Abstract

The main purpose of this thesis is to investigate the practices and attitudes of the French when questioned by foreign tourists in English. In addition, it explores to what extent the French understand foreign tourists who address them in English and make themselves understood when they respond to them. Lastly, it also considers any correlations between the French's responses when addressed by foreign tourists in English and their socio-demographic background and English proficiency.

In order to achieve these aims, a multiple method was conducted during the winter of 2021/2022 in Paris. Two quantitative research techniques were combined alternately to gather as much and various data as possible. Thus, structured interviews were carried out among 206 respondents first, and a new sample of 280 participants was observed thereafter. The interviews focused on the attitudes of the French when addressed in English by foreign tourists, while the observations concentrated on their practices. Hence, questions from the interview guide regarded the French's feelings, opinions and thoughts when asked in English by tourists, whereas the observations were concerned with the response (e.g. the willingness to help, the language used, and the accuracy of the answer). The observations necessitated the help of an external person, i.e. a non-native speaker of French and English, who posed as a foreign tourist together with the researcher. The non-native speaker was the one to question the French participants in English and the researcher took notes of the observations.

The collected data shows that the majority of the French stop and attempt to help foreign tourists who speak English. Nevertheless, a few of them answer solely in French and some mix English and French in their reply. This indicates that not all of the responses the French provide to foreign tourists are understandable. Approximately a fifth of the responses the French give to foreign tourists are incomprehensible, another fifth are comprehensible from a little to a moderate extent, and a half are comprehensible from a large to a very large extent. As regards the understanding of the requests expressed by foreign tourists in English, many French are able to understand them from a moderate to a very large extent, and it seems that the rest, who cannot understand, manage to guess the meaning of the requests due to context. Furthermore, the findings reveal that most of the French have positive attitudes towards speaking English with foreign tourists; they frequently feel helpful and often interested. However, the results also show that a few French experience embarrassment, nervousness and shyness when interacting

in English with foreign tourists, feelings that are barely present when the tourists can speak French. Moreover, the collected data suggests that the variables of age, educational background and notably the level of English proficiency have an influence on the French's practices and attitudes towards interacting in English with foreign tourists.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The tourism industry has never been as important as it is now and tourists flock to sundry places from all over the world. There are a number of factors explaining this rise, which has seen a temporary drop because of the Covid pandemic since the spring of 2020. One of them is the development of the transportation sector, which includes airlines, railroads, maritime transportation and transportation infrastructure. This has worked to shorten the distances and enable anyone who can afford it to be mobile in the world. Two other factors are the socioeconomic and industrial developments starting in the post-war period and continuing until the present day. This has led to an increase in attainable leisure and wealth, and by consequence has allowed individuals to spend time and money voyaging. However, this surge is not without its challenges and some of the significant troubles that tourists face when travelling to a foreign country are language issues. In a world with approximately 7,000 living languages (Eberhard et al. 2022), not counting all the dialects, coming across someone who does not understand one's mother tongue is highly probable. In this case, interlocutors need to find a common means of communication. Although English is not the most spoken mother tongue in the world, it is by far the language that has the most speakers, including native speakers and non-native speakers. Thus, English plays a key role in tourism.

As the country that attracts most international tourists each year (UNWTO 2020 Annexe 6), France has great use of English non-native speakers. Nevertheless, it is a well-known fact that several foreign tourists visiting France return home with the impression that the French are not capable or willing to speak English with them. The French are branded as poor English speakers. Moreover, they are stereotyped as either struggling with speaking English or even having a dislike of it. Unfortunately, no research has been carried out in this field, and the preceding statements are only based on popular opinion. In order to verify whether this is reality or myth, research needs to be conducted. This gap in sociolinguistics is the inspiration for this thesis. Although it would have been interesting to question a group of tourists about their experience with the French population whilst visiting France, this present research focuses on the French's own perspective and concrete practices. There are two main reasons for that. Firstly, it is more difficult to find a sufficient number of tourists visiting France to survey than

French citizens. Secondly, the collected data would only inform about the impressions that foreign tourists have whilst interacting with their French hosts. Any possible correlation between the way the French respond to tourists and the French's English proficiency or socio-demographic backgrounds would not be made available.

1.2 Aims and expectations

This thesis is a study of the French's attitudes and practices towards addressing foreign tourists in English. Its aim is to investigate how the French react when foreign tourists address them in English and note any correlation between their response and their English proficiency and socio-demographic background. The main finding expected from this study is that the majority of the French do answer foreign tourists in English in order to help them with their requests. Concerning those who do not, three possible explanations are proposed: negative attitudes towards English, lack of English oral proficiency and discomfort. Thus, the four following hypotheses are put forward.

Hypothesis 1: The French do communicate in English with foreign tourists.

Hypothesis 2: The French who do not communicate in English with foreign tourists do not do so because they have a negative attitude towards English. NB: If this hypothesis is confirmed, it would go against what previous research has observed (see Section 2.4).

Hypothesis 3: The French who do not communicate in English with foreign tourists do not do so because of a lack of oral proficiency (listening and speaking skills) in English.

Hypothesis 4: The French who do not communicate in English with foreign tourists do not do so because of discomfort. Indeed, it may be that the French have adequate skills in English, but feel embarrassed when using it in public.

Only these four hypotheses will be analysed although there is of course a vast amount of possible reasons why the French would choose not to interact with foreign tourists in English, including very individual ones, such as lack of time on a specific day.

1.3 Material and methodology

To achieve the aim of the thesis, a multiple method study was conducted. For the testing of the four hypotheses, a quantitative method seemed more suitable than a qualitative. The first part of the multiple method consisted of interviews carried out in French in the eastern part of Paris, more specifically at Paris Gare de Lyon, one of the six large railway stations in Paris. A total of 206 participants were interviewed by using a structured interview guide. The sample was chosen according to certain criteria, and only respondents residing in France and having the French nationality were interviewed. In addition, the sample included both men and women as well as different age groups to assure that the collected data would be representative of the French population. The second part of the methodology implied the observation of a random sample of 280 individuals (within 203 groups). The focus was on the French's first reaction when a stranger addressed them in English. If the French did not want to answer or rejected the question in any way, the observation stopped there. On the other hand, if the French tried to answer the 'foreign tourist', further observations were registered, such as the proficiency of the French to speak English, the ease with which one could understand what they said and the coherence between what was asked for and the answer. To achieve this task, two individuals, a non-native speaker of French and English together with the researcher, wandered in the proximity of tourist attractions in Paris and asked either individuals or groups of individuals questions in English. The questions were such as are typical for tourists, e.g. 'Excuse me, do you know how to get to Notre Dame?' or 'Could you help me find my way to the city centre, please?'.

1.4 Relevance

As mentioned in Section 1.1, there is a gap in sociolinguistics when it comes to the French's use of English in intercultural interactions. Previous research has been carried out on the French's English proficiency (see below Subsection 2.5.1), and national tests have provided an overview of the level of their English, but no study has investigated their concrete practices. This thesis, thus, aims at filling this gap. The subject of the present research is of interest to both sociologists and linguists. Indeed, on the one hand, the study is concerned with relationships between individuals and how they interact, and on the other hand, it regards

languages and language issues. In one respect, this study deepens previous research on French attitudes towards English. Although the focus here is not on attitudes towards the English language as such, but rather on practices and attitudes towards using English with foreign tourists, both features are closely related. In fact, it is more common to observe non-native speakers of English speaking English if they have positive attitudes towards English than if they hold a negative position. Therefore, it is believed that this thesis will provide valuable input into the field of sociolinguistics.

1.5 Research questions

Considering the aims of the thesis and the hypotheses already mentioned, the main research questions are the following:

- What are the French's attitudes when questioned in English by foreign tourists?
- What are the French's practices when questioned in English by foreign tourists?

These two main research questions are accompanied by four minor research questions:

- To what extent do French people understand foreign tourists addressing them in English?
- To what extent do French people make themselves understood when interacting with foreign tourists who have not learnt French?
- What effect do socio-demographic variables such as age, gender and educational background have on the French's attitudes and practices towards speaking English with foreign tourists?
- What effect does French people's English proficiency have on the French's attitudes and practices towards speaking English with foreign tourists?

1.6 Structure

The thesis is divided into six chapters. After the introduction, Chapter 2 presents the research context by providing different relevant theories and a literature review. It positions the English language in a European and global perspective, describes the role of English in tourism,

discusses various language issues in intercultural interactions, examines divergent opinions on French attitudes towards English, and finally inspects the English proficiency in France using a European survey from 2012. The methodology and materials employed for the present research are detailed in Chapter 3, where the choice of a multiple method combining two quantitative approaches is justified. In addition, Chapter 3 provides a description of the sample and the ethical considerations that were followed. Chapter 4 presents the findings; it is divided into two major sections: the interviews and the observations. To facilitate legibility and avoid confusion, the results are categorised according to various features: firstly by the types of answers, secondly by socio-demographic variables, and thirdly by levels of English proficiency. Additional remarks are appended to each section. Chapter 5 provides a discussion of these results in an attempt to answer the research questions. To ensure that the discussion covers all aspects of the research questions, each section of this chapter is devoted to a single research question, either main or minor. In addition, the last section of Chapter 5 examines the hypotheses; it reveals both those which are retained and those which are rejected. Finally, Chapter 6 presents a conclusion, offers answers to the research questions as well as outlining the limitations of the current study, and ends with an outlook on potential further research in the field.

2. Research context

This chapter provides the theoretical orientation and a literature review, which are the background of the study. It is divided into six sections, each covering a specific domain relevant for the establishment and implementation of the methodology and thereafter the analysis of the results. First, the position and use of English in both the European and global context are presented. Second, the concept of tourism and communication issues related to English in this field are examined. Third, more communication issues, this time in a more general context, are discussed. The fourth section is an investigation of the French's attitudes towards the English language. Then, English proficiency in France is explored in the penultimate section by means of an overview of the school system and recent research on Europeans and their languages. Finally, the last section is a reflection on the main features covered in this chapter and an explanation of how these features contribute to the present thesis.

