



The Prestige of English Among French University Students

Amanda Leistiko

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The Prestige of English Among French University Students

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Sous la direction de Mohamed Benrabah
UFR de Langues étrangères (LLCE et LEA)
Langues littératures et civilisations étrangères

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Abstract

The primary objective of this research is to investigate the perceived prestige of English among French university students. While the spread of English in France has been documented since the post-war period, little current research has been conducted in terms of individual French attitudes towards English. For this reason, the author decided to conduct a theoretical and quantitative study of how French university students perceive the English language. Moreover, the author sought to identify various social, economic and political factors which might influence French university students' perception of English. In conducting this research, the current spread of English in several domains of French society was similarly investigated with the purpose of examining the current linguistic environment in France today.

This thesis first deals with certain social developments which have led to the emergence of English as a prestige language. Furthermore, focus is placed on the actual diffusion of English in the areas directly affecting the lives of French university students. Finally, the French elite's public response to the emergence of English is investigated in order to identify how these attitudes might influence French university students' perception of English; as well as to further examine the current linguistic environment in France.

The data emanating from a questionnaire electronically distributed to 150 French university students indicate that English is highly prestigious among this group. Moreover, the results suggest that French students perceive the acquisition of English as advantageous for their current studies, as well as for their future employability. What is more, the research indicates that French university students choose to study English because it is both useful and an international language. In sum, it appears that French university students are highly positive in orientation towards English for reasons of utility, future employability and international mobility. The author thus recommends more research with regard to the attitudes of French students in order to better adapt language policy to their needs and motivation.

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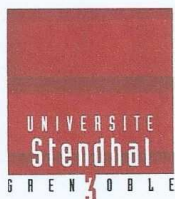
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I. Introduction

The motivation for this research primarily came from my personal experience living in France for three years. Working as an English teacher here has exposed me to varying attitudes towards the English language, as well as to varying levels of motivation concerning the acquisition of English. These attitudes have often varied and I have experienced both positive and negative perceptions of the spread of English in France. With this being said, it seems like the perception that English is undoubtedly useful in today's world seems to always be at the center of these discussions. Moreover, the demand for English lessons in France appears to increase every year, with parents registering their children in English lessons at the age of one! Thus, the decision to measure French perceptions of the use and spread of English in France was made in order to measure these attitudes. In addition, preliminary research revealed that there is a lack of current research in this particular area. Also, it appeared that the last major study of French attitudes towards English was conducted by Jeffra Flaitz in 1988. Now in the new millennium, it therefore seemed important to measure current French attitudes towards English in light of the recent globalization and digital age phenomena. The idea thus being to investigate how current social, political and economic developments have influenced French perceptions of English.

I.1 Statement of problem

The primary objective for this research was to study the prestige of English among French university students. Furthermore, the main focus of the research was to investigate French university students' perceptions of the utility of English with regard to their personal academic and professional careers. In this way, research was centered on the notion that French university students may perceive the acquisition of English as advantageous. Thus, the relationship between this perception and the status of English as an international *lingua franca* also served as a main objective of this research.

Age was chosen as the primary variable of this research for two reasons: (1) I am a student myself, therefore it was much easier to distribute the questionnaire to fellow students, and (2) Flaitz (1988, p.168), at the conclusion of her research, suggested that younger people tended to be more positive in orientation towards the English language. What is more, she discovered that those subjects with a stronger academic background tended to be more positive in orientation (op. cit). Given that these results were obtained in 1988, one could conjecture that, in the recent contexts of both globalization and the creation of the European

Union, today's French youth are even more positive in orientation. It was thus in this vein that the age variable was chosen for this research.

I.2 Research method

With the purpose of investigating these objectives, a combination of quantitative and theoretical research was employed. In terms of the quantitative research, an online questionnaire was distributed through social media to 150 French students enrolled in degree-awarding programs. The online questionnaire was in turn based on the theoretical research collected from the outset of the research. The questions included in the questionnaire thus served to investigate French university students' perception of the utility of English in their immediate studies, as well as in regard to their future employability. In addition, several questions were included in order to measure the primary reasons why French university students study English. Moreover, questions aimed at investigating the students' consumption of English-language films and series were similarly included to gauge their demand for English-language products.

Regarding the theoretical aspect of the research, focus was placed on studying the impact of globalization and international mobility on the spread of English in France. In this way, links between these phenomena and French university students' perceptions of English could be investigated. In conducting the theoretical research, the following questions served as a basis for analysis: (1) Why might French university students view English as a prestigious language, and (2) What is the current spread of English in France, and how has this impacted their academic and professional careers?. The areas to be studied were the following: the French audiovisual, research and education domains. Furthermore, (3) Has the official response (the French elite's) to English changed since Flaitz's study, and how might that account for French university students' attitudes today?. It should, however, be noted that Flaitz discovered a discrepancy between the "official" attitudes and those belonging to the general French public in 1988 (Flaitz, 1998, p.160). Thus, the purpose of investigating this question was to identify if this discrepancy still remains, or if it has changed in the light of recent global developments. If this were to be the case, one could conjecture that public attitudes may have become even more positive since Flaitz's study in 1988.

Two theoretical frames of reference were employed in order to investigate the status of English as a prestige language in France. First, focus was placed on Abram de Swaan's notions of the global language system and how one may consider languages as

hypercollective goods. Second, an analysis of why students may positively perceive the English language was conducted by focusing on Clive Earls' discussion of Strubell's "Catherine Wheel". The aim, then, was to use these theoretical frames of reference to research why French university students might positively perceive English to be an advantageous language to acquire for their academic and professional careers.

I.3 Research related questions and hypotheses

The aforementioned combination of theoretical and quantitative research will serve to investigate the following research questions:

1. What are French university students' perception of the English language?

Hypothesis: French university students are generally positive in orientation towards the English language.

2. Does a relationship exist between French university students' area of study and orientation towards English?

Hypothesis: A relationship exists between French university students' perception of English and their area of study. Those students studying Business and Economics and the exact sciences are expected to be more positive in orientation than students of other disciplines.

3. Is there a relationship between a French university students' proficiency in English and their perception of English?

Hypothesis: French university students with a greater proficiency in English are expected to be more positive in orientation towards English.

4. How prestigious are English-language "products" (films, series and educational courses) among this demographic?

Hypothesis: English-language products are highly prestigious among this demographic. It is expected that English-language films and series will be particularly prestigious among this group.

With regard to the investigation of these research related questions, this thesis will be structured in the following way: (1) an analysis of why French university students' might perceive English to be a prestige language, (2) the current spread of English in the

audiovisual, research and education domains of French society, (3) the French elite's defense of French and their response to English in France, (4) a discussion of the quantitative research method employed, and finally (5) an analysis of the data emanating from this research.

II. English as a prestige language

The growing prestige of English has developed in light of several factors. First, the status of the English language rose as a result of British colonialism during the 19th and early 20th century. However, the current prestige of English finds its roots in a much more recent past. As the English-speaking countries, and primarily the United States, grew in terms of political and economic power after 1945, the English language simultaneously grew in prestige (De Swaan, 2001a, p.17). Second, this phenomenon occurred in time with the move towards a new world order: globalization. As international political organizations were established in the wake of the Second World War, the need for an international lingua franca became more pressing (Crystal, 2003, p.12). Furthermore, Crystal (*ibidem*, p.13) suggests that the development of mass communication has helped to create a sort of international community, or “global village”.

It is therefore essential to analyze the developments which have influenced non-native speakers to acquire the English language. Moreover, these motivations provide a basic framework for discussing the spread of English in France. In order to analyze the motivating factors leading to the acquisition of English, Abram de Swaan's (2001a) notion of the global language system will be used as a frame of reference. Furthermore, focus will be placed on his ideas pertaining to the economic application of languages as hypercollective goods. When approaching these concepts, it is crucial to consider de Swaan's idea that the evolution of languages has resulted from human action rather than the outcome of human intention (*ibidem*, p.2).

Earls' (2013) application of Miquel Strubell's Catherine Wheel to the emergence of English-medium programs in the German higher education system will in turn be discussed with the purpose of further applying de Swaan's ideas to the acquisition of English among French university students. A discussion of these concepts will thus prove to be essential when analyzing the prestige of English among French university students, as well as current discussions to increase the number of English-medium programs in France.

II.1 Why is English perceived to be a prestige language?

What is the global language system? According to de Swaan, the global language system is a network of connections between the different language groups of the world. He suggests that the global language system is a pattern of multilingualism which has connected humanity regardless of the “great confusion of tongues”, (*ibidem*, p.1). It is essential to note that this multilingual pattern has not developed randomly, but rather that it represents “a strong and efficient network that ties together – directly or indirectly – the six billion inhabitants of the earth”, (op. cit). This “worldwide constellation of languages” is therefore intrinsically linked to the political, economic and cultural systems of the world (op. cit). It is thus for this reason that one must contextualize the situation of the world's languages within the phenomenon of globalization.

In order to better understand this notion, de Swaan's “language galaxies” must be in turn examined. What exactly constitutes the different parts of the global language system? De Swaan has organized the global language system in a hierarchical pattern comprised of four different parts. First, the “peripheral languages” tend to circle around one hundred “central languages” which are generally used in education, the media, politics and bureaucracy (*ibidem*, p.4-5). De Swaan suggests that the learning of languages tends to occur upwards as speakers of a central language generally choose to learn a “supercentral” language; as opposed to peripheral languages. These languages are primarily chosen because they represent the world's *lingua francas*, and thus enable speakers to participate in international communication and mobility. The supercentral languages, each with their own “regional constellation”, include: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, German, Hindi, Japanese, Malay, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish and Swahili (*ibidem*, p.5). Finally, a “hypercentral language” connects the speakers of these supercentral languages. De Swaan gives the following example, “if an Arab and a Chinese, a Russian and a Spaniard, or a Japanese and a German meet, they will almost certainly make themselves understood in one and the same language”, (*ibidem*, p.6). At the current moment, this language is English.

For the purpose of this thesis, focus will be centered on this progressive movement towards English. If language acquisition generally occurs upwards, it is essential to note that speakers must recognize something advantageous in the languages that occupy a higher position in the system. With regard to this phenomenon, de Swaan thus qualifies language as a “hypercollective good”. In this way, the more humans use a given language, the more

valuable it becomes. This quality of language, nevertheless, separates it from other economic goods given that it is not 'consumed' as it is used (*ibidem*, p.27). This idea is important to discuss in that it describes the changing status of languages, and provides a basis for understanding why French university students may view English as prestigious.

There are several factors to discuss regarding the notion that languages function as economic goods. First, even if languages are freely spoken, and often without added cost, humans are unable to learn an unlimited amount of languages. Moreover, languages which are not acquired as a native tongue or at a young age often require much effort on the speaker's part. For this reason, de Swaan notes that "a prior investment is required" when learning a new language. Then, if acknowledging that a considerable amount of effort is exerted during this process, speakers must make a choice. According to de Swaan, speakers will naturally want to learn the language that they view as the most advantageous, or which they view as having the greatest "return" (*op. cit.*). He relates this choice to that which consumers face when buying a new product. In this way, language users are said to "shop" for the "standard" that they regard as being the most beneficial to their situation. He then suggests that "language loyalty is an extreme case of consumer loyalty", given that the adoption of a new language (the "standard") requires time and effort (*ibidem*, p.28). Finally, as more speakers opt for a given language, its utility increases for those speakers who are already using it, or for those who will learn it in the future (*opcit.*). In other words, a language with a "grand reputation confers prestige on its users", (*ibidem*, p.29). It is then under these conditions that prestige languages are born, or more specifically, how we can define the position of English as a hypercentral language.

How then does de Swaan's concept of linguistic capital relate to the higher education system? Or, how can we apply these ideas to the advantage French university students might recognize in the acquisition of English? To answer these questions, the factors influencing the development of English-medium higher education programs in Germany must be considered. Given that Germany is one of France's top allies in the European Union, it is fair to assume that both countries face many of the same political, economic and social constraints. The case of German higher education is thus an interesting frame of reference to use when discussing the prestige of English among French university students.

In Earls' (2013) paper entitled *Setting the Catherine wheel in motion*, he uses Miquel Strubell's Catherine Wheel to define the changing status of English in German higher

education. His essay primarily studies the role that the status of English has played in the growth of English-medium programs in German universities. Earls notes that English-

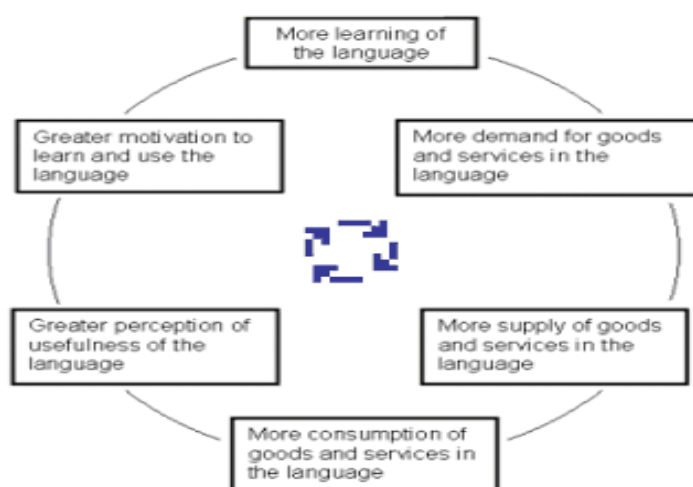


Figure 1. The Catherine Wheel Model. Adapted from Earls 2013.

medium programs were initially introduced in 1996 with the intention of attracting international student flows (Earls, 2013, p.125-126). However, in a study conducted in 2011, data revealed that 73% of the students enrolled in English-medium programs at German universities were in fact German nationals (*ibidem*, p.127). Moreover, the same study determined that out of the 643 English-medium Master programs offered, 615 were available exclusively through English (*op. cit.*). In sum, the data clearly suggests that English-medium programs have become highly attractive to German students.

In order to look more closely at why these programs have proven to be so attractive to German students, Earls employs Miquel Strubell's Catherine Wheel model. In regard to this model, three different versions have been developed: the individual as consumer, the individual as worker and the individual as a social being (*ibidem*, p.127-128). It should however be noted that these models were originally developed to analyze minority languages, yet Strubell suggests that they can equally be used for the discussion of languages that are expanding or acquiring a dominant position. For his analysis of English-medium programs in Germany, Earls focuses on the first version, given that, in his opinion, the introduction of these programs has resulted from the marketization and commodification of international education (*ibidem*, p.128). In other words, students have become consumers in an ever-expanding market of global education. Thus, this notion is similar to Abram de Swaan's application of the consumer to language learning. It is then particularly important to note that

students will most likely choose the scholastic options which appear to be the most advantageous for their futures.

With regard to the “individual as consumer” version of the Catherine Wheel (see Figure 1), six interconnected factors are represented in a circular fashion: (1) competence in a given language, (2) an increase in status of said language as linguistic capital, (3) an increase in products relating to the language, (4) an increase in consumption of said products, (5) an increase in perceived utility of the language, and finally (6) an increase in motivation to use and learn the language (op. cit). Each step in this “wheel” is then said to put the following steps in motion. For the purpose of this research, focus will be centered on this sequential movement in order to identify French university students' perception of the utility of English.

