

Yeah.

Participant X 47:13

We go by what their entry grades are and you know, make comparisons with what their exit ticket is.

When our training school so.

Yeah, frequent observations from.

Newbies.

We have open door policy, so all our doors are pop in. You know whenever you want.

There's that transparency there.

We do. I mean, we do work, scrutinise once a term, we do like a language, open door specialised week, once a year, where we all go in and, you know, watch each other and make comments and share that.

But probably.

It's the engagement of my pupils. If I can tell that you know.

Researcher 48:22

Hmm.

Participant X 48:25

That the the behaviour's slightly changing or you know they're not engaged or.

I can tell instantly.

Whether I've pitched it right or the topics wrong or.

Style of game or whatever.

Researcher 48:46

So it feels like you and your colleagues are quite reflexive, like in terms of your practises.

So and do you think big and do you think because of that that makes you a more confident teacher and like able teacher?

Participant X 48:51

Yeah.

As much as we can be, yeah.

I think so. 'cause, there's that. There's that communication between us all. So it's not just like I'm in this room. You're in the other. I don't know what's going on in that room.

Researcher 49:08

Yeah.

Participant X 49:14

Or like some of our students in the last couple of years have the behaviour has been a lot more challenging than it ever has been and with having boys as well. Obviously in the last.

Five years we've had to adapt.

In some ways, not just for boys, though, I think actually it's probably more COVID the effects of that and mobile phones.

Researcher 49:34

Yeah.

Participant X 49:44

And just concentration.

Yeah.

Researcher 49:50

OK.

Now is a question I ask every everyone of my interviewes is like how much French are German? Do you use in the classroom and like what affects your amount? Obviously the level of students is to be considered. So like I'll take that into consideration.

Participant X 50:09

So if so, a level all the time apart from.

When we're teaching grammar.

You know, like we were looking at the active in the passive and in German.

Yesterday and like yeah, she was struggling to to be able to to see when you'd use what tense. And I kind of made the point that it's more of a journalistic, you know, time frame.

I think I'm going off topic now, Pierre.

Researcher 50:49

Oh, that's fine because, well, what I'm asking you why I'm asking questions like there is these again, I don't agree with with what's being said. That's also why I'm reception that. But like you know that native, they always use French because they are comfortable and sometimes they massively miss the targets, you know and that non-native feel the word being used, not mine insecure. Do you do you think there is some truth to that or it's a bit more complicated than the simple binary.

Participant X 51:17

I yeah. I think it's more complicated. I think it depends on their mastery of English.

Researcher 51:22

Yeah.

Participant X 51:23

And also probably technology now because if you don't embrace technology and

language now and Gianfranco Conti's, you know, sentence builders and everything that we've got on offer as language teachers now and God forbid, don't mention the word AI if you don't, if you don't embrace all of that stuff and you're not allowing your kids to. Then they're just gonna be disengaged. 'cause. That's the way that they wanna learn stuff.

Most of them.

Researcher 51:58

Yep. So you would agree that you know the the use French by the teachers is more complicated and native French. Yeah, and non-native. Yeah. OK. Oh, I agree with you as well. You know, like there's more than just the teacher and the students now in the mixed.

Participant X 52:05

Yeah.

Yeah, yeah.

Hmm.

Researcher 52:17

So so yeah, we are going to say we are reading out of time, but.

As like a final remark.

Did we mention something or did we not mention something and you would like to mention it?

Or do you have a question as well?

Participant X 52:42

No, it's just really interesting. Your line of your line of study and I wonder.

How you you came to it?

Researcher 52:53

Oh, I can share the link that so when I was assisting a lesson one time while talking about food with like the younger years and, you know, curiosity of children sometimes and they ask me, oh, do you do you eat cheese? I say no, I'm lactose intolerant and like, oh, you can't be lactose intolerant. You're French. And that's parked like A5 in conversation and like grilling of, like, do you drink wine? Do you eat snails like?

Participant X 53:21

Oh yeah, all that. Yeah.

Researcher 53:23

Are you from Paris? And you know, was it the star as well? So they were, you know, curious. And they were, like, intrigued by.

Participant X 53:24

Ha ha ha.

This ratatouille, your favourite films are, yeah.

Researcher 53:31

Yeah, exactly. And then, you know, I I said note some questions like, are you even French? And I'm like OK, that's weird. And then a few months later, I didn't know the translation for a word thing was like.