2.1 The English language

2.1.1 English as the most spoken language

Kachru (2008) initiated the concept of World Englishes and designed the Concentric Circles model, thus dividing World English into three categories. Each category or circle corresponds to a different way the English language has been acquired in the past and is now used and taught in a particular country (i.e. a different variety of English). The countries in the inner circle, for instance, have English as their national and dominant language. The outer circle includes the countries where English has an official status among other languages, but has been acculturated. Lastly, the expanding circle comprises the nations which mostly use English for international functions only. According to this model, France belongs to the expanding circle. In fact, English in France is a foreign language that is learnt at school by most pupils.

In the European context, according to the Special Eurobarometer 386 carried out in 2012, albeit sharing the second place with Italian (13% each) as the most spoken mother tongue, English occupies the first place as the most widely spoken foreign language (38 %) (European

Commission 2012: 5). This number has been stable since 2005, when the Special Eurobarometer 243 was conducted (European Commission 2006: 12).

In the global context, English is the most spoken language. Solely regarding the number of native speakers of English, English occupies the third place with 370 million speakers in 2021 (Eberhard et al. 2021b). The first and second place are respectively occupied by Mandarin Chinese with 921 million native speakers and Spanish with 471 million native speakers. Nevertheless, when considering all speakers of English (i.e. both the native and other), English is well ahead with 1,348,000,000 speakers (Eberhard et al. 2021a), followed by Mandarin Chinese with 1,120,000,000 speakers. French ranks seventh with a total of 267,000,000 francophones.

2.1.2 English as a lingua franca

Two types of individuals make use of English. It can either be a native speaker, meaning that English is his/her mother tongue, or a non-native speaker, implying that English is learned as a foreign language. A person can have two or three first languages (L1) and still be a native speaker of all these languages, as long as they have been learned from birth. However, if a language is learned at a later stage in life, it will be referred to as a second language (L2) or even third language (L3).

When two individuals interact in English, there are three possible alternatives. First, the two interlocutors can be native English speakers. In that case, both employ their first language to communicate. The second alternative is that one of the individuals is a native English speaker whilst the other is non-native. In this instance, only one of the speakers is using his/her mother tongue. The other is conversing in a foreign language. Lastly, when both individuals are non-native English speakers, none of them are using their first language to interact. The common term to describe English in the last case is lingua franca. English as a lingua franca (ELF) is employed when native speakers of two different languages wish to communicate, but do not know the language of the other. Hence, they find a common means of communication that is foreign to both of them.

English is the most employed lingua franca in the world today. It is used in business, politics, tourism, commerce, science, computing, etc. ELF is intercultural, as those who speak

it have various backgrounds and cultures. Nevertheless, ELF is according to Baker (2018: 27) not culturally free. Every interlocutor carries and displays his/her own culture when using ELF. This reveals that users of ELF do not adopt the American culture (or any other culture from a country in the inner circle), but continue to express their own. In the same way, research has shown that countless users of ELF continue to use their accent and do not fully follow the rules of Standard English as the proper manner to speak (Seidlhofer 2018: 89). Despite the fact that most learners of English in Europe learn a standard accent, either Received Pronunciation or General American, few comply with it – besides, few native speakers do so either.

2.2 Tourism and the need for English

2.2.1 Tourism in general

Tourism is a term that envelops an array of behaviours and is a phenomenon observed in sundry forms including eco-tourism, backpacking travel, day tourism, domestic tourism, etc. This is probably the reason why there exists a wide range of definitions of what tourism is. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), for instance, defines tourism as the activity of a tourist and furthermore specifies that a tourist is a visitor who fulfils three criteria (UNWTO 2010, cited in Xiaojuan et al. 2012: 446). First, the visitor needs to travel a minimum distance of 50 miles from his/her place of residence and visit an unusual environment. Second, the length of the stay should be between 1 and 364 days. Third, although the prime purpose of the trip can vary (e.g. pleasure, health, business, self-awareness), it cannot be to work for an individual or an institution in the host country. In 2010, Xiaojuan et al. (2012) carried out a study in the Midwest of the USA to find out what a tourist is from a tourist perspective. The findings reveal that most visitors agreed with the definition from the UNWTO.

Although communication plays a crucial role in the tourism industry, scholars have often studied these two fields separately. However, Jaworski and Pritchard (2005) regrouped an array of contributors, each specialising in different fields, to juxtapose the subjects and explore notions of identity and otherness. Through various research methods, they studied communication in tourism and came to several conclusions. Only the study pertinent to this thesis will be presented here, which is the one conducted by Jaworski and Lawson (2005) in

Poland between April 2001 and June 2002. This study explored the interaction between hosts and visitors from the hosts' perspective. To do this the researchers carried out seven semi-structured interviews with agritourism farmers. Despite the fact that most of the visitors were Polish, meaning that there were few language barriers, there remained differences between hosts and visitors that could potentially give them feelings of otherness (e.g. difference in dialect, rural vs urban and professional status). Nevertheless, the hosts expressed a desire to make the tourists feel at home by focusing on the similarities between the two groups and creating a perception of 'sameness' (Jaworski and Lawson 2005: 134-135). When describing their interactions with foreign customers, the hosts conceded that familiarity and informality were more challenging to achieve (Jaworski and Lawson 2005: 138). In sum, the findings show a discrepancy between the two types of interpersonal contacts. Whilst hosts scored high on closeness with their Polish tourists, they struggled to do the same with foreign visitors.

Another interesting aspect, in respect to tourism, is the negative stereotypical images often associated with tourists (Xiaojuan et al. 2012: 447, O'Reilly 2005: 155-156). They are sometimes cast in pejorative characteristics such as frivolity, inactivity and reliance. Moreover, even though there is a possibility for all tourists to become hosts one day, the situation is not always reversible as being a tourist is not affordable to anyone. For these reasons, it could be argued that some hosts have a tendency to express hostility instead of hospitality. In addition, Jaworski and Pritchard (2005: 22) touch upon the 'tourist gaze' and the 'consuming of place'. Even though the tourism industry provides a substantial financial contribution to the host country, some hosts can find it annoying to have visitors who wander around in their streets, maybe having the feeling that tourists are there to exploit their residence.

Finally, it should be pointed out that tourism has had a long history and it is difficult to date when it first emerged. However, in light of the statistical material, it can be asserted that globalisation has engendered an intense increase in tourism in the last decades. Borders and limits are not the hindrance they used to be. With the invention of the aircraft, and more importantly, because of the increased accessibility of air travel, more people can travel half a world away in no time and on a reasonable budget.

2.2.2 Tourism and the use of English

If we disregard domestic tourism and tourists travelling to a country sharing their mother tongue, English is the language used most frequently in tourism communication. Communication in tourism is essential. Some examples of tourists' various forms of communication include the booking of plane tickets or hotel rooms, the ordering of food at the restaurant, and finding their way through the city. In essence, tourists are dependent on communication. Several studies have been carried out in the field of English proficiency among tourism students and staff. Some of them will now be introduced.

In Taiwan, a research conducted by Wu (2012), cited in Cloudia Ho (2020), demonstrates that, according to their employers, hotel employees lack sufficient English skills to communicate with foreign visitors. Furthermore, Wu distributed 300 questionnaires to college students in the tourism industry, and the collected data shows that students were dissatisfied with the teaching they received in the English subject. They expressed a feeling of not having been well enough prepared for their future employment and wished they had spent more time with role-playing in class.

These results are in line with Liao et al.'s (2017) findings, also collected among Taiwanese tourism interns (cited in Cloudia Ho 2020). The questionnaires distributed to 80 respondents describe a common impression that English lessons had been insufficient to prepare them for the needs in the field. There were three main elements identified as lacking in their course: foreigners' culture, accent and dialect. Consequently, the interns faced difficulties communicating in English with foreign customers.

A third similar research was carried out by Trang (2015). As a result of his quantitative research among tourism employees in Vietnam, he postulates that speaking is the primary basic language skill required for communication in the tourism industry (Trang 2015: 42). Furthermore, he exposes the inadequate English training these tourism staff had received, arguing that even though they had learned the use of English in real situations, there existed no study exploring what real situations resemble (Trang 2015: 3). Thus, the majority of the respondents encountered communication difficulties when conversing with foreign customers. One of the central challenges mentioned was the problem of understanding the various English accents (Trang 2015: 46).

Common to all these studies is that a lack of English proficiency was a hindrance for communication with foreign visitors. The tourism students and staff felt inadequately or not at all prepared for the linguistic professional needs, and expressed incomprehension issues, especially due to unknown dialects or accents.

2.2.3 Tourism in France

The Coronavirus pandemic has affected the tourism industry dramatically since February 2020. Therefore, the statistics that are included here are prior to the crisis. According to the World Tourism Barometer, France is listed as the most visited place by international tourists in 2019 with 89.4 million international tourist arrivals (UNWTO 2020 Annexe 6). Next comes Spain, and the USA is in third place. Paris, the capital of France, is the most visited city in Europe with 38 million visitors in 2019, and the second most visited city in the world, after Bangkok. Among all the characteristics that attract visitors to Paris are the monuments, the food, the fashion industry, the art and the museums.

2.3 Research in sociolinguistics

Communication is a complex process. Indeed, not only does it encompass much more than just the act of speaking but it can also engender misunderstandings. This section is meant to present some issues people may face when interacting with foreigners.