However, rather than launching into an in-depth discussion of how Earls has applied this model to the emergence of English-medium programs in Germany, it is instead important to highlight several fundamental factors that Earls suggests have been “catalysts” in accelerating the movement of the Catherine Wheel's six components in Germany. Earls (op. cit) suggests that these catalysts are often based on changes in language planning. Furthermore, it should be noted that these changes are often defined by their respective political, economic and cultural contexts. These changes thus influence the evolution of language acquisition (De Swaan, 2001a, p.6). With this being said, it is essential to determine the role of these external factors in order to discuss the status of English in French higher education. The primary areas to discuss are the following: globalization and the European Union.

II.2 The case of English in France: supra-national obligations

Noting de Swaan's notion of regional constellations, it is important to consider that France currently participates in the regional language constellation of the European Union as well as in the globalized world. For this reason, it should be noted that France, as a political community, is both an independent nation and a member state of the European Union. In this way, France has both national and supra-national obligations (Ager, 1999, p.2). When discussing the prestige of English among French university students, one must therefore recognize that French students also belong to the greater European and global social, political and economic spheres. French students' future job market thus often transcends the borders of France. Therefore, the spread of English in France has increased as a result of the ever-increasing need for transnational communication and mobility in Europe and elsewhere.

In order to approach this idea, it is essential to touch on some basic notions pertaining to globalization, as well as to define the term “global English”. These notions are important given that they highlight the status of English as an international *lingua franca*; thus lending a general framework for understanding the desire to have a commonly understood language in the world today. As previously mentioned, the world's nations have become increasingly connected through mass media, new technologies and international political and economic institutions. According to Crystal (2003, p.11), a common language, or *lingua franca*, has become increasingly sought after in light of these recent global developments. Kachru (1992, p.3-4) demonstrates that the search for a common language has been present since 1887 among Universalists who have desired an artificial language lacking cultural and linguistic connotations. What is more, Kachru (op. cit) notes that these attempts have been reduced to “linguistic esoterica”, and thus merely represent the want for a transcultural code of communication. With regard to the ever-increasing spread of English today, Kachru (op. cit) comments that attitudes have been both positive and negative: among those who believe that the spread of English is a “unique phenomenon of our time”, and those who consider it as a “form of linguistic and cultural colonization”, (op. cit). With all elements considered, it is this desire to become globally intelligible which serves to characterize the status of English in the world today.

According to Mair (2013, p.255), global English has transcended the boundaries of “structural” levels and does not necessarily apply to any given sociolinguistic or World Englishes model anymore. In his opinion, linguists should rather begin to classify the spread of English in terms of “second-language acquisition” or “learner language” models. He then suggests that “the more English spreads globally, the more heterogeneous it becomes internally”. Therefore, if considering Mair's position, English has become “de-contextualized” from its original cultural context and has now assumed a more “post-national” character (op. cit). A notion which is particularly important to consider given that transnational borders have become commonplace; with many people having both national and post-national identities.

Reinforcing this idea, Mair (op. cit) applies Appadurai (1996)'s notion of cultural globalization to the function of global English in the world today. Within this model, Appadurai has created a list of vocabulary extending from the term *landscape* in order to “represent the conflicting pulls of deterritorialisation and re-localisation in the processes of cultural globalisation”. For Appadurai, the meaning of the term landscape is entirely subjective and dependent on the individual. For this reason, he has organized the social and

cultural *landscape* of the global world into five *-scapes*. First, the *finanscape* characterizes the global world's tendency towards neoliberal capitalism. Second, the *ethnoscape* describes the increased international travel and forced or voluntary migration in the world. Numbers three, four and five include the *mediascape*, *technoscape*, and *ideoscape* respectively. Mair then suggests that global English is a central aspect of each of these *-scapes*. To support this idea, he describes the situation of African asylum seekers in Italy who have used English as a means of communication. He indicates that this example belongs to the *ethnoscape* level of the global world given that it describes an incidence where English has been used in terms of international migration (op. cit).

In sum, for the purpose of this research, it is essential to note that English has become “de-contextualized”. One must therefore consider how non-native speakers may perceive the impact and use of English in the global world today. The question of how France's supranational influences affect the status of English among French university students will thus be approached in this way.

The status of English in the European Union has constantly been shifting since the founding of the European Economic Community in 1957. During this time, French, which had previously been the sole language of the European Coal and Steel Community, ceased being the sole official language when the Community decided that all “binding decisions” must be written in the member countries' respective languages. Within the first years of the EEC, French remained the dominant language of communication. However, the entry of the United Kingdom in 1973 marked a significant departure from this dominance (De Swaan, 2001a, p.152-153, Wright, 2006, p.40). The increased use of English in the European Union continued to rise with the entry of countries like Sweden, Austria and Finland in 1995; as well as with the entry of Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Cyprus and Malta in 2004 (De Swaan, 2001a, p.156-157, Wright, 2006, p.40). Given that English was the common second language for many of these countries, it became the most spoken language in the E.U. This fact was confirmed in 1998 when a Eurobarometer survey revealed that English was the favored second language among Europeans (De Swaan, 2001a, p.161). As English appears to be the first foreign language taught in most of the large member countries, this trend continues today (Legendre, 2003, p.3). These instances are significant given that they support the notion that English is viewed as an advantageous language in terms of international communication.

Concerning Europe's current linguistic situation, it is necessary to identify two fundamental levels: the level which relates to the nation-state, and that which relates to the European Union as a whole. De Swaan (2001, p.145) further qualifies these levels as belonging to either "civil society" or to bureaucratic domains. With regard to the levels belonging to civil society, de Swaan qualifies the first as "domestic communication". He suggests that this level of European communication refers to the language which is both used by the majority of citizens and protected by a given country. In other words, the national language. Second, "transnational communication" concerns communication between the citizens of the European Union. De Swaan (op. cit) notes that, in terms of languages used, English reigns "paramount" in the global European sphere. English has thus achieved numerical power throughout Europe. A reality which lends to its status as a desired language to acquire.

In regard to the greater level of bureaucratic communication, there are again two secondary levels. First, all formal and public communication used for the European Parliament and European Commission. It should be noted here that within the Maastricht Treaty of 1992, it was agreed that all languages of the European Union should be officially recognized. Moreover, all decisions concerning the European Union must be published in all of the member languages. When it concerns the Commission's internal functioning, however, de Swaan (op. cit) suggests that members have informally opted for a few 'working' languages. Thus, in line with historical developments, French and English tend to be the working languages employed; with English progressively gaining more prestige (*ibidem*, p.152).

Through these four levels of communication, the linguistic situation in Europe is highly dynamic. It is for this reason that one can qualify the European linguistic situation as a "state of diglossia". One in which European speakers recognize both their national language and one or more of the "supercentral linking languages" (*ibidem*, p.151). It is therefore essential to note that two forms of cultural identities exist in Europe: the national identity and the European identity (the "post-national" identity). If considering that English is commonly the first foreign language chosen among Europeans, it can be assumed that it is often the language used for trans-national communication and affairs in Europe. This appears to be the most prevalent in such "intermediate domains" (the *mediascape*) as entertainment, advertising, sports and fashion. Here, Seidlhofer, Breiteneder and Pitzl (2006, p.4-5) claim that a "bottom-up" process has occurred. Rather than language use being determined through

language policy, it is instead spread upwards through the youth (op. cit). These notions are therefore key when considering French university students' attitudes towards English in that they highlight the current prestige of English in relevant social and cultural domains.

Now, after having established the political and cultural functions of communication in Europe, it is possible to discuss how the status of English has increased in relation to transnational mobility in Europe. First, the following questions should be posed: how has an ever-increasing need for mobility shaped education in Europe? In response to a demand for highly-skilled workers throughout Europe, European countries agreed on the mainstreaming of international standards for European establishments through the Bologna Process in 1999 (Earls, 2013, p.132). European countries have thus been transitioning to “knowledge-based” economies (*ibidem*, p.135). In other words, lawmakers have recognized a need for the standardization of higher education programs in order to promote mobility and competitiveness in Europe as a whole. Commenting on this idea, Earls (op. cit) cites an OECD document from 1999 by noting that 'economic success is increasingly based upon the effective utilisation of intangible assets such as knowledge, skills and innovative potential as the key resource for competitive advantage'. Given that linguistic knowledge is considered to be a useful skill, the establishment of the Bologna Process has created a clear relationship between the increased mobility of Europeans and the increased status of English.

As a result of the standardization process of European higher education, many higher education establishments have experienced an increase in the student population. Earls (*ibidem*, p.132) suggests that this increase in student population coincided with restricted public spending in many European countries. For this reason, universities have viewed the increase in international student population as an “opportunity to exploit potential competitive advantage and bolster their economies”, (op. cit). Moreover, many of these international students (in Earls' case of Germany) had not acquired the German language at a level adequate for higher education studies. In an effort thus to accommodate this influx of foreign students, English-medium programs were introduced (op. cit).

Expanding on this idea, it is essential to note several figures concerning the number of European students that have participated in European higher education exchange programs. Due to the increased demand for highly-skilled workers across Europe, two notable programs have been introduced to European higher education: the Erasmus and Leonardo da Vinci

programs. It is important to note that both programs once belonged to the greater European Commission “Lifelong Learning Program”, yet this has recently changed.

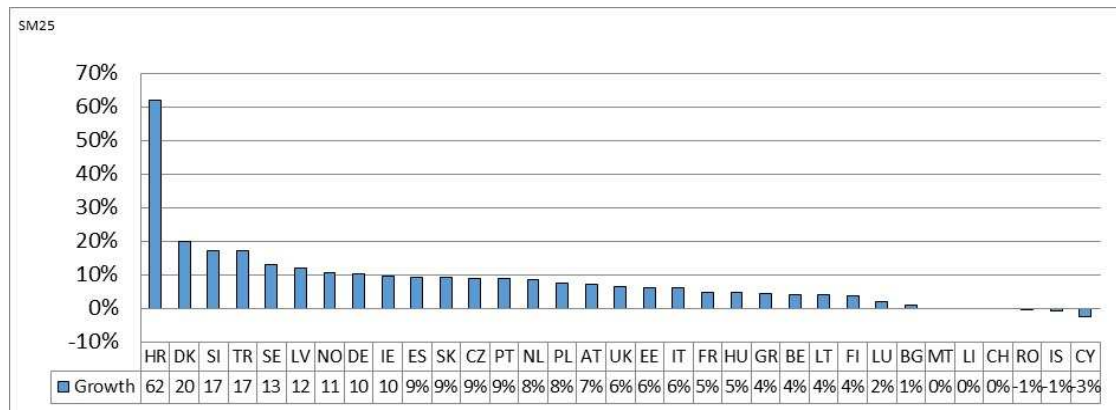


Figure 2. Erasmus student mobility: the relative change in the number of students per sending country between the 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 school years. Taken from “Erasmus programme 2011-2012: the figures explained” (2013).

Between the years 2014 to 2020, a new European initiative “Erasmus +” will replace the Lifelong Learning Program. Through this program, the budgets of subprograms such as Erasmus and Leonardo da Vinci will receive will be increased by 40%. In addition, the European Commission hopes to double the number of Europeans who participated in previous programs (4 million people between 2014-2020, compared to 2.7 million between 2007-2013). The new changes to this program are aimed at continuing mobility across Europe, as well as targeting youth unemployment by providing young Europeans with the language proficiency and adaptability skills that are necessary for securing a job within Europe (“Erasmus+ memo”, 2013).

Students participating in the Erasmus program have the ability to study for three to twelve months abroad in another European country. Through this program, most university credits earned abroad should apply to the student's course of study within their home country (Legendre, 2003, p.9). According to a press release from the European Commission in 2013, a record number of 250,000 european students during the 2011-2012 school year either completed part of their studies in another European country, or took advantage of the job placement scheme in a foreign company to “boost their employability”, (“Number of Erasmus students tops 3 million”, 2013). Looking at Figure 2, it should be noted that the majority of E.U member countries recognized at least a 5% increase in Erasmus participation among students. In addition to this, more than 46,500 academic or administrative staff received grants from the Erasmus program to either teach or train abroad. The commission notes that

this program is “an experience designed to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the 33 countries which participate in the scheme”, (op. cit). When asked to comment on the success of the Erasmus program, the European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism, and Youth noted that, 'the skills and international experience gained by Erasmus students make them more employable and more likely to be mobile on the labour market' (op. cit). Here, it is clear that international study is both highly popular and viewed as indispensable for the building of “employable” skills. Given that English is the most popular foreign language for most European students, one can imagine that this increase in student mobility has increased a demand for services and skills in the English language. Similarly, as previously discussed, English may be viewed as indispensable for this sort of trans-national mobility.

Continuing with the discussion of mobility throughout Europe, the Leonardo da Vinci program has encouraged students, recent graduates and educators of vocational training programs to complete an internship in a European company from three weeks to nine months (Legendre, 2013, p.9). Participants are encouraged to apply to such internships in order to gain vocational experience on a larger European level, and more importantly to secure a job later. In order to foster this type of mobility among students in vocational studies (CAP, BacPro or BTS in France), a supplementary “Europro” qualification is available for degrees. This qualification attests to both the students' linguistic skills and their knowledge of European professional culture. It is thus recognized that the acquisition of these skills increases the employability of young students and workers within the European job market.

Concerning France's supra-national obligations and globalization in general, it is clear that international mobility (the *ethnoscape*) and cooperation between countries have become increasingly significant in recent history. Furthermore, skills such as foreign language proficiency and common education standards have been recognized as advantageous and necessary for mutual intelligibility across Europe by both citizens and policy makers. This has been proven by the increased student participation in such programs as Erasmus and Leonardo da Vinci, as well as the increased funds allotted to such programs by European policy makers. Moreover, it is fair to confirm the notion that European countries have been transitioning towards “knowledge economies” where students have become consumers in an international education market. It is therefore essential to consider that students either share these beliefs or recognize the role they may play in their future employability at the national or post-national levels. Then if these notions are true, it is safe to suggest that several external

catalysts influencing the “motion” of the Catherine Wheel towards the “greater perception of the usefulness of a language” are present and undoubtedly affect the social, cultural and economic contexts of French students.

III. The spread of English in France

With the purpose of better understanding French university students' perceptions of the English language, it is necessary to consider the current diffusion of English in different domains of French society. Based on the previous discussion of the status of English in the global and European spheres, research indicates that English has become progressively present around the world. The next question then is: how is the spread of English defined in the case of France? And, to what extent is the English language currently present in various French domains? If this spread appears to be increasing, one could conjecture that an apparent supply and demand is occurring on the part of French citizens; therefore influencing positive orientations towards the English language. It is thus critical to analyze the diffusion of English in domains which directly affect French university students' lives. For this reason, the current presence of English in the French audiovisual, research and education domains will be studied.