Participant X 53:39

Hmm.

Researcher 53:44

Reporter. So I still don't know how to say that in English, honestly. And they said so. You don't know that word. So do you speak French? And I'm like, that's a bit extreme, you know, for a word and and then the incident with my colleague, I'm like, well, that's a bit. That's a bit out of proportion for like, you know.

Participant X 53:55

Yeah.

Researcher 54:02

How do you know she's not qualified? So yeah, I came to that conclusion. Like is is the binary, you know, is there a purpose? Is it really the reality of things when you are actually in the classroom and not just writing a paper?

Participant X 54:17

Yeah, it's just that washing to the stereotype or rushing to the easiest.

Opinion, isn't it?

Researcher 54:25

It's from my experience the better teachers have been the non natives so you know the assumption that because I would be French, I would be a better teacher. I was like, oh, it's a bit more.

New instant that.

Participant X 54:38

Yeah.

Researcher 54:40

Yeah. Oh, you talked about stereotypes. That's a question I forgot to mention. There's this thing called, you know, meeting the stereotype or meeting the aesthetic of a French teacher. And when I say aesthetic, I'm talking about gender.

Participant X 54:53

Hey.

Researcher 54:54

I'm talking about race as well, and I'm talking about accent.

Do you think there is some truth to that that sometimes as a teacher, if you don't meet, maybe the expectations of students, parents or colleagues, then you, you know?

You are put into question.

Participant X 55:14

Hmm.

Researcher 55:16

I can break down the the statement into questions because I realise it's a bit of my lot of information to take in.

Participant X 55:23

Oh, I think that's becoming more and more male languages. Teachers. When I did my PGCE.

Researcher 55:28

Hmm.

Participant X 55:31

Most of like the training and the training schools I went to or the courses I went on, it was quite female. I don't think. I think now when I go to them like I went to a Pearson one.

Researcher 55:44

Mm hmm.

Participant X 55:45

In the autumn, and I remember saying to my husband afterwards, I was like, oh, it's really nice to, you know, not just be. In a room with women.

Participant X 55:56

So yeah, that point.

Backgrounds.

That's really that's a harder one to judge.

Researcher 56:10

'Cause. Yeah, I had the example of like. Obviously you know I'm I'm white. So who am I to talk? But you know, some of my students, they were surprised when we told them, you know, about 10% of the population in France is non white due to history. And, you know, general mobility in the world and they were like, oh, so there is black people. Not my quote, not my quote. I want to specify on the record but like so there is black people that speak French and like, yeah, like actually the the the biggest French speaking town is not Paris. It's like Kinshasa in in in Congo so.

Participant X 56:37

Mm hmm.

No.

Researcher 56:49

You know.

Participant X 56:49

Hmm.

Researcher 56:51

And so, you know, sometimes they have expectations to have a white French teacher and you know.

If you're on the right, I'm wondering how would they react to that? Would they question you, you know?

OK.

Yeah.

Participant X 57:09

I suppose part of our job is about helping them to become.

Less ignorant.

And like you said, like teaching them statistics or.

In in introducing them to literature from around the francophone world.

Like geography? Well, even in year four we were doing something last term about.

Researcher 57:32

Hmm.

Participant X 57:37

All the places around the world where French is spoken.

I think there's a lot more that we can do.

On that day, definitely.

Researcher 57:48

Yeah.

No, I agree. Umm, I just wanted to come back to the agenda thing because I'll be transparent. Most of the interviews I've done. I mean, if all of them ready. I've been with women. So that's why I asked the question about, you know, do you think again? I don't know if I'm going to put that in the way I want to. I hope it comes across as something acceptable. But like, do you think that there is this pipeline of, you know thinking that languages are for girls therefor, you know, it carries on with university and then teacher training.

Participant X 58:00

Yep.

Oh.

Hmm.

Researcher 58:22

And therefore there is this like.

Gender expectation related to French learning and French teaching.

'Cause you said something. Why?

Participant X 58:30

Yeah, they're probably, yeah, there probably is. There probably is, sadly, sadly, there may well be that kind of.

Assumption. When I was at university though, I mean I went to the university at UCL and there were there was a good mix gender wise there.

Researcher 58:39

Yeah.

OK.

Participant X 58:51

But in my professional.

Background. I've worked with one French man.

Researcher 59:00

OK.