The first issue that will be discussed is speech modifications. Alfallaj (2016) conducted informal interviews and conversations with both natives and foreigners in Saudi Arabia about their mutual interactions. He found that language obstacles were experienced from both sides. In order to make themselves clear and comprehensible to foreigners, the natives tended to adjust their manner of speaking, using what is called foreigner talk. Foreigner talk resembles baby talk, i.e. the dialogue and speech adults have when interacting with babies. In other words, as adults often utilise simple words and sentences to facilitate babies' understanding, so native speakers tend to do with an L2 speaker of their mother language. Alfallaj (2016) observed foreigner talk in Arabic, i.e. the L1 of the citizens of Saudi Arabia. Foss (2018: 47), on the other hand, carried out a study in the Norwegian context to investigate if foreigner talk could be found

between two non-native speakers of English. The results expose that L2 speakers also modify and simplify their language when addressing less proficient foreigners. Foreigner talk seems to ease language comprehension. However, as Alfallaj's (2016) observations show, notwithstanding the use of foreigner talk, there were several misunderstandings between the native and foreign population. The reason for this can be found in the fact that when proficient speakers address less proficient speakers and modify their speech, less proficient speakers hear utterances they have not learnt in their teaching classes. Therefore, even if someone learns to use a foreign language in real situations, it is not certain that this person will be exposed to the exact learnt dialogues.

A second issue one might encounter when interacting with foreigners is misunderstandings because of culture. Indeed, one may have learnt a foreign language and even be proficient in that language, but unless the culture is learnt, too, there will potentially be some mutual incomprehension. In other words, cultural awareness is essential for understanding others. One of sundry manners to express culture is through gestures. Boulet and Harrison (2014: 1272) postulate that the French have particular gestures that display their own culture. The way the French kiss each other when they meet, the way they interact with strangers, the way they walk at a fast pace in the metro, etc. All of these attitudes can seem rude and hostile from a foreigner's perspective. Hence, when foreign tourists travel to France, they might not understand the French culture, and vice versa, the French might not be aware of the foreign culture.

Another expression of culture is the grammar and syntax people use when speaking. Tréguer-Felten (2018: 7) states that when two individuals employ ELF to communicate with one another, they may think they understand each other, but their dialogues are imbued with cultural influence and therefore the interaction includes misunderstandings. In her book, she criticises the use of ELF, claiming that it is a synonym for Globish, a term formalised by Gogate in 1998 and then Nerrière in 2004 (Tréguer-Felten 2018: 1). Consequently, ELF is no longer a language, which signifies that there is no structure that defines it, and each interlocutor is competent to coordinate his/her speech according to his/her own culture. This may cause misconceptions. Pitzl (2018: 3) agrees with Tréguer-Felten and is a proponent of ELF not being a language but a 'language use'. Hence, there is a greater likelihood that non-understanding, misunderstanding and negotiation of meaning will occur in interactions in ELF than in interactions between two individuals who share the same mother tongue.

2.4 French attitudes towards English

According to Labeau (2000: 125), the French language, albeit influenced by several other languages, has had the mythical attribute of being pure. In brief, for the French, their language is sacred and it 'is seen as an important identity factor' (Gadet 2006: 1787). Linguistic borrowings and foreign influences have been denoted as a threat since the 15th century (Judge 2000: 89). During these last decades, the emergence of English as a new lingua franca has reminded the French population to be on its guard. In order to protect their national language, the French created two laws: the Bas-Lauriol law and the Toubon law. In spite of being adopted within an interval of almost thirty years (i.e. 1975 for the former, and 1994 for the latter), they are quite similar. The main purpose of these linguistic laws is to make the use of French mandatory in diverse contexts in order to protect it (Judge 2000: 90). As Walter (2000: 40) and Gadet (2006: 1792) put it, Anglicisms are the most recent enemy feared by the French when it comes to defending their language. Hence, the French appear to display negative attitudes towards English.

This negative attitude may be caused by the prestigious place that the French language had to cede to English after the two World Wars (Flaitz 1988: 5). French was indeed a lingua franca in Western Europe from the 16th to the 19th centuries and was used for international diplomacy, culture and at court. Nonetheless, the situation has switched, and English is now the most used language in the world, as described in Section 2.1. Since then, the French's attitudes towards English have been of great interest among scholars, and several have agreed that French positions are negative. However, in 2015, Walsh published a study of French attitudes towards English where she adopts a different approach than those used by most of her predecessors. She makes a clear division between official and individual attitudes, and her findings reveal a dichotomy between the two. In fact, on the one hand she agrees that official positions in France are negative towards English, and on the other hand, she claims that individual attitudes are nuanced (Walsh 2015: 23). The method she used was mixed as she conducted both a questionnaire study with 401 respondents and an interview study with 36 participants. Even though the results do not show unequivocal attitudes, it is clear that the majority of the respondents expressed that English is a major language to learn and it should be taught from primary school. In addition, less than a third estimated that French is in danger, and fewer than half meant that the government should protect French with laws.

Walsh (2015) was not the first to distinguish between the official and individual level. Approximately 30 years prior, Flaitz (1988) published his study on the same subject and made comparable findings. He also employed a mixed methodology, using an ethnographic study, a content analysis, an observational investigation, an examination of legislation, and a quantitative study with 145 respondents. The results reflect that, in general, the French have positive attitudes towards English (Flaitz 1988: 190). Furthermore, he noticed that the socio-demographic variables age, educational background and occupations influence the attitudes of the respondents. The more pronounced connection was between age and attitudes. The younger the respondent was, the more likely the attitudes were to be found positive, and vice versa.

Thus, although the attitudes towards English in France might seem negative due to the implementations of multiple laws, reforms and writings, the attitudes of the French as individuals appear relatively positive. In 2015, Goursau (2015) gathered all the English borrowings used by the media in France and counted a total of 5,000 Anglicisms. Moreover, he claims that the English words in common use represent 2.5% of the French vocabulary. This denotes that despite the protective acts, the population remains positive to the use of English words, either because they do not have any French equivalent or simply because it sounds chic and fashionable.

Finally, it should be pointed out that a survey conducted in 2012 reveal that the majority of the French regard English as the most useful language to learn for their own sake (79%), but also for their children's future (92%) (European Commission 2012: 70, 79). Indeed, English is believed to pave the way for communication on holiday, study abroad, better employment, comprehension of other cultures, encounters with foreigners and self-gratification. This is consistent with the finding that indicates that 88% of the French consider that Europeans should at least learn one foreign language (European Commission 2012: 113). Thus, these results depict positive attitudes of the French towards foreign languages and particularly English.

2.5 English proficiency in France

2.5.1 English proficiency

Research has denoted a weakness in foreign languages among the French students, and in 2013 the Minister of National Education judged the results to be alarming (Peillon et al. 2013). However, a survey, the Special Eurobarometer 386, co-ordinated by the European Commission in 2012, positions France at a level a little higher than the European average when it comes to the amount of people who can speak English well enough to have a conversation (European Commission 2012: 21). Indeed, 39% of the French answered that they speak English well enough in order to have a conversation in that language whilst the European average was 38%. Compared to a similar survey conducted seven years earlier, the results show a slight improvement, as the percentage of French respondents who said they could have a conversation in English in 2005 was equal to 36% (European Commission 2006: 13). Moreover, the findings of the Special Eurobarometer 386 show that a quarter of the French were able to understand the news either on the television or the radio, a third understood English when reading a newspaper, and around three in ten managed to interact online in English (European Commission 2012: 31, 33, 37). All of these numbers are above the European averages[1]. Concerning the frequency with which foreign languages were used in France, the majority of the French admitted to using their L2 occasionally, a quarter recognised using it often, whereas merely a fifth used it daily (European Commission 2012: 42).

The main purpose of the Special Eurobarometer 386 conducted in 2012 was to investigate the Europeans' proficiency in languages other than their mother tongue. In total, 26,751 respondents were interviewed face to face in the 27 Member States of the European Union. This survey provided information about the English proficiency in France from the French respondents' perspective. Thus, whereas the French Minister of National Education based his judgement on tests, the Special Eurobarometer 386 reveals the level of English the French personally estimated to have.

The results from the survey were weighted according to sundry socio-demographic variables such as age, gender, occupation, school-leaving age and region. This allows for the

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[1] 26% vs 25% for understanding the news, 32% vs 25% for understanding the newspaper, and 29% vs 26% for communicating online

comparison and classification of findings. Foreign languages which are regularly used are most likely to be the ones spoken with fluency and ease compared to foreign languages which are seldom used (European Commission 2012: 41). The most mentioned situations where the French use their foreign languages are, in descending order, whilst they are on holiday abroad, watching films/television or listening to the radio, using the Internet, communicating with friends, conversing at work, reading books/newspapers/magazines and interacting with family members (European Commission 2012: 52). Moreover, the survey indicates that Europeans who can hold a conversation in a foreign language are most likely to be young (15-24 years old in the survey), to have fulfilled their full-time education program late (20 years or more in the survey) or to be still studying, to occupy a director position and to use the Internet on a daily basis (European Commission 2012: 17).

Gerhards (2014) attempted to analyse and explain the findings of the Special Eurobarometer 386. Moreover, his aim was to identify any correlation between the English proficiency in Europe on both macro-level (e.g. country size and educational level in the country) and individual-level (e.g. age and social class of the participants) factors. One of his conclusions was that small countries that have a highly developed educational system are more likely to have a high proficiency in English. The former factor is linked with the prevalence of a native language. Indeed, the smaller a country is, the greater the chance that the national language has few speakers and the media are neither dubbed nor translated. Hence, citizens see the necessity of learning foreign languages if they want to understand the media and communicate with a larger number of people. Furthermore, Gerhards (2014: 69) noticed that age has a negative influence on linguistic proficiency. The older a person becomes, the longer it is since they studied, and unless they have an employment where they use English to communicate, it is forgotten due to a non-use of the language. Lastly, another inference Gerhards (2014: 66) drew from his findings is that the more closely related two languages are, the greater the linguistic proficiency will be. It is, for instance, easier for a Norwegian to learn Danish than Russian by the simple fact that Danish and Norwegian resemble each other.

If Gerhards' theories are applied to France, the English proficiency should be found intermediate. On the one hand, the country is large, French is spoken, either as native or foreign language, by 24% of Europeans (European Commission 2012: 10, 19) and French has Latin language roots as opposed to English, which has Germanic roots. These factors are not conducive to a high English proficiency. However, on the other hand, France has a highly developed educational system, which should promote higher English proficiency.