III.1 The spread of English in the French media, television and cinema industries

In regard to the spread of English in the French media, television and cinema industries, it is critical to consider Seidlhofer, Breiteneder and Pitzl (2006)'s suggestion that these domains reflect a certain bottom-up process. A process in which English has begun to spread upward through the youth, rather than through traditional top-down processes such as changes in language policy or planning. This idea is incredibly pertinent for this thesis as it describes a voluntary process which tends to occur among the age group of this research. In this way, it is essential to consider that French university students have most likely been exposed to the English language in any one of these domains, at one time or another.

Concerning the domain of cinema, Crystal (2003, p.99) notes that the years before and during the First World War inhibited the growth of European cinema. It was then during this period that American cinema began to grow in dominance. Moreover, when sound was included in film technology during the 1920's, the English language dominated and was thus spread to other countries through the form of film. In addition, it has been rare to find a 'blockbuster' movie produced in a language other than English since this period (op. cit). It is

therefore important to consider that within the domain of European cinema, the English language has a certain cultural legacy. This notion is confirmed when considering the top most successful films in France since 1945. At the top of this list, the 1998 American film *Titanic* occupies the number one position. In the same list, nine out of the top 15 films appear to come from English-speaking countries (“*Bilan 2012*”, 2013, p.20). To better understand the extent of this cultural legacy today, it is essential to analyze the current prevalence of English language films in the French cinema industry.

According to the CNC's (*Centre national du cinéma et de l'image animée*) assessment for the 2012 year of French cinema and television, American films occupied 42.7% of the film market. It should be noted, however, that the share of French films in the same market increased to 40.3%. Moreover, it appears that in comparison with the previous year, the share of American films in the French film market decreased by 3.1 points. The CNC then asserts that the share of American films in the market was at its lowest point since the year 1985 (“*Bilan 2012*”, 2013, p.7-10). Concerning these figures, it can be concluded that the production of French films has been increasing in recent years and the share of American films in the market as either been decreasing or stabilizing. However, as American films led the market at 42.7%, one can imagine that these films have widespread success, thus conferring prestige on English language products.

After considering these market share results for the 2012 year of French cinema, it would seem that American films have been decreasing in popularity. However, if one looks at the share of ticket sales for the same year, it is clear that this is not necessarily the case. In a list of the 54 films with more than one million tickets sold, films from English-speaking countries (the United States, the United Kingdom and New Zealand), hold 32 out of the 54 placements (*ibidem*, p.13). In this way, 59% of these top 54 films come from English-speaking countries. Therefore, regardless of the decrease in the market share of American films in the French cinema market, English-language films continue to be popular among French audiences. This popularity could be explained by the reality that within this year, top-grossing blockbusters like *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* appeared in French cinemas. Moreover, these large-scale productions tend to incite an influx in “buzz” across the internet or on television, thus encouraging spectators to watch them at the cinema. Nevertheless, these figures reflect a voluntary action among French spectators to watch English-language films.

Concerning the distribution of ticket sales among different age groups during the 2012 year of cinema in France, the 20-24 years old age group was the third largest group of spectators at 11.6% (*ibidem*, p.62). These figures show that the age group concerned in this research is present and significant in the domain of cinema in France. In regard to the audiences present for films of different nationalities, the youth age group (15-24 years old) represented 31.6% of the audiences for American films in 2011, and 36% of the same audiences in 2012. For the same years, this age group represented 21.7% of the audiences of French films (*ibidem*, p.68). Here, it is clear that English-language films have become more popular among the age group concerned by this research. For this reason, one could conclude that when given the opportunity, French youth tend to prefer watching American films. If considering that increased exposure correlates with increased status, this tendency may signify positive attitudes towards the English language among French university students.

In order to have a full scope of the spread of English in the audiovisual domains, it is necessary to consider the diffusion of English-language films and series on French television. Concerning all French channels (publically and privately operated) in 2012, 41.5% of the previously unreleased films aired were French, with 29.1% being American films. However when looking at the figures for the TNT channels (privately operated), it appears that across the channels W9, NT1, Gulli, NRJ12 and TMC, the airing of American films averaged to 43.46% (*ibidem*, p.24). Here, it is clear that a discrepancy exists between the airing of French and American films in the public and private spheres. Furthermore, according to the same assessment of French audiovisual domains, out of the 94 most aired films on national channels since 1957, 14 out of the top 15 films were French (with the other film being Italian) (*ibidem*, p.31). Thus, in comparison with the slight preference for American films in cinema, French films generally tend to be favored on television. This could be a result of the fact that national channels appear to prefer French films when given the choice. In addition, as they are publically owned, there might be more attention paid to which films are aired, or that the licensing for American films tends to be quite expensive.

Glancing at the top audiences for the 2012 year, however, sheds light on the popularity of certain films aired on television. Out of all the films aired on French television, the American film *Gran Torino* attracted the largest audience at 9.4 million spectators. Furthermore, American films had the largest audiences on TF1, France 2, Arte, Direct 8/D8, W9, TMC, NT1, NRJ12 and France 4. In all, French films tended to attract the largest audiences on the channels France 3, M6 and Gulli (*ibidem*, p.37). Here, one can see that even

if national channels like France 2 and France 4 air more French films, audiences tend to be the largest for American films. In sum, French films appear to dominate the television market, whereas American films slightly dominate that of the cinema. However for both audiovisual domains, it is clear that audiences and ticket sales tend to generally be larger for American films. For this reason, it is clear that the spread of English language products in the audiovisual domains exists, and that demand for these products appears to be relatively high.

The last domain to consider in regard to the diffusion of English in the French audiovisual industries is the use of English in television advertising. When watching French television, it is almost impossible to miss advertisements using the English language. Recognizing this emerging trend, Martin (2002) sought to establish a cline of code-mixing in French advertising. After having studied several types of advertisements, Martin discovered that the 'French' products generally using English for advertising purposes tend to include cosmetics, perfume, fashion, and certain food products (particularly wine, mustard, etc.). When advertisements use English for French food products, it is normally under the guise 'Made in France', in order to reinforce their "home-grown" quality (Martin, 2002, p.399). What is particularly interesting about this code-mixing, is that advertisers clearly recognize the use of English in French advertising as profitable.

However, according to Martin (*ibidem*, p.385), the relationship between the degree of how anglicized an advertisement is and the socio-psycholinguistic effects on the viewer has not been adequately studied yet. Moreover, extensive research would be necessary to determine the number and types of English loan words used in French advertising (*ibidem*, p.400). Although it has been suggested, through studies of the relationship between images and English in the non-Anglophone contexts of other countries, that the pairing with English in code-mixed advertisements symbolizes modernity, technological efficiency and/or reliability (*ibidem*, p.382). In spite of the limited amount of research in this area, it is undeniable that these code-mixed advertisements are present on television and have undoubtedly been viewed by the age group concerned in this research. Furthermore, and similar to the aforementioned figures relating to the domains of cinema and television, the existence of these code-mixed advertisements is completely voluntary and thus proves that English language products are viewed as prestigious.

III.2 The spread of English in French research

Similar to the audiovisual domains, the diffusion of English in the area of international research is undoubtedly widespread. Although the use of English as a *lingua franca* can be seen in all disciplines, it is the most marked in the sciences, and particularly in the “hard” or “exact” sciences: physics, chemistry, biology and geology. The shift leading to the dominance of English in these areas can be explained by certain historical developments occurring after the First and Second World Wars. According to Kaplan (2001, p.10), as the European scientific, technical, and educational structures were stunted during and immediately after the World Wars, those in the United States remained and continued to function. In addition, he cites the use of English in World War II settlements, the birth of the United Nations, the invention of the computer, and ever-increasing growth of science in the last fifty years as factors contributing to the current spread and status of English (*ibidem*, p.12). As a way to promote and nurture the sciences in Europe during the post-war years, international collaboration in the form of large and international laboratories tended to be favored. A notable example of this international collaboration was the construction of the CERN research center in Geneva in 1954 (Gingras, 2002, p.34). As will be discussed, this tendency towards international collaboration has raised several linguistic phenomena.

In reference to the high level of research found in the United States, Kaplan notes the “law of science” stating that “those doing the greatest amount of research both require the greatest quantities of information from the information banks and contribute the greatest quantities of new information to those information banks” (Kaplan, 2001, p.10). Concerning the link between the amount of research conducted and the English language, the International Federation on Documentation (FID) has determined that 85% of all the scientific and technological information distributed today is either written or abstracted in English (*ibidem*, p.12). Furthermore, the spread of English through research has been compounded by the introduction of new technologies. If these new technologies were developed in English-speaking countries, it meant that the English language tended to be carried with it; a fact which has become undeniably true in terms of the computer industry (*ibidem*, p.17).

Regarding the function of English in today's 'knowledge economies' where information reigns supreme, one must consider the role of information itself. According to Martel (2001, p.30), during the last decade we have recognized an increased “emphasis placed on the utilitarian function that science and technology play in the economic, social and

political context from which they emerge”. Moreover, they are now states, supranational organizations, businesses and industries which tend to fund the majority of international research. As a result of these varied sources of funding, Martel suggests that researchers no longer “claim allegiance” to any nation, but rather to science itself (op. cit). Whatever the effect added (overt, covert, intentional or unintentional), “linguistic imperatives” coming from the source of funding play a critical role in current research. Commenting on this link between the language of research and funding, Martel (2001, p.33) suggests that “the language of science and technology becomes increasingly tied to the language of business/finance”. She then notes that although it may be “too early to tell”, this language very well might be the use of English as a *lingua franca*. And, as the transfer of information and knowledge has become increasingly transnational, the use of a *lingua franca* has been in turn increasingly welcomed (op. cit).

Continuing with this discussion of the transnational quality of research, one must consider the degree to which research has been “internationalized”. Gingras (2002, p.33) discovered that international collaboration in scientific research increased in the post-war era. Citing the National Science Board's figures from 2000, Gingras (*ibidem*, p.35) notes that collaborative research in publications increased (based on the world average) in all disciplines between the years 1986-1988 to 1995-1997. In regard to the hard sciences, biology, physics and geology, international publications increased by 6.5%, 11.3% and 10.8% respectively. Collaboration in the social sciences appeared to be less significant with a 3.2% increase between the same years. Looking more closely at how this phenomenon has functioned in the case of France, it appears that the percentage of international publications conducted in France exceeds the world average in every discipline between the years 1986-1988 and 1995-1997. For example, in the areas of biology, physics and geology, international collaboration on publications increased by 12.4%, 18.6% and 18.6% respectively. Moreover, the increase in the area of the social sciences equaled 9.4%; 6.2% higher than the world average (op. cit). Then if considering Martel (2001)'s suggestion that the language of international research has become increasingly tied to the language of international business, it can be assumed that the role of English has increased in relation to the increase in international collaboration on publications. Furthermore, it can be assumed that the role of English in French research has also significantly increased.

For this reason, it is critical to consider the degree to which English has been historically present in French research. According to Truchot (2001, p.318), the function of

English in French research (and within the francophone world) has been highly debated since the 1980s. In one such conference, “*L’avenir du français dans les publications et communications scientifiques et techniques*” (Montreal 1981), researchers discovered that a large proportion of the French-speaking scientific community had used English as a language of publication. It was also revealed that English was the principal language used in international conferences within France, Canada and Belgium (*ibidem*, p.319). In terms of actual figures, the OST (*Observatoire des sciences et des techniques*) released a study in 1996 which revealed that within PASCAL (the database for the CNRS), citations in English rose from 75% in 1978 to 80% in 1988, and 85% in 1994 for the hard sciences. The same study discovered that in FRANCIS, the database for human sciences and mathematics, citations in English accounted for 52%, with those in French accounting for 38% of the total citations (*ibidem*, p.324-325). In regard to these figures, a clear discrepancy exists between English used in the hard sciences and that which is used in the soft sciences. Nevertheless it appears that overall, English has exercised a significant role in the area of French scientific research.

Beyond its use in publications, it appears that the English language has become a dominant medium of communication within French research laboratories. Referencing the results of the 2008-2009 study ELVIRE, Héran (2013, p.2) notes that while 42% of researchers from all disciplines feel limited in their use of English, 77% believe that English has become so widespread in the sciences that the choice of language is no longer questioned. He then cites that only 2% of laboratory directors were able to attest to the dominance of French in their laboratories. Furthermore, only 20% of conference organizers were able to provide interpreters at least once in the year. In addition, despite linguistic regulations stipulated under French law, bilingual (French and English) laboratory websites were twelve times more common than trilingual websites (*op. cit.*).

In regard to varying attitudes towards the dominance of English in the scientific field, Héran suggests that age and scientific discipline are two fundamental factors. As the use of English in different scientific disciplines has already been discussed, the age variable will rather be focused on. According to results obtained from the 2008 ELVIRE study, 77% of researchers born between the years 1985 and 1989 cited that English was the only foreign language they used in the workplace. These results then compare to 66% of researchers born between the years 1970-1974 and 1975-1979 who responded with the same answer (*ibidem*, p.3). It is therefore apparent that the sole use of English as a foreign working language in French research has become much more prevalent among younger researchers. Moreover, it

appears that English has not only dominated the use of French, but the use of other foreign languages as well. For the same 1985-1989 age group, 8% of researchers responded that they choose English before German and 12% said that they use English before other languages. Responses to the choice “autres langues que l'anglais” are negligible and not represented on the graph. Furthermore, ideologies towards the English language have appeared to change among the youth. Héran (op. cit) suggests that *'la dénonciation de l'impérialisme anglo-saxon est en net recul'*. He then cites that 67% of researchers born before 1955 think that *'privilégier l'anglais dans les sciences, c'est soutenir la domination de la culture anglo-américaine'*, with only 40% of researchers born in the 1980s responding in the same manner. Moreover, when questioned about the *'défense du français'* as a research language, 38% of young researchers agreed; in comparison with 67% of older researchers (op. cit). In regard to these attitudes, the positive evaluation of English as a language of science appears to be generational. With this being said, younger researchers clearly tend to have a more positive evaluation of English as a language of science; a fact which is incredibly pertinent to this study of the prestige of English.

III.3 The spread of English in French education

Considering the previous discussions of English in the European Union and in the sciences, it may not come as a surprise that the English language is increasingly present in the French education system. French language planning stipulates that two foreign languages must be studied by all students following secondary general or technological courses of study (*“Les langues vivantes étrangères”*, 2014). This decision, in line with the Council of Europe's recommendations, is an effort at promoting multilingualism in France and throughout Europe (*“Language Education Policy Profiles”*, 2009, p.13-14, *“Les langues vivantes étrangères”*, 2014). However, English has consistently been chosen as the first foreign language studied in French secondary school. In an assessment of the 2002-2003 school year, 95% of French students chose English as their LV1 (Legendre, 2003, p.3). Ten years later, it appears that this trend has not changed. According to statistics recorded for secondary students in the 2013 school year, officials noted that 95% of students again chose English as their first mandatory foreign language. The choice of German as a LV1 followed with 6.7% of students (*“RERS 2013”*, p.126). Moreover, the Ministry of Education notes that a slight difference in figures exists among secondary students studying in private and public establishments. With 96.2% of students studying English as their LV1, the figures suggest that students in private establishments slightly tend to prefer the study of English as their first mandatory foreign

language. Among students in public establishments, 95.1% of students chose English as their LV1 (op. cit).