Participant X 59:00

One Chinese man.

Researcher 59:03

Mm.

Participant X 59:04

Never a male Spanish teacher or German teacher.

Umm.

But now I'd I yeah, I mean the courses that I'm going on, it seems to be there are more. Yeah, the Gianfranco Conti one. When he came into our school summer last year, that was a good mixture of men and women as well. A lot of men from.

Researcher 59:29

Yeah.

Participant X 59:35

Up north, though, strangely I don't know if that was. Yeah, I I don't know. I don't know where you would find out statistics of that either. I mean, gosh, you'd have to ask universities, wouldn't you?

Researcher 59:45

Yeah, no.

Yeah. No, because I'm. I'm I'm curious. And I was surprised that for the for the questionnaires, you know, I asked for agenda is like you know 98% women which is fine. But I was like oh was expecting more of a mix.

Participant X 59:51

Yeah.

Researcher 1:00:02

And same for the interviews. I was expecting more mix so that's why I'm asking the question.

Participant X 1:00:06

Could you I mean with with GPR these days, could you could you contact PG you know could you contact universities asking PGCE students? Maybe not, I don't know. It'd be really interesting to find out though whether or not there's been a change in the last, I don't know, 1020 years and why there has been, it's really interesting. Yeah.

Researcher 1:00:17

Yeah.

Hmm.

Yeah. No, no. Same with my students, mostly. Mostly girls. I'll admit so.

Participant X 1:00:37

I think I'm with possibly with.

With German, there's been more.

Gosh, I'm stereotyping again, but I remember hearing the the A teacher at Dulwich I think was the head of languages at Dulwich and he was talking about you know, football and engaging with boys and they actually had a project on that and.

Participant X 1:01:03

Yeah, we're going to have to work hard for to, to engage more boys actually are in our current year ten group, though. There's more boys than girls.

Researcher 1:01:10

Hmm.

No. Interesting.

Participant X 1:01:12

That's that's the first year.

None of the native speakers, they're really into their French football.

Researcher 1:01:21

Yeah.

Participant X 1:01:21

We were talking about the Mbappe.

Researcher 1:01:24

Transfer.

Participant X 1:01:25

Documentary about the other day. Yeah. And the transfer and everything. Yeah. So I don't know if that's making a difference.

Researcher 1:01:35

Right and.

Participant X 1:01:35

But yeah, just more cultural references, isn't it?

Researcher 1:01:40

Yeah. And I mentioned in the aesthetics, so we mentioned gender, you know, race and also the accent. Do you think like there is?

This other representation of the French Parisian accent, you know, in recordings or even in expectations of pronunciation.

Participant X 1:01:59

Yep, yeah, in recordings, probably. I mean, I think I'm quite lucky that I've worked with.

Researcher 1:02:02

Yeah.

Participant X 1:02:07

Yeah, I we've got two members of staff from Marseille. Toulon.

So many in the South. So we always talk about the you know, the sunshine in their voices.

Researcher 1:02:21

Hmm.

Participant X 1:02:23

And yeah, we've done some phonic stuff with with the Québécois accent.
And but you have to find it. You you don't. It's it's never available, which is sad.

Researcher 1:02:35

Yeah.

Participant X 1:02:39

Yeah.

Researcher 1:02:40

And you think your accent? I'm not? I'll ask that question to everybody. But do you think you're accent sometimes is put into question? I know mine was because I'm not from Paris. I have a very rural accent.

Participant X 1:02:54

OK.

Researcher 1:02:55

Do you think your accent was put into question by students or colleagues or even yourself?

Participant X 1:03:00

It never has been, but probably with the last student that I had.
It may well have been possibly or just the fact that I was a non-native and the expectation that they wanted her to go to Oxford to study French and philosophy and maybe.

Researcher 1:03:18

Hmm.

Participant X 1:03:27

You know, would I be? Would I be the right person to deliver that?

Researcher 1:03:32

Hmm.

Participant X 1:03:33

But yeah, she's got her place, so I'm I'm happy she did really well on the exams, so yeah.

Researcher 1:03:37

Mm hmm.

OK.

Well, very happy to hear that. Do you have any like concluding remark or questions?

Participant X 1:03:45

Mm.

No, not at all. I've really enjoyed our conversation, and if you, you know, if you, if you need follow up or anything, please get in touch with me. So I'd be very interested.

● **Researcher** stopped transcription