2.5.2 English in the French Curriculum

A quick overview of diverse pamphlets on the school system in France (e.g. Ministère éducation nationale 2010 and Ministère éducation nationale 2019a) reveals that English as a school subject is not mentioned. The structure of the French school system is organised according to the children's age. Since September 2019, school is compulsory from age 3. From 3 to 6 years old, children start at *école maternelle,* 'nursery school'. Then, from 6 to 11 years old, they attend *école primaire,* 'elementary school'. *Le collège,* 'lower secondary school', comes next, from 11 to 15 years old. Finally, they go to *le lycée,* 'upper secondary school', from age 15 to 18. According to a welcome booklet distributed to new immigrants in France, foreign languages are taught at school from sixth grade, i.e. lower secondary school (Ministère éducation nationale 2019a). On the other hand, the pamphlet describing the French school system to foreigners published in 2010 indicates that children learn foreign languages at elementary school, but highlights that it is not a priority (Ministère éducation nationale 2010: 9). Apart from these observations, the pamphlet provides sketchy information about these foreign languages. The reader does not know which languages it refers to. It seems therefore that the English subject and in general all foreign languages are assigned a subordinate status in the French education curriculum.

Nonetheless, in 2013, the French Minister of National Education acknowledged the pivotal role of foreign languages in the development of the French citizens (Ministère éducation nationale 2019b). He claimed that foreign languages will equip the children with self-, cultural and world awareness. In addition, learning new languages can open doors to employment opportunities that would not otherwise be available to the younger generation. Hence, the Minister proposed a new law called *La loi d'orientation et de programmation pour la refondation de l'école de la République* 'The orientation and planning act for the renewing of the school of the Republic'[2], which was voted on 8 July 2013. This act renders foreign-language learning obligatory from first grade. Concerning lower secondary school students, two foreign languages are mandatory and here it is stipulated that one of them must be English. Moreover, the law requires that teachers dedicate more time to foreign-language teaching than before. This

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[2] Author's translation

endeavour to increase the national proficiency in foreign languages in France depicts positive attitudes towards English as well as towards other foreign languages.

2.6 Inference

This chapter placed the English language in its global context and highlighted its pivotal role as a lingua franca. English is indeed the most spoken foreign language in the world and is therefore widely employed in the tourism industry. As the number of tourists expands worldwide, the necessity to find a common means of communication is crucial. Host countries cannot expect tourists to be proficient in their mother tongue and should consequently be prepared to interact in a lingua franca, which is often English. However, as research shows, there seems to be a lack of English proficiency, even among tourism staff and students. This phenomenon is also observed in France as only 39% of the population admit to being able to have a conversation in English. As mentioned in this chapter, one of the reasons for the scarcity of skilled English non-native speakers is inadequate and ineffective English lessons. The present thesis considers all these pieces of information and investigates both the French's ease in addressing foreign tourists and the possible reasons behind it. Different socio-demographic and English use variables will be gathered and any correlation with the results from the investigation will be examined. The following chapter will detail how the study was carried out.

3. Methodology

This chapter describes in detail the methodology as well as the materials used to conduct this study. It explains the choice of quantitative methods as opposed to qualitative ones. It also justifies the use of multiple research methods, discussing its benefits for the study. Subsequently, it offers a detailed picture of the materials, i.e. the interviews and the observations. Next, it elucidates the criteria that were used to select the participants. Lastly, it informs about the ethical rules that were taken into consideration.

3.1 Quantitative study

In sociological research it is common to differentiate between two types of approaches, namely qualitative and quantitative methods. Whereas the former focuses on opinions, attitudes and concepts, the latter is concerned with measurement and numbers. Therefore, qualitative approaches frequently involve a small sample of subjects, in contrast to quantitative approaches that favour large amounts of respondents. Moreover, qualitative methods serve to obtain detailed descriptions and are process-oriented, as opposed to quantitative methods that serve to obtain frequencies and ratings and are outcome-oriented. Since this study examines the practices and behaviours of a large number of participants and is interested in gathering data about them in the form of numbers, a quantitative research approach was chosen. This choice is supported by the fact that quantitative methods are useful for testing hypotheses, which is needed in this research.

Once the quantitative approach has been selected, researchers still need to choose between a number of techniques. In fact, quantitative data collection techniques include, for example, questionnaires, interviews, observations and documents review (Kuada 2012: 103, Walia and Chetty 2020). The methodology of this thesis consists of two different research techniques, which are interviews and observations. Interviews were favoured rather than self-administered questionnaires for three main reasons. First, it is easier to find participants on the street than on the web. Indeed, although there may be an immense number of people connected to the web, the possibility of finding someone willing to participate on the web is lower than when interviews are conducted face-to-face. Second, the gathering of paper questionnaires on the street would have been more complicated and time-consuming than structured interviews.

Third, asking questions directly to the interviewees prevents imprecise questions and misunderstandings, and enables clarifications when participants do not understand. Following the interviews, observations were conducted for reasons that are explained in Section 3.2 and Section 3.4.

3.2 Multiple method

In a single study, researchers can choose to use only one research technique. However, it is also possible to combine different research approaches, which is a practice that is meant to reinforce and deepen the findings. There are two possible ways to do that. Researchers can use either a mixed method or a multiple method. Whilst the former is a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, the latter is the use of two or more research techniques belonging to the same category of approach (i.e. either qualitative or quantitative) (Mark 2015: 23). Thus, if a study involves both quantitative interviews and quantitative observations, as is the case in this study, the methodology is multiple. Even though both research techniques have a common aim, i.e. to answer the research questions, they often have diverse functions. Results from the first method habitually serve to develop and elaborate the second method. Indeed, new information may arise after the analysis of the first findings, new hypotheses may be tested, or new data may need to be deepened and extended. There are a number of benefits of using multiple methods. Hesse-Bieber et al. (2015: 7-8) enumerate some of them. According to them, multiple methods enable, among other things, to increase understanding, to address new research questions or hypotheses, and to assess the reliability and validity of the collected data. The downside of the use of multiple methods, on the other hand, is undoubtedly that it is time-consuming.

In the present study, it seemed appropriate to use multiple methods due to the complexity of the research questions. In fact, interviews are not sufficient to reveal the concrete practices of the French when interacting with foreign tourists in English, but only their perceptions of them. As pointed out by Mackey and Gass (2005: 96), interviews, like all research methods, can contain flawed data. Indeed, some of the answers respondents give during an interview are based on how they believe they would have behaved, but they might react differently in reality. Thus, conducting observations besides interviews could either reinforce the answers from the respondents or weaken them. Conversely, observations alone

are not adequate to disclose feelings and opinions because these are unobservable data. Thus, combining interviews and observations permitted the collection of more data.

Consequently, the study consisted of two phases. Both phases were carried out during January and February 2022. During phase 1, 206 participants were interviewed (see Section 3.3 for details of the interviews). Thereafter, a new sample of 280 participants was observed (see Section 3.4 for details of the observations) throughout phase 2. Phases 1 and 2 were carried out successfully. The chosen study site for phase 1 was Paris Gare de Lyon, a busy railway station with an average of 730 trains going through daily (Trainline 2022). There were four prime advantages to interviewing participants there. First, a large proportion of the individuals in Paris Gare de Lyon are not busy. Quite the contrary, they either sit idly on a bench or surf the internet whilst waiting for departure. Second, Paris Gare de Lyon gathers people from all over France as well as foreigners. This increases the chances of collecting data from participants with different socio-demographic backgrounds. Third, since the research was conducted in the wintertime, the railway station provided shelter from the rain and the cold. This is an important factor to take into consideration, as few people like to be interviewed outside in bad weather conditions. Fourth, this station is almost guaranteed to be crowded and there is a constant flux of people coming and going. Thus, participants are easily found and the researcher does not need to move long distances in search of new interviewees. Nevertheless, there are disadvantages to conducting interviews in a train station as it can be overcrowded and noisy. Therefore, to make sure that the interviewees heard the questions, they were offered the possibility to read them at the same time as the interview went on.

As regards the observations, they were conducted in areas of the city of Paris usually highly frequented by tourists, such as Notre-Dame de Paris, the City Hall, the Panthéon and important railway stations. These places were selected as they are typical places where tourists would request someone's assistance. The goal was to carry out the observations in a context that resembled real situations as closely as possible.

3.3 Interviews

The interviews were conducted through face-to-face interactions. To ensure comprehension from the respondents, the interviews were both written and carried out in French (see Appendix 1 for the interview guide translated into English). All responses and comments were also given

in French, and those that are transcribed in the following chapters have been directly translated to English. For the texts in the original language, see the corresponding footnotes. The interview guide consisted of five parts. The first part collected general information about the interviewees such as their age, gender, place of residence and occupational status. The second part concerned the participants' English proficiency according to their own opinion. The third part included questions about the frequency of English use as well as the contexts where the English language had been acquired. The fourth part dealt with the respondents' attitudes towards interacting in English with foreign tourists. As a first step, the participants were asked if they had already been enquired by foreign tourists in English. If the answer was 'Yes', they were encouraged to answer the subsequent questions according to their previous experiences. In contrast, if the answer was 'No', they were invited to base their responses to the subsequent questions on a hypothetical experience. As a second step, the interviewees were asked about their perceptions, feelings and attitudes when addressed in English by foreign tourists. Lastly, the final part was meant to investigate the French's attitudes towards interacting with tourists in French and search for any similarity or difference between opinions when interacting with tourists in French as opposed to in English. The last part does not differentiate between native French speakers and non-native French speakers.

The interviews lasted approximately five minutes per participant. This time was extended whenever the interviewees wished it in order to be exhaustive in their response. The questions were closed-ended and only the answer 'Other' needed to be specified. According to Mackey and Gass (2005: 93), there are two major benefits of using closed-ended questions. First, the results analysis phase is much simpler and quicker. Second, the reliability of the study is higher. On the other hand, one downside is that the answers are restricted to the alternative choices whilst open-ended questions allow for non-expected opinions and comments. In other words, the interview guide was very questionnaire-like. Otherwise, the use of interviews in general offers several benefits in research. Those mentioned by Mackey and Gass (2005: 173-174) are the opportunity to investigate unobservable data such as opinions and sentiments, the possibility of asking the respondents to be more specific in their answers, better accessibility for dyslexic individuals, and lastly, the opportunity to adapt to the participants. Furthermore, Mackey and Gass (2005: 174) warn against the effect of the researcher on the interviewee and recommend paying attention to it during the interview in order to attenuate it.