Furthermore, it appears that English has emerged as a prominent foreign language in the sphere of bilingual secondary school programs in France. Beginning in 1992, the Minister of Education Jack Lang promoted the introduction of European and international sections in the pursuit of fostering bilingualism and cultural knowledge among French students. Regarding the growth of these programs in France, figures show that between the years 1994 and 2002, European sections increased from 490 to 1700 in *collège* and 141 to 800 in *lycée*. Furthermore, it appears that 56% of these programs from the 2002 school year were sections in English (Legendre, 2003, p.17). These figures have continued to grow in recent years. In the RERS note for 2013, 351,000 students were registered in European or international sections at the beginning of the school year in France and the DOM. In terms of change from the previous year, an 8.3% increase in participation was recorded for European sections, and a 7.7% increase for international sections. Regarding the languages of these sections, English tended to dominate at an average of 68.9% of sections. The only academies where English was not dominant were Corsica and Nice (Italian sections) and Nancy-Metz and Strasbourg (German sections) (“RERS 2013”, p.128).

The predominance of English as a foreign language in the French higher education system is equally present. In the 2008-2009 ELVIRE study commissioned by Ined/DGLFLF, research revealed that out of the 95% of French associate professors who attested to giving regular classes or seminars during the 2007-2008 school year, 9% of those academics responded that they regularly conducted classes in English. In addition, 17% of respondents declared that they occasionally taught their classes in English. Within the same school year, 55% of research fellows and research directors declared to have taught regular classes or seminars. Out of that 55%, 13% attested to regularly teaching their classes in English; 34% responded that they occasionally taught in English. In terms of specific disciplines, English-medium courses (or occasionally English-medium) were on the rise in political science and management with 15% +22% and 10% +23% increases respectively (Héran, 2013, p.3). When launching a search for “programs taught in English”, it appears that 840 English-medium degree awarding programs are now available in France (“Programs taught in English”, campusfrance.org). In regard to these figures, Héran asserts that these English-medium programs continue to increase every year (Héran, 2013, p.3). While the number of French students participating in these English language courses is not documented, one can imagine

that if the number of university professors who conduct classes in English continues to increase, the demand for these classes by students also continues to rise.

However little research is currently available on the topic of English-medium programs in France, an interesting pilot study concerning transdisciplinary DUT courses taught in a foreign language was recently conducted at the University of Toulouse. The “SMILE 2013” (*“Sensibilisation à l’Enseignement d’une Matière Intégrée à une Langue Etrangère”*) sought to provide a minority (less than 10% of the annual total) of the DUT Informatics national program courses in English. As a final objective for the project, researchers aimed to *“renforcer la transversalité entre matières disciplinaires”* (Diab and Cabanac, 2014, p.17). In addition, Diab and Cabanac (*ibidem*, p.24) assert that the program cannot be qualified as “anglicization”, but rather as a “transdisciplinary” approach. The goal thus being to show students that it is possible to learn in another way (*op. cit.*). In total, regardless of their incoming level of English, 130 DUT students voluntarily participated in the program (*ibidem*, p.18).

Towards the end of the English-medium modules, researchers Diab and Cabanac distributed an anonymous survey in order to determine the effectiveness of the courses. In response to the question, *“Trouvez-vous cet enseignement SMILE intéressant?”*, 90% of students responded positively for the Economics course, 95% for Graphs (mathematics) and 75% for TDD (informatics). The second question, *“Pensez-vous avoir compris l’essentiel de cet enseignement SMILE?”*, received 97% “yes” responses for Economics and 72% for the XML informatics course (*Ibidem*:20). Finally, in regard to responses to the question, *“L’année prochaine, SMILE devrait-il être obligatoire pour toute la promotion?”*, the results were much closer. For the Economics, TDD and *Cryptographie* courses, “yes” responses varied between 41 and 48% and “no” responses varied between 50 and 59%. However for the Graphs and XML courses, “yes” responses were at 66% and 70%, and “no” responses were at 30% and 10% (*ibidem*, p.23). Considering the results of this survey, it appears that regardless of initial levels in English, French university students managed to understand the fundamental aspects of the English-medium courses. A fact which is particularly interesting considering that many opponents to these types of programs claim that inequalities will develop between students who have mastered the language, and those who have not. Furthermore, while the “yes” and “no” responses were much closer for the third question, students appeared to consider that the English-medium teaching of such as math (the Graphs course) and informatics (the XML) was beneficial for future students. In this way, the English language can be said to be

prestigious among university students in such academic fields. In regard to the success of this program, researchers Diab and Cabanac (*Ibidem*, p.24) write that, “*nous voulions donc également témoigner du fait que dans certains cas, comme le nôtre, la mise en place de ce type de dispositif peut tout à fait se faire de manière démocratique*”. Then upon consideration of the success of this pilot program, and the popularity of secondary school European sections in English and university courses taught in English, the demand for English language “products” in the French higher education system clearly exists.

In sum, research suggests that English is the dominant foreign language within all three domains of French society. Moreover, it appears that English has continued to spread in all three areas, and particularly within the areas of French research and education. In this way, it is evident that the clear supply and demand of English-language products is on the rise in France. Thus, one could conjecture that the perception of the utility of English among French university students is rather high as well (see Figure 1, The Catherine Wheel). However, while research indicates that the cases of France and Germany are strikingly similar in this respect, differences pertaining ideological attitudes nevertheless exist. Earls (2013, p.130) notes that Germans, in light of the historical presence of English in Germany after World War II, tend to be ideologically indifferent to English. The French, however, have historically had a stronger position regarding the existence of English in France. It is thus essential to discuss these developments in attitudes to better identify the current linguistic situation in France, and how these points of view may affect French university students' perception of English.

IV. The defense of French

In her research, Flaitz (1988, p.111) references Fishbein's notion that attitudes are manifested through behavior. She then claims that in order to examine the French elite's attitudes towards English, one must consider the action taken to defend the French language. It is thus within a similar vein that this subject will be addressed. Given that Flaitz and other notable linguists have already discussed older French linguistic policies at length, current developments in policy, and particularly those concerning the area of higher education, will be given focus. However, it is nonetheless essential to review previous actions and consider any corresponding historical events in order to better understand the context of these recent policy changes. In doing so, the current linguistic situation in France can in turn be evoked. In this way, evolutions in the French elite's actions since Flaitz's study will be at the center of analysis in an attempt to prove that a slight divergence in attitudes towards English has

occurred. This section will thus be organized in the following way: (1) the significance of *La Langue Nationale*, (2) historical developments leading to the decline in prestige of the French language after World War II, (3) significant actions taken to protect the French language, and finally (4) the current linguistic situation in France.

IV.1 *La langue nationale*

If considering Ager's (1999, p.6) notion of '*la langue nationale*', it is important to consider that French was overtly accepted as France's official language in Article 2 of the French Republic's Constitution. Citing the work of Saussure, Bourdieu (1991, p.69) comments on the connection between the state and language by writing, "*entendant prouver que ce n'est pas l'espace qui définit la langue, mais la langue qui définit son espace*". He then adds to this idea as he suggests that, "*l'intégration dans une même 'communauté linguistique'; qui est un produit de la domination politique sans cesse reproduit par des institutions capables d'imposer la reconnaissance universelle de la langue dominante*" (*ibidem*, p.70). French, in so far as it is the language of the Republic, necessarily evokes the notion of social cohesion. In other words, all speakers of the French language belong to a dominant group in which the adopted standard reigns supreme. The French language is therefore symbolically representative of the French identity. While this link between language and the state may seem redundant to note, it is culturally significant and inexorably provides a basis for understanding certain attitudes and motives regarding French linguistic policy. Moreover, the fact that French authorities explicitly established this connection in 1992 is of particular interest in this regard. It is thus important to discuss the historical developments which have influenced the adoption of *la langue nationale*.

In terms of language policy, France is an interesting country to research given that attempts at standardization have been documented since 1539 in the *Ordonnances de Villiers-Cotterets*. In an effort to reform justice proceedings during François I's regime, these edicts determined that only French should be used for official documents in court affairs, deeds and judgments (Durand, 1996, p.78, Flaitz, 1988, p.111, Schiffman, 1996, p.78). Durand (1996, p.78-79) claims that these edicts were not only significant for administrative purposes, but also symbolically significant for French history. For this reason, the move to centralize French territory through the mandated use of French served to establish the link between the French state and the French language.

However, attempts at language unification in France were the most notable during and after the French Revolution in 1789. Durand (1996, p.79) writes that “whereas the French monarchy had tolerated local languages, the French republic needed to assert unity in the face of what was perceived as the ‘divide and rule’ policy of the *Ancien Régime*”. Bourdieu (1991, p.74) also comments on this post-Revolution ideal as he suggests that, “*la théorie condillacienne qui fait de la langue une 'méthode' permet d'identifier la langue révolutionnaire à la pensée révolutionnaire*”. French was thus viewed as a medium through which revolutionaries could express their ideas relating to the Republic; therefore linking the notion of the Republican and the French language. In an effort to assert this unity, the legislative assembly in 1794 established the 8 *Pluviose* law declaring that only French could be used for public and privately registered acts (Flaitz, 1988, p.111, Schiffman, 1996, p.75-76). Schiffman (1996, p.76), citing the work of linguist Renée Balibar, asserts that the revolutionary policy 8 *Pluviose* is the oldest explicit language policy in the world. Furthermore, in alluding to the idea that this policy may have symbolically represented certain cultural values in France, Schiffman (op. cit) poses the following question: “Has France pursued a relentless monolingual policy because the law of 8 *Pluviose* enabled it to do so, or is the law of 8 *Pluviose* a manifestation of deeper impulses of French culture?”. The consideration of this question is thus crucial when analyzing the function of language in France, and particularly when considering the basis of certain linguistic attitudes in France.

Another fundamental development in the notion of '*la langue nationale*' was the establishment of the *Académie Française* in 1635 by Cardinal Richelieu. With the founding of this institution, Cardinal Richelieu sought to standardize and codify the French language in order to assure the quality of its use (Flaitz, 1988, p.111). Through this effort at codification, the Paris-based form became the accepted norm (Durand, 1996, p.78-79, Schiffman, 1996, p.120). This development was not only critical for linguistic purposes, but also for the continued centralization of the language. Therefore, it is essential to consider that the creation of this institution also played a significant role in shaping attitudes. The unquestionably strong and overt position of the *Académie Française* regarding the defense of French will later be discussed in this section.

IV.2 The decline in prestige of the French language: A historical context

Before discussing the historical context of the shift in prestige of the French language, it is first important to consider the link between language policies and history. Schiffman

(1996, p.59) suggests that “if language policy is not deeply rooted in the linguistic culture of a language group, it is not going to *fit* the needs of its speaker very well”. He then defines language policy as “not just a text, a sentence or two in the legal code”, but rather “a belief system, a collection of ideas and decisions and attitudes about language” (op. cit). This idea then supports Flaitz's previously mentioned reference to Fishbein's notion of attitudes. With this being considered, the historical context of these policies, as well as any cultural values evoked, must be discussed in order to gain a better understanding of the attitudes expressed.

Moreover, it is important to specify that language policies often develop in response to the loss of prestige of a given language. As mentioned above, the loss of prestige of a language is rooted in its historical context. According to Ager (1999, p.9), the loss of prestige of a given language may cause 'linguistic insecurity' among its speakers and thus certain policies are enacted to defend the language. He specifies that linguistic insecurity normally occurs among speakers of minority languages that risk extinction, but it nonetheless occurs among any speakers that recognize a threat to their language (op. cit). This idea is further supported by Tabouret-Keller (1997, p.317-318) when he suggests that, “members of a group who feel their cultural and political identity threatened are likely to make particularly assertive claims about the social importance of maintaining or resurrecting 'their language’”. In the case of France, a fear that cultural and linguistic diversity could end if the Anglo-American model takes over has been present since the end of the Second World War. This fear has been a significant driving force behind overt policies created to protect the French language from 'foreign intrusions' (Schiffman, 1996, p.121). Similarly, it has influenced legislation aimed at ensuring the use of French in the public sphere.

It is therefore important to note that the shift in prestige of the French language occurred in result of political, economic and social developments after the two World Wars. While these shifts were more apparent after World War II, Wright (2006, p.39) claims that English had begun to be used during the negotiation of treaties at the end of the First World War. However, she notes that English speakers still had to fight for their language to be used at this time. The eventual “new balance of power”, according to Wright (op. cit), found its origins at the end of the Second World War when France was not represented in the discussions at Yalta and Potsdam. In light of this event, French was not used as a medium of communication. This shift in the principal language used for political negotiations was if anything symbolic. Moreover, France witnessed a further decline in political power as the independence of former colonies and overseas territories became a reality between the years

of 1959 to 1962 (Ager, 1999, p.100). After several centuries of indisputable dominance in intellectual circles, the status of French began to decline.

This decline, as previously noted, was coupled with the rise in power of English speakers. Durand (1996, p.82) notes that the combination of the United States' economic, military and cultural power and the widespread use of English in the former British colonies influenced the dominance of English as a world language. This rise coincided with several disagreements between France and the Anglo-American powers concerning post-war political matters. Freeman (2008, p.191) cites that French post-war policies in regard to the Suez crisis, nuclear designs, the Bay of Pigs, the recognition of China, and the withdrawal from NATO promoted distance from the United States and in turn influenced anti-American sentiments during President de Gaulle's time in office. Furthermore, there were several disputes between France and England concerning England's entry into the European Common Market (op. cit). The synthesis of these events served as a context for certain Anglophobe attitudes during the post-war period.

Economically-speaking, Anglo-American products began to saturate the French market after the Second World War. The American company Procter and Gamble was the largest company in France during the 1960s. When the computer industry was just beginning, the American company IBM and then British company BULL were the two largest competitors in the market (*ibidem*, p.193). The political and economic hegemony of these two countries, and notably that of the United States, influenced the intervention of the political analyst Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber in 1967 when he wrote his famous essay "*Le défi américain*". In this essay, he called on France to devise new strategies to fight the dominance of American companies in France. Furthermore, he urged France and other European countries to invest in European research and funding, as well as to establish collective economic and political policies in order to counter American dominance (*ibidem*, p.194). This intervention was thus historically significant because it represented one of the first public appeals in France to counter American hegemony.

IV.3 Significant actions taken to defend the French language

For some members of the French authority, the declining prestige of France and the French language in the international sphere have been viewed as a result of the rise of Anglophone countries, and thus the rise of the English language (Flaitz, 1988, p.105). Actions taken to defend the French language in the face of the changing political and economic

environment have been documented since 1966 with the creation of the *Haut Comité pour la Défense et l'expansion de la langue française*. President de Gaulle commissioned this institution to protect the French language from change within France, as well as to promote its use abroad (Ager, 1999, p.100, Flaitz, 1988, p.112, Wright, 2006, p.40). This act is seen as being largely influenced by linguist René Etiemble's 1964 work entitled *Parlez-vous français?*, in which he urged French political authorities to be aware of the danger of 'being colonised' and of the reality that the notion of free enterprise was capable of ruining France. In order to protect the language from the intrusion of these threats, he then urged politicians to regulate the use of anglicisms in French (Ager, 1999, p.99-100, Freeman, 2008, p.193). While many contest the validity of some of Etiemble's claims, it is clear that his work started a tradition of linking the ideological corruption of the French language with the use of anglicisms (Flaitz, 1988, p.107-108). These ideas not only influenced the creation of the *Haut Comité pour la Défense et l'expansion de la langue française* in 1966, but have also played a key role in the enactment of two French laws dedicated to the protection of the French language.