There are different ways in which interviews can be conducted. Sukamolson (2007) cites in-person interviews, occurring either at the interviewee's residence or at the researcher's

office, telephone interviews where the questions are presented to the interviewees over the phone, and central location intercept interviews, taking place at locations likely to be frequented by potential participants. For convenience, the latter was chosen in this study. Caution was exercised to make the interviewees feel as comfortable as possible. They were addressed kindly and offered the choice whether or not to agree to participate in the survey. In addition, they were spoken to in a discreet and confidential manner in order to avoid the glance of others. Indeed, responses could be altered due to bystanders as some participants might answer what they believe others would like to hear. Furthermore, interest was shown to the interviewees and both their remarks and reflections on their responses as well as their small talk were given attention. Not only does this process create an atmosphere of trust and confidence among the respondents, but it also enables to collect more data as attitudes and opinions can also be uncovered through informal chatter.

3.4 Observations

Subsequent to the interviews, the reactions of 203 groups of individuals when addressed by a 'foreign tourist' were observed. Similar to interviews, observations can be more or less structured. The type of observations that was selected for the present research was structured. Therefore, a detailed checklist (see Appendix 2) was utilised to facilitate the analysis of the data and ensure that the main features were examined. Observation is a research technique that provides data on behaviours in particular contexts. Since the second research question is "What are the French's practices when questioned in English by foreign tourists?", it seemed relevant to conduct observations. Thus, this research question would be answered with tangible examples and not only the French's perspectives. Nevertheless, common to interviews, observations have disadvantages and require careful consideration. First, despite the great amount of data that observations can offer on actions, it cannot provide explanations on the reasons behind these actions. In other words, observations reveal no attitudes or emotions. Second, two important features to consider when observing are 'the observer's paradox' and the 'Hawthorne effect' (Mackey and Gass 2005: 176). Both regard the influence an observer's presence may have on the participants, but whilst the former is concerned with the alteration of the response in general, the latter focuses on the participants trying to behave better to impress. However, considering how the observations were conducted in this study, there is little likelihood of such effects.

The procedure that was followed during phase 2 was the same for each individual or group of individuals. A non-native speaker of French or English accompanied by the researcher in person walked down the streets in Paris and approached passers-by in English. Only the non-native speaker, who was a man, did the talking. He asked simple typical tourist questions such as "Excuse me, where is the train station, please?" or "I beg your pardon, where could I find the nearest *métro* 'underground' station, please?". When the conversation was over, the supposed tourists moved in the indicated direction, and notes were taken right away in order to remember as much detail as possible. The direction requested was therefore always in the opposite direction to that of the individuals asked. Only when the persons previously asked were far away, did the non-native speaker address a new group. To avoid any suspicion of the participants, distances were kept between the observations of two different groups, notes were taken discreetly on a mobile phone, and the non-native speaker and the researcher had taken on the appearance of tourists with a backpack and a map.

The features that were observed during the interactions were the persons' behaviours and responses when addressed in English by a non-native speaker of French or English. However, to answer the third minor research question, which is 'What effect do socio-demographic variables such as age, gender and educational background have on the French's attitudes and practices towards speaking English with foreign tourists?', the participants' gender and estimated age were also registered. The first observation was the respondents' initial reaction, which played a central role in the further procedure. Three situations were believed to possibly arise. First, that the respondents would ignore the request and not give any answer. In that case, the process of observation would end there. Second, that the individuals would provide a negative response. Both the response and the language used to utter it would then be registered. Third, that the given response would be positive. In this latter scenario, the response would be examined in greater detail.

3.5 The sample

The procedure used to select the sample during phase 1 was semi-randomised. On the one hand, any pedestrian and person sitting on a bench was a potential participant. On the other hand, some eligibility criteria had to be considered for two primary reasons. First, to answer the research questions it was necessary that the respondents be French, reside in France and have

French as their first language. Otherwise, the results and by consequence the analysis would be altered and erroneous. Second, to provide a representative sample of the French population, individuals with sundry social characteristics had to be interviewed. Indeed, if the majority of the respondents were men over 65 years old, the findings would have been skewed, as they would solely represent one group of the entire population. Thus, albeit the first interviewees being randomly selected, attention was payed later on to collecting data from individuals belonging to various age and gender groups. Selecting respondents according to their occupation or education would have been difficult as such variables are rarely visible to the naked eye.

This process of selecting the participants is called stratified random sampling by, among others, Mackey and Gass (2005: 120). The last official statistics about the French indicate that slightly more than half of the population are women (51.64%), only a minority (11.78%) are between 15-24 years old, half (50.26%) are between 25-64 years old, and a fifth (20.02%) are 65 years old or more (Insee 2019). To ensure the best representation of the French population, these proportions have been retained in the selection of the participants as far as possible.

In all, 206 participants were interviewed. Table 1 provides an overview of the sample distribution according to age, gender, level of education, occupation and place of residence. The same age groups used by Walsh (2015: 12) were picked out, i.e. from 15 to 24, from 25 to 64 and over 65. This age categorisation characterises roughly three different lifestyles: student, worker and pensioner.

Phase 2, the observations, was slightly different since it was not possible to ask the participants about their first language or nationality. Thus, some of the individuals who were observed may have had a different mother language than French and also a different nationality. This means that the findings do not necessarily reveal the practices of the French only. Nevertheless, there are two good reasons to take these results into consideration. First, the probability of meeting a French person in France is far higher than encountering a foreigner. Second, a hypothetical foreign tourist in France would not see the difference between a French citizen and a foreigner when asking for directions, which signifies that the results will represent what foreign tourists would experience with more accuracy. Similarly, for the same reason, occupation, education and place of residence were criteria that were not registered. However, the approximate age and gender were recorded and Table 2 shows the distribution of the 203 groups of individuals that were observed, in total 280 individuals. It must be specified that children with an estimated age under 15 were not counted among the individuals in groups.

Table 1: Distribution of the participants in phase 1

	Variables	Number of respondents	Percentage of the respondents	Distribution of the French population (Insee 2019)
Age	15-24	42	*20.4%*	11.78% (14.3% of those over 14)
	25-64	119	*57.8%*	50.26% (61.3% of those over 14)
	65 +	45	*21.8%*	20.02% (24.4% of those over 14)
Gender	Female	108	*52.4%*	51.64%
	Male	98	*47.6%*	48.36%
Highest education level completed	Lower than upper secondary school	25	*12.1%*	
	Upper secondary school	30	*14.6%*	
	Higher than upper secondary school	151	*73.3%*	
Occupation	Student	34	*16.5%*	
	Working	111	*53.9%*	
	Unemployed	5	*2.4%*	
	Retired	56	*27.2%*	
Place of residence	City	164	*79.6%*	
	Small/mid-size town	28	*13.6%*	
	Rural	14	*6.8%*	
Total		206	*100%*	

Table 2: Distribution of the participants in phase 2

	Variables	Number of respondents	Percentage of the respondents	Distribution of the French population (Insee 2019)
Estimated age	15-24	60	*21.4%*	*11.78% (14.3% of those over 14)*
	25-64	166	*59.3%*	*50.26% (61.3% of those over 14)*
	65 +	54	*19.3%*	*20.02% (24.4% of those over 14)*
Gender	Female	144	*51.4%*	*51.64%*
	Male	136	*48.6%*	*48.36%*
Total		280	*100%*	

3.6 Ethical considerations

Because the present study deals with human beings, some ethical considerations had to be followed. Indeed, subjects need to be handled with care, their rights and opinions should be respected and research should not cause them any harm. Advice from Walliman (2017) served as guidelines for the preparation, the realisation and the following of the study. First, during phase 1, the participants were well informed about the study and sufficient transparency was

provided. When participants were addressed in phase 1, they were introduced to both the student-researcher and the aim of the study. Whenever asked, they also received an overview of the interview guide. Second, each individual in phase 1 had the right to freely choose whether or not to take part in the interview. After a short introduction, the respondents were invited to participate in the interviews without obligation. In addition, they were reassured that they could stop the interview at any moment and choose not to register their participation. Their answers were then deleted. This only happened twice because two participants had to catch a train. Several individuals refused to participate, but the great majority of those asked agreed. Third, the persons' right to privacy was respected. The collected data was anonymous, and no confidential information, such as name, phone number or social security number were asked for. Moreover, the questions did not include any sensitive information. However, all the data was stored safely and was only accessible with a password.

Lastly, Walliman (2017: 53) states that researchers should get ethics approval. It was originally advised by supervisors that since the research was conducted in France, the French national centre responsible for research projects should be contacted. Nevertheless, after several unsuccessful attempts at finding and contacting this entity, it appeared that there is no such centre in France. It is rather the universities that have the role of giving ethics approval for research. Diverse French universities were thereby contacted and the project was reported to them. The received feedback was unanimous and invited to approach the Norwegian national centre for research data (NSD) instead since the university where the thesis is written, the University of Stavanger, is Norwegian. NSD was therefore consulted and the project was explained in detail. The obtained response clarified that as long as the participants cannot be identified, it was not required for the project to be reported. To prevent the identification of the respondents, predefined categories for age, work and place of residence were therefore favoured over open fields where people can write their own answers. In addition, no confidential information was collected as previously mentioned and neither audio nor visual recordings were made.

Concerning individuals' freedom to participate in a project, DeWalt and DeWalt (2011: 186-187) suggest to procure an informed consent from participants before conducting any research, meaning both under interviews and observations. However, they agree that oral consents are sufficient for formal interviews, and observations in public places are exempt from informed consent because this research technique is regarded as minimal or not prejudicial to the participants. Hence, in the present study, even though respondents were asked for a verbal

consent during phase 1, no consent was received in phase 2 as the participants were not informed about being observed.