The two principal laws to consider are the following: the *loi Bas-Lauriol* under President Giscard d'Estaing in 1975 and the *loi Toubon* under President Mitterrand in 1994. The motivations behind these two laws are essential for contextualizing current acts today. First, the *loi Bas-Lauriol* is primarily important given that it was one of the first overt French policies enacted after 1945 to protect the French language. Freeman (2008, p.195) notes that the *loi Bas-Lauriol* was a response to warnings issued by Etiemble and Servan-Schreiber during the 1960s, as well as reports from different ministerial committees tasked with determining the scope of foreign borrowings in French. The *loi Bas-Lauriol* stipulated the use of French in the audio-visual industry and for certain work and business procedures (Flaitz, 1988, p.114-115, Freeman, 2008, p.195, Schiffman, 1996, p.79).

However, several problems existed concerning the enforcement of the *loi Bas-Lauriol*. First, Flaitz (1988, p.115) asserts that the ministerial commissions responsible for evaluating and enforcing these measures rarely met regularly. Second, for the reason that no stable structure was established to ensure that French equivalents for anglicisms were provided (op. cit). Moreover, Durand (1996, p.81) notes that the *loi Bas-Lauriol* often conflicted with Common Market legislation. He concludes that for these reasons, and for lack of publicity, this law passed relatively unnoticed in France (op. cit). Why then is this law worth

mentioning? According to Wright (2006, p.50) and Durand (1996, p.81), the *loi Toubon* passed in 1994 is seen as an extension of the *loi Bas-Lauriol*.

Considering the link between these two laws, it is important to note that authorities decided to revisit the founding principles of the *loi Bas-Lauriol* almost twenty years later. In this way, it is clear that a similar linguistic environment existed in 1994. One in which authorities recognized a need to further stipulate linguistic regulations to protect the French language. Commenting on this idea, Truchot (2001, p.322-323) notes that a “more radical attitude was adopted” in France in 1992 after the French Parliament voted to ratify the Maastricht Treaty, thus changing the European Economic Community into the European Union. During this process, some French politicians warned that entry into the new European Union could present a threat to national values (Durand, 1996, p.84). It was at this point that the French Parliament chose to modify the Constitution by including Article 2, which stipulates that '*la langue de la République est le français*' (*ibidem*, p.323). This action can be seen as a defensive measure taken in the face of growing commitments to the greater multilingual European community.

Two years after the addition of Article Two to the French Constitution, the French government implemented the *loi Toubon* (op. cit). This law extended the *loi Bas-Lauriol* by regulating the use of French in labeling and instructions for use on packaging, for all contracts and official documents, and for all public services (Wright, 2006, p.50). More importantly, the 1994 law stipulated that French be the medium of education, as well as the official language of any conferences taking place in France (Ager, 1999, p.65, Durand, 1996, p.81, Truchot, 2001, p.324, Wright, 2006, p.51). When speaking to the French National Assembly in 1994 before the adoption of the *loi Toubon*, M. Francisque Perrut evoked the link between the French state and the French language in the following:

Près d'un demi-millénaire après que François Ier eut signé, en 1539, l'ordonnance de Villers-Cotterêts, qui faisait de la langue française l'unique langue judiciaire du royaume, deux siècles après que la Convention répondant aux mêmes exigences d'unification nationale, eut voté la loi du 2 thermidor an II qui exigeait l'emploi de la langue française pour tous les actes publics, la Ve République a, à son tour, en 1992, constaté la nécessité de réaffirmer dans son texte fondateur que 'la langue de la République est le français'. (Durand, 1996, p.85)

Francisque Perrut's speech to the National assembly therefore proves that the evolution in French language policy has been founded on the notion of the *langue nationale*. Moreover, if

considering Bourdieu's idea that the French linguistic community has been built on the notion of “*la langue révolutionnaire*”, any perceived threat to the French language may appear as a threat to French social cohesion.

Although the *loi Toubon* merely reinstated many of the measures from the *loi Bas-Lauriol*, it sparked much more reaction from the public. A closer look at the historical context of this period is thus essential for understanding this reality. First, fears that national unity would be threatened if France entered the European Union were at the center of many debates. Second, the prestige of French as an international language appeared to be in further decline at this time (Durand, 1996, p.84). Furthermore, Durand (op. cit) suggests that it was “no accident that the late eighties and early nineties witnessed a huge debate around a possible reform of French spelling”. For these reasons, it is clear that the origins of the *loi Toubon* were rooted in the social and political environments of the time.

Before moving to a discussion of the current linguistic situation in France, a brief review of the ministerial committees charged with the protection of French is essential; given that they are undoubtedly linked to legislative actions. In regard to these committees, Durand (1996, p.80) suggests that “the pre-eminence of French within France kept being reasserted by the creation of institutions”. He then notes that this trend began with the *Haut Comité de défense et d'expansion de la langue française* in 1966. This commission was then transformed into the *Haut Comité de la langue française* in 1973 (op. cit). While the mention of these committees is notable in so far as they constituted explicit actions taken in the defense of French, the HCLF was relatively inactive until the 1980s. It was during this period that the committee was reorganized into four separate areas of service: the French language, modern languages, languages for special purposes, and media and cultural relations. In addition to its restructuring, the HCLF was also renamed the *Commissariat général de la langue française* (Flaitz, 1988, p.112-113). In regard to the current linguistic situation in France, the evolution of these institutions is notable for three reasons. First, it appears that throughout consecutive decades since the 1960s, French authorities have recognized a continual need to protect and promote the French language. Second, the *Commissariat général* was tasked with providing the French language with alternatives for any foreign borrowings (*ibidem*, p.113). This act is still current today in the DGLFLF; France's current French language political body. Finally, the increased organization of the *Commissariat général* during the 1980s most likely influenced the increase in public reaction regarding the *loi Toubon*.

IV.4 The current linguistic situation in France

With the purpose of approaching the current linguistic situation in France, it is essential to consider Bourdieu's ideas regarding ideologies. Bourdieu (1991, p.208) suggests that ideologies “*doivent leur structure et leurs fonctions les plus spécifiques aux conditions sociales de leur production et de leur circulation*”. He then notes that ideologies are “*doublement déterminées*”, meaning that they exist for two fundamental reasons: (1) as a result of certain social conditions and (2) to serve the interests of those who transmit these ideas (op. cit). It is then within this frame of thinking that the current linguistic situation in France will be approached. If ideologies are born out of social contexts, it is thus important to consider that current attitudes towards language in France have developed in function of supranational obligations to the European Union and increased participation in globalization. Moreover, one can imagine that previous language policies and actions, and thus previous linguistic situations, have undoubtedly influenced current ideas. Furthermore, Bourdieu's second quality of ideologies sheds light on the current linguistic situation in France. If ideologies serve the interests of those who transmit them, overt language policies then indicate French lawmakers' association between the French language and the state. Similarly, these language policies express certain ideologies regarding the use of foreign languages, and notably of the use of English.

Thus if considering this notion of ideologies, I would argue that current attitudes have either relaxed or changed in comparison to the attitudes expressed through previous legislative acts. With the purpose of highlighting this divergence in attitudes, focus will be placed on debates surrounding a current significant act: the *loi Fioraso*. It is essential to note that this legislative act has direct links to both the *loi Toubon* and the 1992 addition of Article Two to the French Constitution. Parallels between the two pieces of legislation will therefore be the focus of analysis in order to confirm that the French authorities' attitudes have become more positive towards English in recent years.

What then is the link between the *loi Toubon* and the *loi Fioraso*? The transition from the *loi Toubon* to the *loi Fioraso* can be defined as a result of the ineffectiveness of the language regulations stipulated under the *loi Toubon*. If the law was implemented as a result of certain historical developments, it also lacked effectiveness for these same reasons. As France began to embrace more international exchange and collaboration, adherence to the *loi Toubon* became more difficult. In the 2008 ELVIRE study commissioned by the

Ined/DGLFLF to investigate the situation of French in the sciences, Hérán (2013, p.4) suggests that:

en dépit de la loi Toubon, l'anglais n'a cessé de progresser dans les activités des chercheurs français et de gagner les jeunes générations: 81% des directeurs de laboratoire ont constaté depuis vingt ans la progression de l'anglais comme langue dominante de leur spécialité.

He further supports this idea by adding, “*en dix-huit ans d'application de la loi, aucune activité de recherche anglophone sur le sol français n'a été condamnée*”, (op. cit). Moreover, Wright (2006, p.51) suggests that within the academic setting, “those ignoring the law justify their actions by arguing that at the present moment English opens doors, equipping French students to participate in the global movement of students”. In 2006, she researched many higher education institutions in France and discovered that, for this reason, many schools initiated English-medium programs regardless of the law (op. cit). Furthermore, she interviewed an administrator at a French business school who claimed the following: 'we have to offer courses in English if we want to remain among the best' (*ibidem*, p.52). Referencing the effect of the Bologna process on French education, the business school administrator followed by adding, 'what was agreed at Bologna requires us to accept a single lingua franca. At the present time this is English' (op. cit).

Through this example, it is evident that for the administrator, and possibly others in similar positions, the utility of English is seen as outweighing any ideological concerns. A reflection which is particularly important to consider in regard to current language debates. Wright (2006, p.51) qualifies this manner of thinking as 'post-national'. An attitude which can be defined as the “willingness to participate in global developments without seeing the move to English as necessarily a defeat” (op. cit). Furthermore, this testimony highlights the changing status of English as a result of globalization, as well as the result of increased mobility made possible through the European Union.

In light of increased collaboration between Europe's “knowledge economies” and an interest in the improvement of research and education in French higher education establishments, the *loi Fioraso* was adopted by the National Assembly in July 2013. In pursuit of this goal, the Minister of Higher Education and Research Geneviève Fioraso and politicians from the left, sought to improve the achievement of first year university students by increasing the links between high schools and universities (“*Enseignement supérieur: la loi Fioraso définitivement adoptée*”, 2013). Moreover, in favor of improving foreign language

courses in French higher education, article two of the *loi Fioraso* proposed a relaxation of language requirements as stated under the *loi Toubon*. In this way, the minister advocated the allowance of higher education programs taught in a foreign language, notably of those taught in English. Promoters of this law believe that the introduction of foreign language mediums will attract foreign students and researchers, thus improving the international recognition of French higher education establishments (Floch & M'Bida, 2013). In article two of the *loi Fioraso* challenges the French language requirements stipulated under the *loi Toubon*, this law has been highly controversial.

According to O'Connell and Chaplier (2014, p.26-27), the current debate surrounding the implementation of English-medium programs in France is essentially ideological with two opposing systems of social, cultural and historical representations. The argument in favor of English-medium programs cites that they are a necessary process in terms of globalization, international research and cooperation, as well as in attracting international researchers and students. Those who oppose the growth of these programs focus on cultural concerns. O'Connell and Chaplier note (op. cit) that these cultural arguments relate to both the national and international levels: the defense of the French language, the defense of *la Francophonie* and the fight against the hegemony of English. Furthermore, those in opposition warn that English-medium programs and the “anglicizing” of French higher education threaten the development of original thought in the sciences and the arts, as well as establish the selection and preservation of a bilingual elite. However, O'Connell and Chaplier (*ibidem*, p.29) suggest that the cultural argument is slightly paradoxical given that certain disciplines such as economics are often marked “Anglo-Saxon”, and the use of English in the hard sciences has traditionally been “vehicular”. In sum, they have found that there is an absence of communication between those concerned by the growth of English-medium programs, thus perpetuating the opposing debates surrounding the issue (op. cit).

Regardless of specific ideological motivations, the move to initiate the *loi Fioraso* marks a significant departure from previous attitudes concerning the use of English as a medium of education. In response to the adoption of the *loi Fioraso*, *Ministère de la Francophonie* Yamina Benguigui was quoted as saying, “*la francophonie n'est pas en danger*” (Béguin & Floch, 2013). When further questioned on the position of French amidst English-medium programs in French universities, Benguigui responded with the following: “*Je pense que ce texte [de loi] constitue un mieux pour le multilinguisme en France*”, (op. cit). These statements thus indicate a departure from the idea that the promotion of French in

France is somehow intrinsically linked to its defense from “foreign intrusions”. If considering previous acts, and those particularly during the 1980s in France, it is clear that attitudes have rather softened in the face of English. Furthermore, when questioned on the future of French in the face of the *loi Fioraso*, ex-Minister of Education (2002-2004) Luc Ferry suggested that “*la langue, c'est un patrimoine et un espace de pensée communs. Mais ce phénomène n'a aucun rapport avec l'enseignement en anglais*” (Bherer & Floch, 2013). Within the same interview, Luc Ferry noted that, in order to promote French culture abroad, it is now necessary to “*élargir le vivier des étudiants étrangers, car ils reviendront chez eux avec un bout de France accroché à leur cartable*” (op. cit). Here, it is evident that ex-Minister Ferry recognizes a relationship between the welcoming of foreign students (who may initially need to follow courses taught in English) and the eventual spread of French culture and language. Again, this point of view suggests a departure from debates regarding previous French language policy.

While these examples may not represent all French lawmakers' opinions, they do, however, signify a certain shift from previous hostilities towards the English language. Moreover, it is particularly important to note that many members of the French elite have clearly opted for more “pragmatic” and post-national arguments. In this way, recent developments with the *loi Fioraso* suggest that the French intelligentsia's position towards English has somewhat softened in the context of globalization. Given the fact that debates surrounding the existence of English in France will most likely continue considering the strong association between the French language and French identity, it is rather important to focus on the idea that many French lawmakers have begun to view English in more pragmatic terms. If this is true, then one can conjecture that, given the evident spread of English in different domains of French society, French students will most likely perceive the acquisition of English to be favorable.

V. Research method: quantitative approach

V.1 Respondents

A total of 150 students responded to the questionnaire. All respondents were French university students currently enrolled in a degree-awarding program. Within this subject pool, several different age groups were represented ranging from ages 15 to 34. However, the majority of respondents belonged to the 20-24 age group. The results concerning this age group will therefore be the focus of analysis.

In addition to recording the students' ages, questions concerning the students' level and area of education, if they have ever traveled or lived in an English-speaking country, their

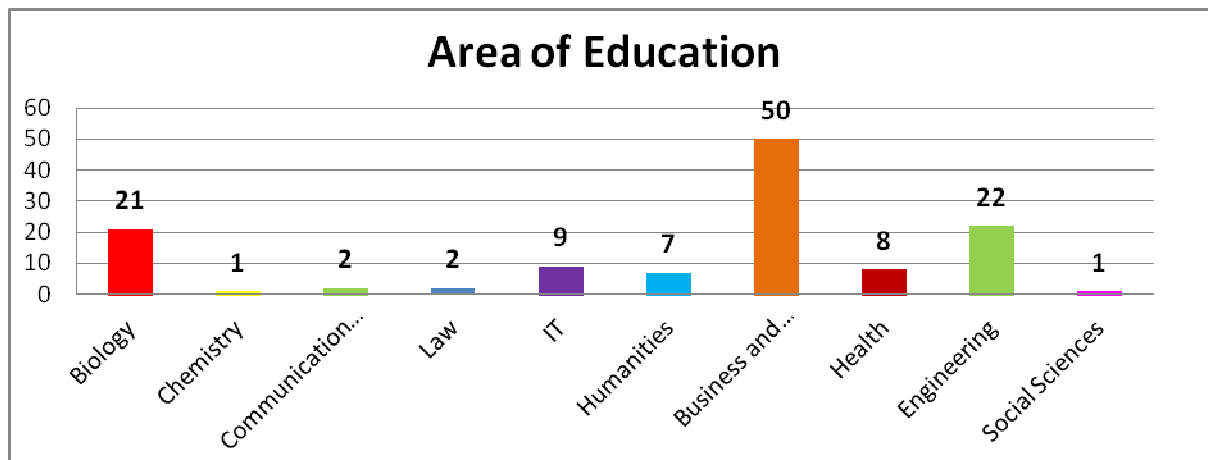


Table 1. Respondents' area of education.

level of English (according to the CEFR levels) if known, and if English was their first foreign language (LV1) in secondary school, were asked to have a wider range of research criteria. More specifically, these additional questions were proposed in order to support hypotheses that the students' area of study, level of education, and level of English acquisition may be factors contributing to a positive orientation towards English.

Concerning the students' area of study, a glance at Table 1 confirms that the majority of respondents noted that their studies corresponded to the areas of Biology, Business and Economics, or Engineering with 21, 50, and 22 responses respectively. Other notable areas include IT, Humanities, and Health Sciences with 9, 7 and 8 responses respectively. Unfortunately, there were only 1-2 responses for the areas of Chemistry, Communication and Journalism, and Social Sciences, making results for these domains negligible.

With respect to the questions concerning the students' level of education and acquisition of English (refer to Appendix 1 for respondents' level of education, level of English and experiences in an English-speaking country), the majority of respondents (43%) were in the process of completing a BAC +5 degree and the majority (88%) studied English as their first foreign language (LV1) in secondary school. With this being said, the addition of the LV1 question was included to support the Minister of Education's note ("RERS 2013") concerning the proportions of foreign languages studied by French secondary school students. It is thus clear that the majority of secondary school children (or their parents) opt for English as the first mandatory foreign language.

As for their level of acquisition, the majority (34%) of students responded that their level was at an equivalent of C1 on the CEFR scale. It is important however to note that the second largest group (21%) entered that they did not know their current level on this scale. There could be several reasons for this response. First, it is possible that even if the students were required to follow a foreign language program in university, they may not have been positioned according to this scale. Second, as is common for many business schools in France, another exam like the TOEIC might be used to determine the students' proficiency. In Benayoun (2005, p.15), it appears that many universities have adopted the CLES (*Certificat en Langues de l'Enseignement Supérieur*) approach to evaluate university students in reference to the CEFR competencies. These criteria have been integrated into the LANSAD programs to teach foreign languages to "non-specialists", and are evaluated on a CLES 1-3 scale. Thus, many students who have been evaluated through this system may not know their corresponding CEFR level. For this reason, a conclusive relationship between the level of English and orientation toward English may prove to be difficult considering the results retrieved from this subject pool.

Imbalances within the age groups, level of education, and area of study result from the manner in which the questionnaire was distributed. These imbalances will thus be discussed in the following section.

V.2 Materials and Procedure

V.2.1 Procedure

The instrument used to collect research data was an electronic questionnaire written in French and distributed through Google Drive Docs. This method of distribution was primarily chosen for efficacy, given that the link could be easily distributed and posted on social media. In addition, by using this method, results were automatically saved and included in an Excel file which helped during analysis. In regard to the distribution of the questionnaire, several French friends currently enrolled in different *Ecoles de Commerce*, Biology, and Engineering programs were asked to post the questionnaire link on various social media sites in order to obtain responses from other French university students. Thus any imbalances in the areas of education and levels of education reflect this method of distribution.

V.2.2 Questionnaire

The questions included in the questionnaire were developed to focus on French university students' attitudes towards English and, thus, the resultant prestige of English in France among this group. Certain questions were adapted from Flaitz's 1988 research in order to measure French attitudes. In using her research as a frame of reference, questions were primarily adapted from questions which focused on the importance and prevalence of English use, as well as those which focused on the reasons why students might choose to study English.

In order to obtain both the perceptions of English and information concerning the individual respondents, the questionnaire was divided into two sections (see sub-section V.2.3 below). The first section consisted of the "content" questions; questions pertaining to attitudes regarding the use of English. These questions were presented using a five-point Likert scale where respondents who strongly agreed with the statement chose (1) and those who strongly disagreed chose (5). Section two therefore dealt with the subjects' personal information such as: area of education, current diploma, acquisition of English, and if they have ever lived in or traveled to an English-speaking country. These questions were presented through a multiple-choice structure where subjects were asked to choose the answer that best fit their current situation. In this way, a more specific analysis based on the comparison between area of education and perceptions of English was made possible.

V.2.3 Questionnaire Format

Partie 1

Dans la première partie il y a des énoncés qui représentent un assortiment de faits. Pour chaque énoncé, il y a des gens qui sont "tout à fait d'accord" (1), ceux qui ne sont "pas du tout d'accord" (5), et ceux qui ont une opinion modérée (3). Merci d'indiquer ce qui correspond le plus étroitement à votre sentiment personnel pour chaque énoncé ci-après.

1. Pour suivre mes études, il est indispensable d'avoir un bon niveau d'anglais. 12345
2. Pour mes études, je fais souvent de la recherche en anglais. 12345
3. Si j'ai un bon niveau d'anglais, j'aurais plus facilement un travail plus tard. 12345
4. La plupart des séries que je regarde sont en anglais. 12345
5. La plupart des films que je regarde sont en anglais. 12345
6. En France, il devrait y avoir plus de matières enseignées en anglais. 12345
7. J'étudie l'anglais parce que c'est une langue internationale. 12345
8. J'étudie l'anglais parce que c'est obligatoire. 12345

9. J'étudie l'anglais parce que c'est utile. 12345

Partie 2

Merci de répondre aux questions vous concernant dans la deuxième partie.

10. A quelle tranche d'âge appartenez-vous ?
11. Quel est votre niveau d'études ?
12. Dans quel domaine étudiez-vous ?
13. Avez-vous déjà voyagé dans un pays anglophones ?
14. L'anglais était-il votre LV1 au collège et lycée ?
15. Si vous le savez quel est votre niveau en anglais ?
16. Avez-vous déjà vécu dans un pays anglophone ?

Concerning the questions in section one of the questionnaire, statements 1, 2, 6, 7, 8 and 9 were included in order to measure French university students' perception of the usefulness of English in regard to their academic studies. Thus if results for these questions were to be primarily positive, one could establish that French university students tend to acknowledge that the acquisition of English is an advantageous aspect of their higher education. Furthermore, if responses to statement number 3 (“A good knowledge of English will help me find a job later”) were to also be positive, it would be clear that French students' motivation to study English is most likely linked to their future employability in the job market. Moreover, if the respondents' responses to statement number seven (“I study English because it is an international language”) were to be positive in orientation, it could be determined that French university students opt to study English because they perceive it to be an advantageous skill in today's globalized world. In sum, these statements were included in the questionnaire in order to establish that French university students value English for the following “utility” reasons: their immediate higher education studies, their future employability, as well as in regard to the usefulness of English in terms of global mobility and communication.

Finally, statements 4 and 5 were primarily included in the questionnaire in order to confirm previous research concerning the prevalence and prestige of English-language products in France's audiovisual domains. Moreover, positive responses to these statements would attest to Strubell's suggestion that the increased demand and supply of English-language goods are intrinsically linked to the increased perception and status of English overall. In addition, if the majority of subjects were to respond in a positive manner to these statements, as well as those concerning the status of English in relation to academic studies, one could determine that the spread of English among the researched age group is significant.

V.3 Results and Discussion

With regard to the analysis of results from the questionnaire, focus will first be placed on the global results (all respondents' responses) from section one in order to evaluate the

Statements	Averages
A good command of English is indispensable for my studies.	1,9
I often consult research in English for my studies.	2,2
A good knowledge of English will help me find a job after my studies.	1,4
Most of the television series that I watch are in English.	1,6
Most of the films that I watch are in English.	2,1
There should be more university programs taught in English in France.	1,8
I study English because it is an international language.	1,5
I study English because it is obligatory.	3,1
I study English because it is useful.	1,3

Table 2. Means of responses from all respondents.

primary variable of this research: age. In addition, these results will serve as a basis of comparison for results concerning those students coming from specific areas of education. Given that the majority of responses came from those French university students belonging to the 20-24 age group, the discussion of results will thus be centered on this age group.

V.3.1 Global results

First if considering Table 2, it is evident that French university students are generally positive in orientation towards the English language. In total, the students' responses to the various statements measuring the prestige of English averaged between scores of 1.3 and 3.1. Here, the most positive responses appear to have been recorded in relation to question number nine: "I study English because it is useful". Moreover, in terms of the most "negative" responses recorded, French university students tended to be undecided in regard to the ninth statement: "I study English because it is obligatory". Upon reception of these results, it became clear that this statement was rather ambiguous, and the respondents may have consequently been confused concerning its intentional meaning. The statement was initially written in order to evaluate French university students' motivation for studying English; if it was merely because English (foreign language) was required in school, or rather because it

was a voluntary action. If the statement had been interpreted in the intended way, results would either clearly show an orientation towards 1 (strongly agree) or towards 5 (do not agree at all). Given that the mean for this statement finally reflects an indecisive score of 3.1, it can be determined that students either interpreted it in the intended way, with responses reflecting a 50/50 response rate, or that students may have responded that they agreed because a foreign language is in fact obligatory in French higher education. However, a clear discrepancy exists between the mean for this statement and those for statements 7 and 9. For this reason, it is apparent that this statement was ambiguous and French university students rather study English because it is both obligatory and perceived as useful.

In terms of the statements aimed at measuring the prestige of English as an aspect of French higher education studies, students responded in a generally positive manner. It is thus clear that French university students globally recognize something advantageous about the acquisition of English. These results should however come at no surprise if considering the previously discussed research concerning the spread of English and consequent status of English as a global *lingua franca*. What is particularly interesting about these results, though, is that statement 6, “there should be more university programs taught in English in France”, had one of the most positive means at 1.8. French university students are therefore almost unanimously in favor of the growth of English-medium programs in France. This is thus significant in regard to current debates regarding the adoption of the *loi Fioraso* in France. Moreover, it appears that like in Germany, English-medium studies are similarly prestigious in France among French nationals. Furthermore, one could conjecture that regardless of certain ideological debates concerning the prevalence of English in various domains of French society, French university students generally consider English to be a prestige language and are thus in pursuit of its acquisition.

Now, concerning the statements which measured the spread of English in French university students' daily lives, results were again generally positive. If glancing at Table 2, the means for statements 2, 4 and 5 all fall between 1.6 and 2.2. Responses to statement 4, “most of the television series that I watch are in English”, emerged at a mean of 1.6 which was quite expected considering both my personal experience and the prevalence of American and British television series on French television. However, the mean for responses to statement 5 (2.2) was slightly surprising. After having researched the distribution of audiences for English-language films during the 2012 year (CNC Bilan 2012), this mean was expected to be closer to that of statement 4. One conclusion for this outcome could be that French films

have indeed become more extensive in terms of film market shares in French cinema. Moreover, given that France has a strong cultural legacy in regard to film production, students may be more inclined to watch French films than French series. Nevertheless, a mean of 2.2 is quite positive. Thus, as was expected, these results represent a voluntary action towards the consumption of English-language products. Furthermore it can be concluded that, given these results, a certain bottom-up process in relation to the spread of English has occurred among this age group.

With regard to the results from the second part of the questionnaire (see Appendix 1 for tables), it appears that 85% of the subjects have traveled to an English-speaking country, and 35% have lived in an English-speaking country. While these results do not directly reflect attitudes towards the English language, they are significant when considering attitudes towards Anglophone culture. Thus, similar to the evident “consumption” of English-language products (television series and films), choosing to live or travel to an English-speaking country proves an interest in Anglophone culture; one in which the English language is inherently linked.

Moreover, judging from the highly positive responses (mean of 1.5) to statement 7, “I study English because it is an international language”, one could conjecture that French university students opt for the acquisition of English for mobility reasons; be it for travel or employment opportunities. In addition, with regard to the responses to this statement and those to statement 3 (mean of 1.4), it is clear that French university students recognize English as an international *lingua franca*. It can therefore be determined that English is viewed as a useful “tool” for future ambitions among this age group.

V.3.2 Results: French Business and Economics students

Concerning the profile of students coming from the area of Business and Economics, the data reveal that 22% of these students were enrolled in a BAC +4 program, while the largest pool of respondents (58%) in this area participated in a BAC +5 program. This is not particularly surprising when considering that the majority of respondents belonged to the 20-24 age group. 92% of students in this area responded that English was their LV1 in secondary school (compared to 88% overall). In terms of acquisition, 50% of students responded that they had acquired English at a level of C1 (according to the CEFR levels). The second largest percentage of students in terms of language acquisition (22%) responded that they had acquired English at a level of C2. When considering data from the global analysis, it is clear

that French Business and Economics students have consistently higher levels of English than the overall distribution of students (50% at C1, as opposed to 34% overall). Moreover, while 21% (the second largest group) of the total students responded that they did

Statements	Averages
A good command of English is indispensable for my studies.	1,7
I often consult research in English for my studies.	2,0
A good knowledge of English will help me find a job after my studies.	1,3
Most of the television series that I watch are in English.	1,3
Most of the films that I watch are in English.	1,7
There should be more university programs taught in English in France.	1,5
I study English because it is an international language.	1,3
I study English because it is obligatory.	3,3
I study English because it is useful.	1,2

Table 3. Means of responses from Business and Economics students.

not know their current level in English, only 10% of Business and Economics students responded in the same way. This discrepancy in data, as previously mentioned, may have resulted from differences in the positioning of students in foreign language classes, as well as differences in foreign language requirements. In any case, it is essential to note these discrepancies in the acquisition of English in order to establish a relationship between a student's level and orientation to English. In response to questions 13 and 16, French students responded at 98% and 44% respectively; well above the figures from the global results.