4. Findings

Chapter 4 displays the findings obtained through the multiple methodology described in the previous chapter, and is divided into two main sections. The first section concerns the data collected during phase 1, through the interviews, and is divided into five subsections. First, the answers to Part IV of the interview guide, which regards the respondents' attitudes when addressed in English by a foreign tourist, are presented. Next, these responses are categorised according to different criteria which constitute two respective subsections: first according to the interviewees' socio-demographic variables and then according to their English proficiency. Thereafter, the answers to Part V of the interview guide, which regards the respondents' attitudes when addressed in French by a tourist, are displayed. They will enable a comparison between attitudes that are common to speaking with tourists in general and attitudes that exclusively revolve around tourists who speak English. The last subsection of Section 4.1 includes various additional remarks on behaviours or comments that were observed or heard during the interviews, and that could be relevant for further analysis. The second section relates to the observations conducted during phase 2, and is divided into three subsections, which resemble the subsections of Section 4.1, the difference being that Section 4.1 displays the attitudes of the French, whereas Section 4.2 reveals their practices. Thus, Section 4.2 begins with a description of the French's practices when questioned in English by foreign tourists, continues with a categorisation of these results according to gender and age groups, and ends with a report on additional observations that seem to be pertinent to the subject of the present research. The results are expressed in percentage and rounded to one decimal place.

4.1 The interviews

4.1.1 Attitudes towards speaking English with foreign tourists

The part of the interview guide that concerns the French's attitudes towards interacting in English with foreign tourists is Part IV. The aim of the first question was to find out how many of the participants had ever been questioned in English by a foreign tourist. The results reveal

that 88.3% had already had this experience at least once. The remaining 11.7% gave an estimate of the attitudes they would have had if the situation had occurred.

The next question, namely 'How do you feel when you meet a tourist who asks you a question in English?', required the respondents to share their emotions when facing tourists who address them in English. The respondents had the options of choosing one or several predefined answers or/and express their feelings in their own words. The majority of the interviewees (57.3%) claimed to feel useful and expressed a pleasure to be able to be of service to someone. More than two-fifths (42.7%) answered that they were feeling interested when addressed in English by a foreign tourist. Some conveyed being interested in what the tourist needed help with, whilst others formulated that what interested them was practising their English. Only a minority admitted to feeling shy (16%) or/and nervous (11.2%). Most of the participants (82.3%) selected the predefined answers of the survey rather than using their own words. Among those who chose the latter, half shared feelings of embarrassment and regret over not being able to speak English and thus being of no help. In other words, a small minority (9.2%) felt useless when questioned in English and were sorry about that.

The third question in Part IV was 'What is your first reaction when you meet a tourist who asks you a question in English?'. As opposed to the previous question, this was a single-choice question. Although the respondents had the possibility of providing their own suggestions, all chose a predefined answer. The majority of the interviewees (59.2%) answered 'How can I help?', 28.2% replied 'How can I best answer in English?', 11.7% responded 'I don't understand what he/she is saying.', and lastly 2% admitted to immediately thinking 'Why did he/she choose me?'.

For the final question in Part IV, the interviewees were asked to estimate to what extent they agreed with three statements. The first one stated that they liked 'talking English with foreign tourists'. The majority of the respondents (70.9%) agreed or strongly agreed, 19.9% were neutral, and 9.2% disagreed or strongly disagreed. A small fraction of those who agreed or strongly agreed conveyed that even though they were inept at speaking English, they wished to have some basic notions of English in order to help foreign tourists. On the other hand, some of those who disagreed or strongly disagreed elaborated their response by claiming: 'I don't like it because I can't speak it.'[3]. The second statement concerned whether they were 'comfortable speaking English with foreign tourists'. Half of the respondents agreed or strongly

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[3] Author's translation. '*Je n'aime pas car je ne peux pas le parler.*'

agreed, 34% disagreed or strongly disagreed, whilst the remaining 16% stayed neutral. The last statement sought the respondents' opinions concerning the necessity for foreign tourists to learn some French before visiting France. The majority of the interviewees (61.7%) disagreed or strongly disagreed, 25.2% neither disagreed nor agreed, and 13.1% agreed or strongly agreed. Some of the arguments raised by the individuals who disagreed or strongly disagreed were expressed as follows: 'Nooo, we don't learn English, so I don't see why they should learn French.'[4], 'Immigrants should learn French, not tourists.'[5] and 'No, we can't learn the languages of all the countries we visit.'[6]. Those who were neutral on the subject often added: 'They decide for themselves.'[7].

4.1.2 Attitudes and socio-demographic variables

The socio-demographic variables that were collected were the respondents' gender, age group, place of residence, occupational status and level of education. The findings displayed in the previous subsection will now be presented according to these features. This process is believed to help answer the third minor research question, namely 'What effect do socio-demographic variables such as age, gender and educational background have on the French's attitudes and practices towards speaking English with foreign tourists?'. For lack of space, the responses will not be sorted by occupational status, or by place of residence. Another reason for not doing so is that the findings sorted by age group, and those sorted by occupational status, although not identical, look very much alike (see Tables 3.4 and 3.6 in Appendix 3). This is not surprising as the age groups used in this thesis often represent different occupational statuses, as mentioned in Section 3.5. Hence, the same observations that can be concluded about the age groups can be concluded about the occupational status. Furthermore, categorising the results according to places of residence has been left out because there are too few representatives of small towns and the countryside among the interviewees, to be able to provide an accurate overview of the rural population.

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[4] Author's translation. '*Nooon, nous ne parlons pas anglais, alors je ne vois pas pourquoi ils devraient apprendre le français.*'
[5] Author's translation. '*Les immigrants devraient apprendre le français, mais pas les touristes.*'
[6] Author's translation. '*Non, on ne peut pas apprendre les langues de tous les pays que nous visitons.*'
[7] Author's translation. '*C'est à eux de voir.*'

As a first step, the findings will revolve around the responses given by all male interviewees. When questioned in English by a foreign tourist, they said to frequently feel useful (62.2%), sometimes feel interested (45.9%), seldom feel shy (10.2%) or/and nervous (10.2%), and rarely feel embarrassed (6.1%). The men responded that the first thought that occurred to them was 'How can I help?' in 61.2% of the cases, 'How can I best answer in English?' in 27.6% of the cases, and 'I don't understand what he/she is saying.' in 11.2% of the cases. Furthermore, concerning the three statements of question 15, most men (74.5%) claimed that they liked speaking English with tourists, 18.4% said that they neither liked it nor disliked it, and a minority (7.1%) acknowledged disliking it. Most men (61.3%) also stated that they felt comfortable speaking English with tourists, 14.3% were neither comfortable nor uncomfortable when such situations occurred, and 24.5% admitted to a feeling of discomfort. Lastly, the majority of the male respondents (63.2%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the fact that foreign tourists should learn some French before visiting France, 13.2% agreed or strongly agreed, and the remaining 23.5% were neutral on this issue.

Now the results from the responses the female interviewees gave will be displayed. When questioned in English by a foreign tourist, they said to sometimes feel useful (52.8%) or/and interested (39.8%), occasionally feel shy (21.3%), and seldom feel nervous (12%) or/and embarrassed (12%). The first thought that occurred to them was 'How can I help?' in 57.4% of the cases, 'How can I best answer in English?' in 28.7% of the cases, 'I don't understand what he/she is saying.' in 12% of the cases, and 'Why did he/she choose me?' in 1.9% of the cases. Furthermore, concerning the three statements in question 15, most women (67.6%) claimed that they liked speaking English with tourists, 21.3% uttered that they neither liked it nor disliked it, and 11.1% admitted to disliking it. However, most women (42.6%) conveyed feeling discomfort when speaking English with tourists, 17.6% were neither comfortable or uncomfortable when such situations occurred, and 39.8% felt comfortable. Lastly, the majority of the female respondents (60.2%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the fact that foreign tourists should learn some French before visiting France, 12.9% agreed or strongly agreed, and the remaining 26.9% were neutral on this issue.

The third results that will be exposed here are the responses given by all interviewees both male and female between 15 and 24 years old. When questioned in English by a foreign tourist, they said to frequently feel interested (61.9%), sometimes feel useful (50%), and occasionally feel shy (23.8%) or/and nervous (21.4%). According to them, the first thought that occurred to them was 'How can I help?' in 54.8% of the cases, 'How can I best answer in

English?' in 40.5% of the cases, and 'I don't understand what he/she is saying.' in 4.8% of the cases. Furthermore, concerning the three statements of question 15, most 15-24 year olds (73.8%) claimed that they liked speaking English with tourists, 19% expressed that they neither liked it nor disliked it, and 7.2% acknowledged disliking it. Most 15-24 year olds (64.4%) also stated that they felt comfortable speaking English with tourists, 19% were neither comfortable nor uncomfortable when such situations occurred, and 23.8% admitted to a feeling of discomfort. Lastly, the majority of the 15-24 year-old respondents (76.2%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the fact that foreign tourists should learn some French before visiting France, 7.1% agreed, and the remaining 16.7% were neutral on this issue.

The fourth results that will be presented are the responses given by all interviewees aged between 25 and 64. When questioned in English by a foreign tourist, they said to frequently feel useful (56.3%), sometimes feel interested (39.5%), occasionally feel shy (16%), and seldom feel nervous (10.9%) or/and embarrassed (9.2%). The first thought that occurred to them was 'How can I help?' in 58.8% of the cases, 'How can I best answer in English?' in 27.7% of the cases, 'I don't understand what he/she is saying.' in 11.8% of the cases and 'Why did he/she choose me?' in 1.7% of the cases. Responding to the three statements in question 15, most 25-64 year olds (70.6%) claimed that they liked speaking English with tourists, 21.8% expressed that they neither liked it nor disliked it, and 7.5% acknowledged disliking it. Half of the 25-64 year olds (50.4%) also stated that they felt comfortable speaking English with tourists, 17.6% were neither comfortable nor uncomfortable when such situations occurred, and 31.9% admitted to a feeling of discomfort. Lastly, the majority of the 25-64 year-old respondents (59.6%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the fact that foreign tourists should learn some French before visiting France, 15.1% agreed or strongly agreed, and the remaining 25.2% were neutral on this issue.