If glancing at Table 3, it is evident that the means of responses coming from students of Business and Economics are slightly more positive than those from the global results. As with the means from the global results, Business students appear to have responded in the most positive manner (1.2) to statement 9. At a mean of 1.3, statements 3, 4 and 7 tied at second. Comparing these results with those from the global analysis, it appears that Business students tended to respond .1, .3 and .2 (respectively) points more favorably than the overall subject pool. Looking more closely at the content of these statements, Business students appeared to be the most favorable to the notion that English is a useful language to acquire. Furthermore, given that these students responded favorably to statement 3, one could conclude that Business students view that the acquisition of English is helpful when looking for a job. Considering that these means tend to be more positive than those from the global

results, as well as the fact that these students tended to have higher levels of English than the overall subject pool, it is possible to deduce that parallels exist between the level of English, area of education and orientation towards English. In this way, students of Business and Economics must recognize something more advantageous about the acquisition of English. This however comes at no surprise when considering the increase in multinational companies and thus mobility throughout the European Union and the world. French Business students' attitudes towards English most likely reflect the position and use of English in the business world. It is therefore important to consider that attitudes towards the utility of English may necessarily result from the current standing of English as an international *lingua franca*.

Glancing at figures for statements 4, 5 and 6, a highly positive orientation towards English-language products exists among French Business students. With regard to statement 4, responses from French Business students averaged at 1.3, compared to a mean of 1.6 for the overall subject pool. For statement 5, the mean of responses amounted to 1.7, as opposed to 2.1 for the overall subject pool. Finally, Business students were more positive in orientation with regard to statement 6: responses averaged 1.5 (compared to a mean of 1.8 from the global results). Given that statements 4 and 5 dealt with the consumption of English-language series and films, it is evident that French Business students tend to “consume” English-language products at a higher rate than the average French university student. This increased consumption may be directly linked to the high level of English acquired by these students. With higher levels of English, these students may be more inclined to watch English-language series and films in order to improve their current levels. Returning to Strubell's Catherine Wheel, “more learning of English” directly influences the consecutive steps “more demand for goods and services in English”, “more supply of goods and services in English” and “more consumption of goods and services in English”. One could thus conjecture that the higher level of consumption on the part of Business students may be directly linked to their levels in English. If this is true, a relationship therefore exists between their increased consumption and positive orientation to English. Given that Business students also responded more favorably to statement 6 (“there should be more university programs taught in English in France”), the data clearly supports this theory.

The only instance where the means of responses from Business students exceeded those of the global responses (3.3 to 3.1), occurred in response to statement 8 (“I study English because it is obligatory”). Again, given that this mean reflects an indecisive response, one could conclude that the statement was ambiguous in nature. However, the fact that this

particular mean is slightly higher than the global average, points to the idea that Business students may be more inclined to consider the acquisition of English as voluntary rather than obligatory.

V.3.3 Results: French Information Technology students

The pool of respondents coming from Information Technology studies was relatively small with nine students. This particular subject pool is nevertheless interesting to study given that the English language has been historically linked to IT advancements. Thus, it is important to measure IT students' attitudes towards English; if they tend to be more positive due to the historical link with English.

Among the nine IT students, 66% were in the process of completing a BAC +5 degree-awarding program. In terms of their first foreign language chosen during secondary school, 88% responded with English. This figure equals the mean from the overall results, but is nevertheless inferior to the mean for Business and Economics students (92%). Concerning the IT students' acquisition of English, results were much more inconsistent than those coming from Business and Economics students. While the majority, 33%, responded that they had acquired English at a level of C1, the second largest subject pools responded that they did not know their level, or that they were at an A1 level (22% for both). Given that these results are rather inconsistent, as well as the fact that French students are normally expected to leave *collège* at a level of A2, it is difficult to believe that 22% of these IT students had acquired English at an A1 level. One could conjecture that, either a foreign language is not a requirement for their programs, or that they have not been positioned in English classes according to their actual level. It is therefore difficult to establish any link between the IT students' level in English and their respective attitudes towards the language. However, interestingly enough, these students appeared to have more experience traveling to or living in an English-speaking country. 88% of IT students responded that they have traveled to an English-speaking country, and 55% noted that they have lived in an English-speaking country (as opposed to 88% and 35% respectively for the global subject pool). One could therefore conclude that this particular subject pool has a keen interest in Anglophone culture.

On average, IT students' responses to the statements in section one of the questionnaire were consistent with the global means; as opposed to students from Business and Economics studies. In terms of responses that appeared to be more positive, a glance at Table 4 reveals

Statements	Averages
A good command of English is indispensable for my studies.	1,8
I often consult research in English for my studies.	2,6
A good knowledge of English will help me find a job after my studies.	1,3
Most of the television series that I watch are in English.	1,6
Most of the films that I watch are in English.	2,1
There should be more university programs taught in English in France.	2,2
I study English because it is an international language.	1,6
I study English because it is obligatory.	3,1
I study English because it is useful.	1,3

Table 4. Means of responses from IT students.

that IT students were more favorable to statements 1 and 3. IT students thus tend to agree that English is both indispensable for their studies and for securing a job after their studies. These results were expected given the “anglicized” nature of Information Technology. However, it was then quite surprising that their responses varied little from the overall means for the other seven statements. In addition, while students in this particular subject pool appeared to be more favorable to the idea that English was indispensable for their studies, the mean for responses to statement 6 was higher (more negative) than the overall mean. In this way, it appears that the IT students recognized the utility of English with regard to their studies, but they were less convinced that there should be more English-medium programs in France. One could conjecture that as IT students most likely use a highly specialized IT English “jargon”, their perceptions of the English language might be different than those belonging to other university students. Furthermore, English use in the IT field might be more specific, thus IT students do not recognize the need to have English instruction for all of their courses. Considering the case study conducted at the University of Toulouse, these results appear to be in line with the attitudes expressed by IT students in the SMILE 2013 pilot program. At the conclusion of that particular program, researchers also discovered that the IT students were rather conflicted with regard to the proposal that English-medium courses should be obligatory for future students. A position which was quite surprising after their almost unanimous approval of the English-medium classes that they participated in throughout the year. Thus, one could conclude that due to the historical spread of English in the Information Technology fields, French IT students tend to be favorable to the idea that the acquisition of English is essential for their success in their immediate and future projects. Moreover, IT

students are more inclined to study English (mean of 1.3) because it is useful rather than because they perceive it to be an international language (mean of 1.6). Their perception of English can thus be qualified in terms of the utility of English; more so than in terms of the notion that English acquisition will help them to be internationally mobile.

V.3.4 Results: French Engineering students

In total, 22 French university students following an Engineering program of study responded to the questionnaire. With regard to the area of study, this particular respondent pool represented the second largest majority of students. Similar to students coming from Information Technology and Business and Economics studies, the majority of Engineering students were in the process of completing a BAC +5 degree program (55%; 32% were in the process of completing a BAC +4 program of study). Regarding their first mandatory foreign language in secondary school, 77% of the Engineering students chose English as their LV1. Similar to the IT respondents, the Engineering students' responses to the questions concerning English acquisition were quite inconsistent. 45% of this particular subject pool responded that they did not know their current level in English, and the next largest group (23%) responded that they had acquired English at a C1 level. With regard to questions 13 and 16 (personal experience in an English-speaking country), Engineering students appear to have had more experience in an English speaking country (59% to 35% for question 16 and 95% to 85% for question 13). Thus, like IT students, more than half of the Engineering subjects have lived in an English-speaking country. One could therefore deduce that Engineering students have an interest in Anglophone culture. A conclusion which is further suggested when considering that Engineering students appear to be more positive in orientation (than the overall subject pool) with regard to statements 4 and 5 (refer to Table 2). It is therefore clear that, similar to French Business and Economics students, French Engineering students tend to be highly favorable to English-language films and series. However, given that results for question 15 were inconsistent, it is impossible to establish a link between this consumption of English-language products and level in English. Nevertheless, given that the majority of Engineering students appear to have lived in an English-speaking country, one could conjecture that these students have a working knowledge of English, thus their consumption of English-language goods has increased.

Statements	Averages
A good command of English is indispensable for my studies.	2,1
I often consult research in English for my studies.	2,5
A good knowledge of English will help me find a job after my studies.	1,3
Most of the television series that I watch are in English.	1,4
Most of the films that I watch are in English.	1,7
There should be more university programs taught in English in France.	2,1
I study English because it is an international language.	1,6
I study English because it is obligatory.	3,3
I study English because it is useful.	1,3

Table 5. Means of responses from Engineering students.

However similar the profiles of the Engineering and Business and Economics students appear to be, Engineering students tend to be slightly less positive in orientation towards the English language. Means for five out of the nine statements in section one were slightly higher than the overall means. Glancing at Table 5 reveals that Engineering students were slightly less favorable to statements 1, 2, 6, 7 and 8 (2.1 to 1.9; 2.5 to 2.2; 2.1 to 1.8; 1.6 to 1.5; 3.3 to 3.1, respectively). Looking more closely at the content of these statements, the data indicate that French Engineering students tend to be less certain that English is necessary for their studies and that English should be more present in French degree-awarding programs (statement 6). Moreover, the data suggests that French Engineering students tend to agree less that they study English because it is an international language. However, the discrepancy between this mean and that which comes from the overall results is extremely minimal (1.6 to 1.5). Furthermore, both means reflect positive orientations towards statement 7. Thus regardless of a slight difference of opinions, most French students tend to agree that they study English because it is an international language. What is particularly interesting about these figures, however, is that French Engineering students responded more favorably than the global subject pool to statement 3, “A good knowledge of English will help me find a job after my studies”. While these particular students are less positive in orientation towards the idea that English is necessary for the completion of their programs of study, they appear to be more favorable to the notion that English plays a significant role in future employability. Therefore, French Engineering students appear to recognize the acquisition of English as advantageous for their foreseeable futures.

French Engineering students appear to be quite favorable to the consumption of English-language films and series. With means of 1.4 and 1.7 for statements 4 and 5 respectively, this particular respondent pool tends to be more positive in orientation than the overall respondent pool. Although the responses for their level of English appear to be quite inconsistent, this high consumption of English-language products may be linked to higher levels of acquisition among this group. Thus, similar to the Business and Economics respondents, the French Engineering students' demand for English-language products may be intrinsically linked to their relatively positive orientation to the English language (see Figure 1, The Catherine Wheel). Moreover, as means for statements 3 and 9 appear to be more positive in nature (than those from the global results), one could conjecture that French Engineering students tend to perceive the English-language as a useful component of their employability profiles.

V.3.5 Results: French students in the “exact” sciences (Biology, Chemistry and Health)

Given that the number of respondents coming from Biology, Chemistry and Health studies was relatively small, the three respondent pools were combined to enable a more substantial analysis of the “exact” sciences. This particular analysis thus concerns 34 students. Responses to the questions in section 2 of the questionnaire revealed that 62% of these students were in the process of completing a BAC +4. In terms of language acquisition, 91% of the exact science respondents chose English as their LV1 in secondary school. Their levels of English acquisition according to the CEFR levels were again inconclusive. 29% (the largest group) of French exact science students did not know their level, and 26% of these students responded that they had a B1 level in English. For those students who responded with a known level of English, the results indicate that exact science students tend to have lower levels than the students in the other disciplines (most of whom had at least a B2 level). With regard to their experiences in Anglophone countries, 62% of these students responded that they have traveled to an English-speaking country. In addition, 9% of the exact science students appear to have traveled to an English-speaking country. When considering the data from the global results, these results appear to be much lower. The data thus suggests that students in the exact sciences tend to have less experience in English-

Statements	Averages
A good command of English is indispensable for my studies.	1,6
I often consult research in English for my studies.	2,1
A good knowledge of English will help me find a job after my studies.	1,5
Most of the television series that I watch are in English.	2
Most of the films that I watch are in English.	2,9
There should be more university programs taught in English in France.	1,7
I study English because it is an international language.	1,7
I study English because it is obligatory.	2,6
I study English because it is useful.	1,5

Table 6. Means of responses from exact science students.

speaking countries; as opposed to students in other disciplines, and notably those students studying Business and Economics.

Similar to the Engineering students, exact science students tended to be less positive in orientation than the overall respondent pool. Glancing at Table 6 shows that students in this field responded in a slightly less positive manner to statements 3, 4, 5, 7 and 9. It should be noted, however, that all of the means for responses from these students fell between 1 and 3; suggesting that these respondents have a generally positive orientation towards English. However, what is interesting to note, is that the exact science students responded in an almost opposite manner than the other students. Where Engineering and Business and Economics students appeared to be generally positive with regard to statements 3, 4, 5 and 9, the data indicates that exact science students were less so. Furthermore, the exact science students appear to agree with statements 1, 2 and 6; thus confirming that these students agree that the acquisition of English is indispensable for their areas of study. It should also be noted that the mean of responses to statement 8 was slightly lower than the overall mean (2.6 to 3.1). Assuming that these students responded to statement 8 in the expected way, the data suggests that French exact science students tend to consider their learning of English as obligatory rather than voluntary. For these reasons, the results indicate that exact science students recognize English as an integral part of their studies. Moreover, one could conjecture that exact science students tend to perceive the acquisition of the English language as more of a necessary aspect of their immediate studies, rather than as a useful tool for their future.

Higher means of responses to statements 4 and 5 suggest that these students tend to consume less English-language films and series than the overall respondent pool. Although, given that the results for their levels in English were quite inconsistent, it is difficult to

establish a connection between acquisition levels and consumption of English-language products. However, based on the fact that these students appeared to be more positive in regard to statements concerning the use of English in their studies, they may tend to perceive English in a strictly academic sense.

VI. Summary of results

With the purpose of analyzing the results emanating from the theoretical and quantitative research, focus will be placed on the individual research questions posed from the outset of the research.

Research question 1: What are French university students' perceptions of the English language?

The global responses from the questionnaire confirm the original hypothesis that French university students are generally positive in orientation towards English. In this way, all of the means for responses to the statements included in section one of the questionnaire varied between 1 and 3.1, suggesting that French university students are rather favorable to English. It should further be noted that French university students appear to be the most positive in orientation towards the idea that they study English because it is useful. In a close second, the data indicates that French university students generally agree that high proficiency in English will help them secure a job after their studies. Moreover, French university students appear to be globally favorable to the idea that they study English because it is an international language. One could therefore conjecture that French university students tend to perceive the acquisition of English as advantageous for their future ambitions. For this reason, their positive perceptions of English are intrinsically linked to the perceived utility of English. These results thus confirm the theoretical research conducted concerning the spread and prestige of English. Moreover, the data confirms the notion that English is considered to be a useful tool in today's globalized world where international mobility and exchange has become the norm; in today's knowledge economies. In addition, given that the defense of French in the face of English has rather softened in recent years, the data suggests that there is less of a discrepancy between attitudes belonging to the French elite and those belonging to the French youth.

Research question 2: Does a relationship exist between French university students' area of study and their orientation towards English?

At the outset of the research, it was expected that French students following a program of study in either Business and Economics or the exact sciences, would be more positive in orientation towards the English language. This hypothesis was primarily based on the notion that these disciplines have become quite international in nature, thus students in these fields might have different perceptions regarding the utility of English. In this way, it was expected that these students, in particular, might perceive English to be more advantageous than other students due to the ever-increasing use of English in the areas of international research and multinational companies. The data, however, proved to be slightly different. While the results suggest that French students of Business and Economics were consistently more favorable than other students with regard to the statements in section one of the questionnaire, the exact science students appeared to be less so. In fact, students coming from Information Technology studies appear to be more positive in orientation towards English than exact science students. However, when considering the positive results which emanated from the SMILE pilot study in Toulouse, these results are not very surprising. Moreover, a historical link between the English language and Information Technology fields has existed since the beginning of the “computer age”. What is particularly interesting to discuss in terms of this research question, is the fact that French exact science and Engineering students appear to have been less confident about the prestige of English when compared with the attitudes of the global respondent pool. What is more, the data suggests that students coming from these two fields are highly positive in orientation towards English for different reasons. The perceptions of French exact science students appear to be more positive regarding the idea that English is indispensable for their studies. The data also suggests that they study English because it is obligatory, rather than because it is an international language. One could thus conjecture that these responses reflect the anglicized nature of these fields in terms of research. On the other hand, French Engineering students do not consider English to be as prestigious in terms of their immediate studies, but rather as a useful skill for securing a job later. Therefore, the research indicates that there is a link between French university students' area of education and their orientations towards English. Moreover, the data suggests that these differences in attitudes may be directly linked to different ambitions for their future careers. With all results considered, it would have been ideal to have a more diversified respondent pool; one including more French students from the social sciences and humanities. Given that these areas of education have less of a historical link with English, it would have been interesting to measure these students' perceptions of English.

Research question 3: Is there a relationship between French university students' proficiency in English and their perception of English?

Unfortunately, given the inconsistent responses concerning the students' degree of proficiency in English, it is not possible to establish a relationship between a students' proficiency in English and their attitudes towards English. The only consistent data emanated from the French students of Business and Economics. Given that half of these students appear to have acquired English at a CEFR level of C1 (“Effective Operational Efficiency”) and their perceptions of English were consistently more positive than those of other students, one could conjecture that a relationship exists between proficiency and perceptions. These results could also be directly related to this particular field of study. Here, it is essential to return to Strubell's Catherine Wheel and note that “more learning of English” is directly related to higher perceptions of English and thus increased demand for English. Judging from the data related to Business and Economics students, it appears that their highly positive perceptions of English indicate this connection between proficiency and attitudes. In light of the rather inconsistent results, however, it would have been ideal to ask students how proficient they felt in English with regard to spoken and written skills (as opposed to the CEFR scale).

Research question 4: How prestigious are English-language “products” among this demographic?

Both the theoretical and quantitative aspects of the research reveal that English-language products are highly prestigious among French university students. Judging from the theoretical research concerning the audiences for English-language films and series on television and at the cinema, it appears that this particular age group tends to prefer watching these films and series. Moreover, due to the highly positive responses to the questions concerning English-language films and series in the questionnaire, this notion is thus confirmed. While certain respondent pools, namely the Business and Economics students, responded more positively than others, the global data indicate that French university students generally tend to “consume” English-language films and series at a high rate. Furthermore, the research suggests that French university students are highly positive in orientation concerning the expansion of English-medium programs in France. With regard to the theoretical research, it appears that the demand for French-English bilingual programs (the European sections) in French secondary schools has been on the rise. Similar attitudes have clearly been manifested in the area of higher education where the number of English-medium

programs has also increased in France. Again, the data emanating from the quantitative research confirmed this idea given that the responses to the question concerning attitudes towards the increase of English-medium programs in France were generally positive. If considering the motion of Strubell's Catherine Wheel, this demand for English-language goods will only continue to increase as French students continue to be exposed to the English language. Furthermore, if this is true, French university students' attitudes towards English will continue to be generally positive in nature.

VI.1 Implications for further research

While conducting this research, it became very clear that there is a lack of research concerning French attitudes towards English. It was similarly discovered that, while the existence of English in France has been highly debated since the 1960s, little research has been implemented to directly measure French students' attitudes towards English; as well as to determine their motivations to learn English. Judging from the highly positive responses emanating from this research, French university students appear to regard English as a prestige language. Given that the research suggests this notion, it would be interesting for researchers to conduct more case studies like the SMILE 2013 program in order to identify which types of English-medium programs appear to be the most successful according to students. In this way, French language policy regarding English education would be more adapted to students' actual attitudes and needs, rather than based on theoretical speculation. Expanding on this idea, it is similarly recommended to research how these attitudes might be manifested in the French workplace given that these students will become a part of the work force very soon. In sum, with further research in relation to French attitudes to English, one would be able to better understand French students' and workers' motivation/demotivation to study and speak English in France.

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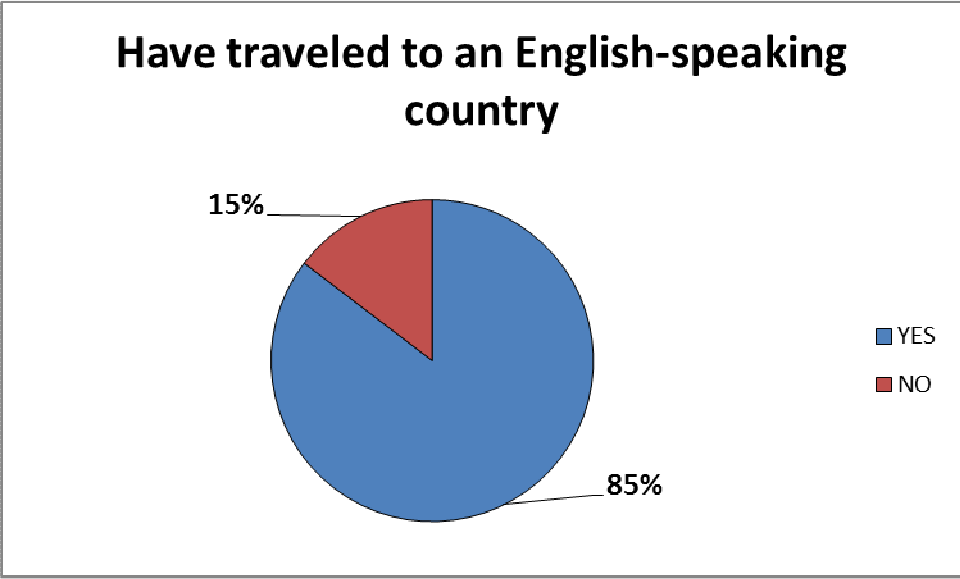
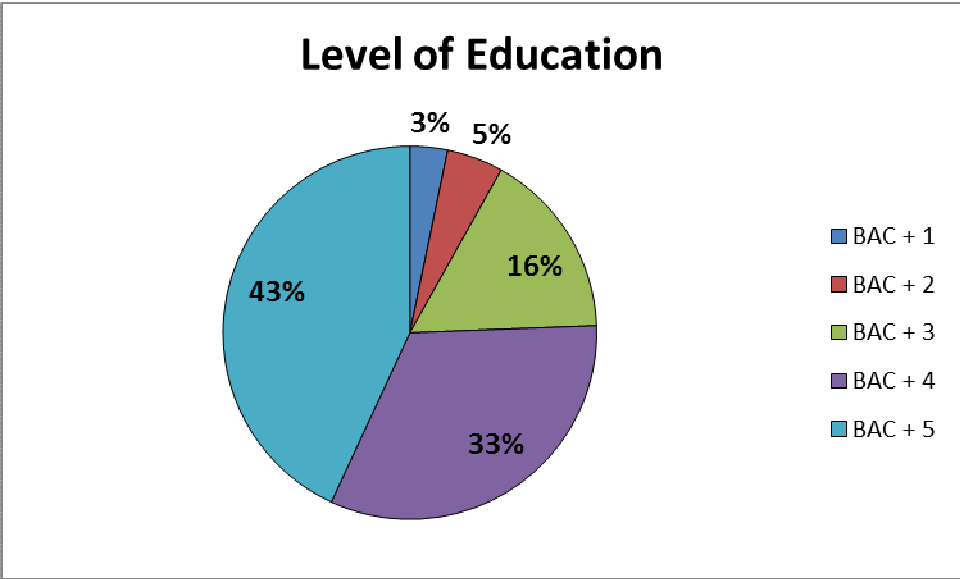
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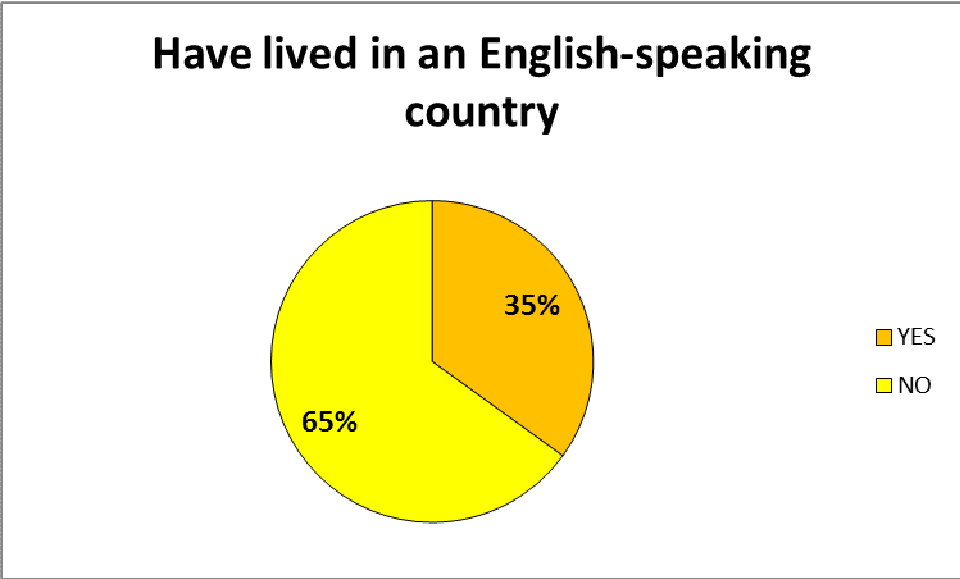
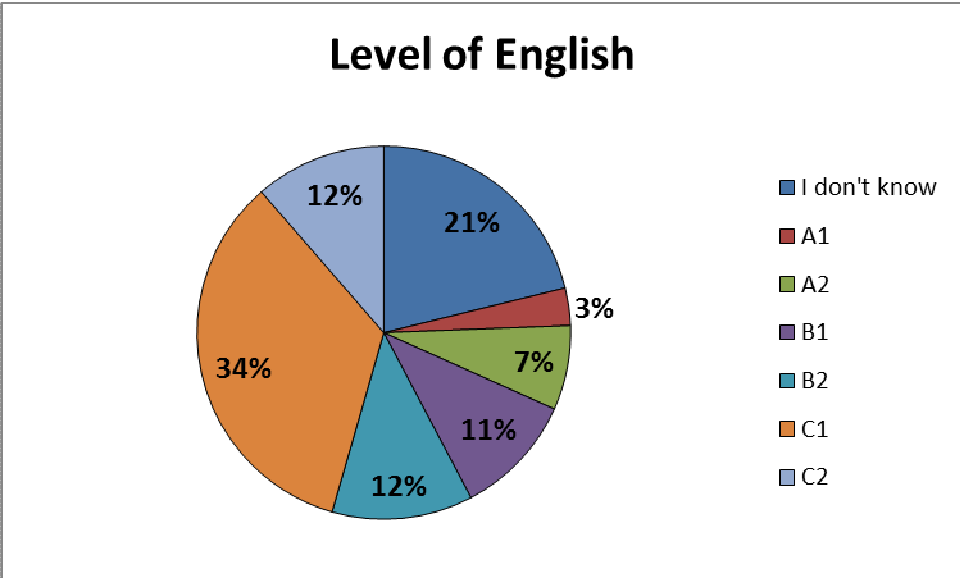
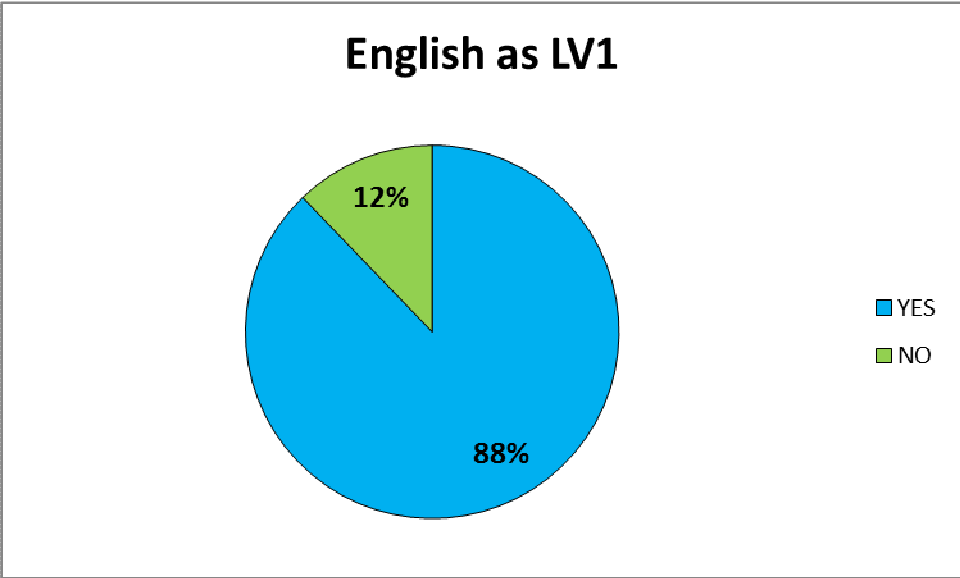
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Appendix

Appendix 1. Tables for the global respondent pool.





Abstract

The primary objective of this research is to investigate the perceived prestige of English among French university students. While the spread of English in France has been documented since the post-war period, little current research has been conducted in terms of individual French attitudes towards English. For this reason, the author decided to conduct a theoretical and quantitative study of how French university students perceive the English language. The data emanating from a questionnaire electronically distributed to 150 French university students indicate that English is highly prestigious among this group. Moreover, the results suggest that French students perceive the acquisition of English as advantageous for their current studies, as well as for their future employability. The author thus recommends more research with regard to the attitudes of French students in order to better adapt language policy to their needs and motivation.

Key words: sociolinguistics, language attitudes, English language spread, applied linguistics, language policy

Résumé

Le premier objectif de cette recherche est de comprendre l'intérêt et les attitudes que les étudiants d'université françaises ont face à l'anglais. Alors que le développement de l'anglais en France a beaucoup été étudié depuis la fin de la seconde guerre mondiale, très peu de recherches ont été conduites sur les attitudes individuelles des français face à l'anglais. C'est pourquoi, l'auteur a décidé de conduire une étude quantitative pour comprendre comment les étudiants d'universités français perçoivent l'anglais. Les données résultantes de 150 questionnaires électroniques auprès de 150 étudiants montrent que l'anglais est très important pour ce groupe. De plus, les résultats montrent que les étudiants français perçoivent l'anglais comme un avantage aussi bien dans leurs études que pour leur future carrière. L'auteur recommande que plus de recherche soient conduites afin de mieux adapter l'apprentissage de l'anglais aux besoins des étudiants.

Mots-clés : sociolinguistique, attitudes linguistiques, diffusion de la langue anglaise, linguistique appliquée, politique linguistique