The fifth results that will now be described are the responses given by all interviewees aged over 65. When questioned in English by a foreign tourist, they said to frequently feel useful (66.7%), occasionally feel interested (33.3%) or/and embarrassed (17.8%), seldom feel shy (8.9%), and rarely feel nervous (2.2%). The first thought that occurred to them was 'How can I help?' in 64.4% of the cases. The answers 'How can I best answer in English?' and 'I don't understand what he/she is saying.' were both represented by the exact same percentage (17.8%). Furthermore, concerning the three statements of question 15, most of those aged 65 or more (68.9%) claimed that they liked speaking English with tourists, 15.6% expressed that they neither liked it nor disliked it, and the same amount (15.6%) acknowledged disliking it.

More than two-fifths (42.2%) also stated that they felt comfortable speaking English with tourists, 8.9% said to be neither comfortable nor uncomfortable when such situations occurred, and 48.9% admitted to a feeling of discomfort. Lastly, the majority in this category (53.3%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the fact that foreign tourists should learn some French before visiting France, 13.3% agreed or strongly agreed, and the remaining 33.3% were neutral on this issue.

The sixth results that will be presented here are the responses given by all the interviewees whose highest education level completed was lower than upper secondary school. When questioned in English by a foreign tourist, they said to sometimes feel useful (40%), occasionally feel interested (32%), embarrassed (28%) or/and shy (20%), and seldom feel nervous (8%). The first thought that occurred to them was 'How can I help?' in 44% of the cases, and 'How can I best answer in English?' or 'I don't understand what he/she is saying' in equally 28% of the cases. In response to question 15, most (56%) claimed that they liked speaking English with tourists, 20% expressed that they neither liked it nor disliked it, and 24% acknowledged disliking it. However, most of them (84%) admitted to feeling discomfort when speaking English with tourists, 12% said to be neither comfortable nor uncomfortable when such situations occurred, and 4% felt comfortable. Lastly, the majority of them (56%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the fact that foreign tourists should learn some French before visiting France, 16% agreed or strongly agreed, and 28% were neutral on this issue.

The seventh results that will be exposed are the responses given by all the interviewees whose highest education level completed was upper secondary school. When questioned in English by a foreign tourist, they said to frequently feel useful (63.3%), sometimes feel interested (46.7%), and seldom feel embarrassed (10%), shy (6.7%) or/and nervous (6.7%). The first thought that occurred to them was 'How can I help?' in 53.3% of the cases. Both the answers 'How can I best answer in English?' and 'I don't understand what he/she is saying.' represented 23.3% of the cases. Furthermore, in responding to the three statements in question 15, the majority of them (70%) claimed that they liked speaking English with tourists, 23.3% expressed that they neither liked it nor disliked it, and 6.6% admitted to disliking it. Half of them also stated that they felt comfortable speaking English with tourists, 23.3% were neither comfortable nor uncomfortable when such situations occurred, and the remaining 26.7% admitted to a feeling of discomfort. Lastly, half of them disagreed or strongly disagreed with the fact that foreign tourists should learn some French before visiting France, a fifth agreed or strongly agreed, and the remaining 30% were neutral on this issue.

The eighth and last results that will be displayed in Subsection 4.1.2 are the responses given by all the interviewees whose highest education level completed was higher than upper secondary school. When questioned in English by a foreign tourist, they said to frequently feel useful (58.9%), sometimes feel interested (43.7%), occasionally feel shy (17.2%), and seldom feel nervous (12.6%) or/and embarrassed (6%). The first thought that occurred to them was 'How can I help?' in 62.9% of the cases, 'How can I best answer in English?' in 29.1% of the cases, or 'I don't understand what he/she is saying.' in 6.6% of the cases. In response to the three statements of question 15, the majority of them (73.5%) claimed that they liked speaking English with tourists, 19.2% expressed that they neither liked it nor disliked it, and 7.3% acknowledged disliking it. Most (57.7%) also stated that they felt comfortable speaking English with tourists, 15.2% were neither comfortable nor uncomfortable when such situations occurred, and 27.2% admitted to feeling discomfort. Lastly, 64.9% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the fact that foreign tourists should learn some French before visiting France, 11.3% agreed or strongly agreed, and the remaining 23.8% were neutral on this issue.

4.1.3 Attitudes and English proficiency

The first results that will be described here are the responses given by all the interviewees who had a beginner's level of English. When questioned in English by a foreign tourist, they said to sometimes feel useful (40.6%), occasionally feel embarrassed (34.4%) or/and interested (21.6%), and seldom feel shy (15.6%) or/and nervous (6.3%). The first thought that occurred to them was 'How can I help?' in 37.5% of the cases, 'I don't understand what he/she is saying.' in 34.4% of the cases, or 'How can I best answer in English?' in 28.1% of the cases. Furthermore, in response to the three statements of question 15, the majority of them (53.2%) claimed that they liked speaking English with tourists, 21.9% expressed that they neither liked it nor disliked it, and 25.1% acknowledged disliking it. However, most of them (84.4%) admitted feeling discomfort when speaking English with tourists, 6.3% were neither comfortable nor uncomfortable when such situations occurred, and 9.4% felt comfortable. Lastly, the majority (56.2%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the fact that foreign tourists should learn some French before visiting France, 21.9% agreed, and the remaining 21.9% were neutral on this issue.

The second results that will be presented are the responses given by all the interviewees whose level of English was elementary. When questioned in English by a foreign tourist, they said to sometimes feel useful (46.3%) or/and interested (39%), occasionally feel shy (24.4%), and seldom feel embarrassed (14.6%) or/and nervous (12.2%). The first thought that occurred to them was 'How can I help?' in 41.5% of the cases, 'How can I best answer in English?' in 36.6% of the cases, or 'I don't understand what he/she is saying.' in 19.5% of the cases. Furthermore, in response to the three statements of question 15, the majority of them (48.8%) claimed that they liked speaking English with tourists, 29.2% expressed that they neither liked it nor disliked it, and 21.9% acknowledged disliking it. However, most of them (58.6%) admitted feeling discomfort when speaking English with tourists, 26.8% were neither comfortable nor uncomfortable when such situations occurred, and 14.7% felt comfortable. Lastly, the majority (68.3%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the fact that foreign tourists should learn some French before visiting France, 17% agreed or strongly agreed, and the remaining 14.6% were neutral on this issue.

The third results that will be displayed are the responses given by all the interviewees whose level of English was low intermediate. When questioned in English by a foreign tourist, they said to frequently feel useful (58.8%), sometimes feel interested (41.2%), occasionally feel shy (17.6%), seldom feel nervous (13.2%), and rarely feel embarrassed (2.9%). The first thought that occurred to them was 'How can I help?' in 55.9% of the cases, 'How can I best answer in English?' in 36.8% of the cases, or 'I don't understand what he/she is saying.' in 5.9% of the cases. Furthermore, in response to the three statements of question 15, the majority of them (73.5%) claimed that they liked speaking English with tourists, 23.5% expressed that they neither liked it nor disliked it, and 2.9% acknowledged disliking it. Half also stated that they felt comfortable speaking English with tourists, 23.5% were neither comfortable nor uncomfortable when such situations occurred, and 26.5% admitted to a feeling of discomfort. Lastly, the majority (57.3%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the fact that foreign tourists should learn some French before visiting France, 11.8% agreed or strongly agreed, and the remaining 30.9% were neutral on this issue.

The fourth results that will be exposed are the responses given by all the interviewees whose level of English was upper intermediate. When questioned in English by a foreign tourist, they said to frequently feel useful (72.2%), sometimes feel interested (47.2%), and seldom feel shy (13.9%) or/and nervous (13.9%). The first thought that occurred to them was 'How can I help?' in 83.3% of the cases, 'How can I best answer in English?' in 13.9% of the cases, or 'I

don't understand what he/she is saying.' in 2.8% of the cases. Furthermore, in response to the three statements of question 15, the majority of them (86.1%) claimed that they liked speaking English with tourists, 13.9% expressed that they neither liked it nor disliked it, and no one disliked it. The majority (88.9%) also stated that they felt comfortable speaking English with tourists, 8.3% were neither comfortable nor uncomfortable when such situations occurred, and 2.8% admitted to a feeling of discomfort. Lastly, the majority (72.3%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the fact that foreign tourists should learn some French before visiting France, 2.8% strongly agreed, and the remaining quarter was neutral on this issue.

The fifth and last results that will be described in Subsection 4.1.3 are the responses given by all the interviewees whose level of English was advanced. When questioned in English by a foreign tourist, they said to frequently feel useful (69%) or/and interested (69%), seldom feel nervous (6.9%), and rarely feel shy (3.4%). The first thought that occurred to them was 'How can I help?' in 86.2% of the cases, or 'How can I best answer in English?' in 13.8% of the cases. Furthermore, in response to the three statements of question 15, almost all of them (96.6%) claimed that they liked speaking English with tourists, and only 3.4% expressed that they neither liked it nor disliked it. Similarly, almost all of them (96.6%) also stated that they felt comfortable speaking English with tourists, and only 3.4% said to be neither comfortable nor uncomfortable when such situations occurred. Lastly, the majority (55.2%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the fact that foreign tourists should learn some French before visiting France, 13.8% agreed, and the remaining 31% were neutral on this issue.

4.1.4 Speaking with tourists in English vs French

In this subsection, the responses to Part V of the interview guide are presented. Part V resembles Part IV in both form and contents, the only difference being that the questions in Part V were about interacting in French. According to the results, when the participants were questioned in French by tourists, they frequently felt useful (77.2%), sometimes felt interested (41.3%), and rarely felt shy (2.4%) or/and nervous (1.5%). The respondents uttered other answers such as curious, glad or caring, but these were only minority responses. The first thought that occurred to them when they found themselves in such a situation was for the majority (83.5%) 'How can I help?', for 13.6% 'What is the best way to word my answer?', or for 2.9% 'Why did he/she choose me?'. The last task of Part V asked the respondents to express in what degree they agree

with three statements. The answers to the first statement show that 84% liked to interact in French with tourists, 14.1% neither liked it nor disliked it, and 1.9% disliked it. The answers to the second statement reveal that almost all (98.1%) felt comfortable speaking French with tourists, whilst a minority (1.9%) felt a discomfort under such circumstances. Lastly, responses to the third statement expose that 57.3% answered similarly to a tourist speaking French than to a tourist speaking English, 32.5% answered differently to a tourist speaking French than to a tourist speaking English, and 10.2% remained neutral on that issue.

4.1.5 Additional remarks

Most of the interviewees who answered that they did not respond similarly to a tourist speaking French and a tourist speaking English stated that the reason was language barrier. They expressed a strong wish to be able to communicate in English well enough to be able to help foreign tourists in need, and regretted their inability to do so. According to them, they tried to answer foreign tourists anyway, either using body language or showing on a map.

In addition, it should be pointed out that not all individuals who were asked to participate in the interviews agreed. On the contrary, approximately one in eight refused. The majority of those who declined to be interviewed were women over 50 and in almost half of the cases, they expressed disinterest as they were being approached and before being addressed. It is important that these persons' reactions are taken into account in the analysis of the findings since they are potential hosts that foreign tourists would go to for help.

Other findings that are relevant to the first minor research question are the answers the interviewees gave to question 8 in Part II of the interview guide. The question asked the participants to estimate to what extent they understood people speaking English. The findings show that 7.3% lacked any comprehension of oral English, 27.2% had a slightly better understanding, 23.8% had a moderate comprehension, 24.8% understood much, and 17% could understand with ease virtually everything people said in English.

4.2 The observations

4.2.1 Findings sorted by types of response

After some notes were taken about the participants' gender and estimated age group, the main interest of the observations was their first response. On the one hand, a response was considered negative if the respondent did not stop and excused his/her incapacity to answer either in French or in English. It could for example be 'I don't speak English.', or '*Je n'ai pas le temps.*' ('I don't have time.'). On the other hand, a response was viewed positive if the respondent stopped and tried to help in either French or English, even though the respondent did not know the answer or did not indicate the right direction. Lastly, a response was considered absent if the respondent said nothing at all. However, this latter situation did not occur (see Subsection 4.2.3 for details). The vast majority of the respondents (95.4%) gave a positive answer, whilst only a minority (4.6%) gave a negative answer. Five of the negative responses (38.5%) were uttered in English, seven (53.8%) were uttered in French, and one (7.7%) was a mix of French and English. Furthermore, five of the respondents (35.8%) who uttered a negative response expressed an inability to speak English, five (35.8%) articulated an unawareness of where the demanded place was located, two (15.4%) conveyed a lack of time, and the last one (7.7%) simply said 'Sorry'. Men gave more than half of the negative answers (53.8%). The negative responses were only given by individuals walking alone, as all groups encountered gave positive responses. In addition, six of these individuals (46.2%) were estimated to be between 15 and 24 years old, five (38.5%) between 25 and 64 years old, and two (15.4%) over 65.

As regards the positive answers, 78.3% of the participants answered in English, 15.7% mixed French and English, and 6% used only French. When the respondents answered in French, they were asked to speak English, and sometimes they tried, but at other times, they apologised for not speaking English and continued in French. The responses received from individuals only speaking in French were registered as incomprehensible although a tourist could have guessed the indicated direction from the gestures made by the hosts. Thus, body language was not taken into consideration when the understanding of the message was estimated. Furthermore, they all pointed towards the direction to take, and seemed eager to help notwithstanding language barriers. In addition, they all answered correctly to the questions that were asked.

Among the individuals who mixed French and English, a tenth did not answer to the questions accurately, e.g. due to misunderstanding them, and for example when asked if the railway station was close, one answered: 'No, no, not close. Open. Open.'. Moreover, although these individuals said a few words in English, half of them gave baffling directions and their vocabulary was limited to 'That', 'Come', 'This. Not this' and 'Right'. The other half who managed to make themselves understood, used the French terms for words they struggled to find like 'bridge', 'roundabout', 'traffic light' and so on. However, when asked in English for a confirmation of proper comprehension, they acknowledged the English words and validated the understanding, saying for instance: 'Yes, yes, the bridge. You must go on the other side of the bridge.'

Despite the fact that 78.3% of the individuals who were observed only responded in English, they had various levels of English, and whilst some of them sounded bilingual, others were difficult to understand. The two 'tourists' made a judgement of the English proficiency of the respondents, and among those who solely answered in English, 3.8% had a beginner's level, 26.8% had an elementary level, 36.4% had a lower intermediate level, 25.8% had an upper intermediate level, and 7.2% had an advanced level. These appraisals of the participants' level of English were based on how understandable and how detailed their answers were. Those who had a beginner's or an elementary level had explanations that were difficult to comprehend. Several, for instance, used the word 'fire' instead of 'traffic light', or 'right' instead of 'straight forward'. This is due mostly to an incorrect translation, as in French, the words 'fire' and 'light' are the same '*feu'*, and the words 'right' and 'straight' are identical '*droit'*. In addition, they struggled with word-finding, employed little vocabulary for their road description, and did not use full sentences. Conversely, those who had an upper intermediate or advanced level gave road descriptions that were elaborate and employed sophisticated sentences. Those who had a lower intermediate level of English were between these two groups. They delivered clear answers, using short and simple sentences.

4.2.2 Findings sorted by gender and age group

Other aspects that merit analysis are the percentage of individuals giving positive responses, giving understandable answers, answering exclusively in English and having a level of English high enough to use full sentences, each according to the categories of gender and

age group. Among the female participants, the majority (95.8%) gave positive responses, 74.3% answered solely in English, 15.3% mixed English and French, and 10.4% spoke exclusively French. Furthermore, 15.3% had a beginner's level of English, 25.7% had an elementary level, 31.9% had a lower intermediate level, 16% had an upper intermediate level, and 6.9% had an advanced level. The remaining 4.2% did not receive an estimated level of English due to the short negative responses they gave. All in all, a quarter provided responses that would have been incomprehensible for a tourist who had not learnt French.

Regarding the male respondents, the majority (94.9%) gave positive answers, 78.7% responded entirely in English, 15.4% mixed English and French, and 5.9% spoke solely French. Moreover, almost 13.2% had a beginner's level of English, 27.2% had an elementary level, 28.7% had a lower intermediate level, 22.8% had an upper intermediate level, and only 2.2% had an advanced level. Again, the remaining 5.1% did not get an estimation of their level of English due to their brief negative response. Overall, 27.2% responded in an unintelligible way for a tourist who had not learnt French.

Among those whose age was estimated between 15 and 24, the majority (90%) gave a positive response, 86.7% answered exclusively in English, 8.3% mixed English and French, and 5% responded solely in French. Besides, 6.7% had a beginner's level in English, 38.3% had an elementary level, 26.7% had a lower intermediate level, 15% had an upper intermediate level, and 3.3% had an advanced level. As before, those who gave a negative response (10%) did not receive an evaluation of their English proficiency level. In all, 21.7% answered in a way that would have been incomprehensible for tourists who had not learnt French.

Concerning the participants whose estimated age was between 25 and 64, the vast majority (97%) responded positively, 77.7% answered exclusively in English, 15.1% used a mix of French and English, and 7.2% responded purely in French. Moreover, 14.5% had a beginner's level of English, 24.1% had an elementary level, 31.9% had a lower intermediate level, 23.5% had an upper intermediate level, and 3% had an advanced level. Only 3% gave a negative response and were not evaluated. Overall, 27.1% gave a response that tourists who had not learnt French would not have understood.

Lastly, with regard to the individuals who were estimated to be 65 years old or over, the majority (96.3%) gave a positive response, 63% answered exclusively in English, 22.2% used a combination of French and English, and 14.8% responded entirely in French. Furthermore, 24.1% had a beginner's level of English, 20.4% had an elementary level, 25.9% had a lower

intermediate level, 11.1% had an upper intermediate level, and 14.8% had an advanced level. The remaining 3.7%, giving a negative response were not evaluated. In all, 27.8% responded in a way that would not have been understood by someone without sufficient knowledge of French.

4.2.3 Additional remarks

During the observations, an interesting event happened. An unknown middle-aged man was observed politely asking two middle-aged women, who were walking and talking together, if they spoke English. Despite sufficient proximity and loudness to be seen and heard, none of the women responded to him. On the contrary, they continued on their way as if nothing had happened. Similar situations also occurred five times in the study, but they were not registered as 'none response' in the detailed checklist. The reason for this was that the individuals who did not show any sign of interest had earbuds placed in their ears and did not look in the direction of the non-native speaker. It may thus be believed that they neither saw nor heard the person addressing them.

More than a tenth of the participants who gave positive responses used Google maps to indicate the adequate direction. Some did it because they found it easier than explaining with proper words, whilst others chose this solution because they were unfamiliar with the neighbourhood. There are plenty of anecdotes of how the majority of the individuals met tried to help and were amiable. Due to the page constrains of this thesis, only few of them will be described here. One of the participants, who apparently did not know English well, simply said 'Please, come' and led the 'tourists' to the nearby police station where information could be given. An elderly lady seized the non-native 'tourist' by the arm and kindly pointed at a street. A young student insisted on escorting the 'tourists' to the nearest metro station and showed great interest in where they were from, what they had seen in Paris so far, etc. One girl used Google translate on her mobile to make sure she was well understood.

4.3 Inference

The findings from the interviews and the observations that have been presented in this chapter provide a broad range of information concerning the attitudes and practices of French respondents towards speaking English with foreign tourists. Not all the answers to the interview guide have been displayed here, only the ones that are deemed pertinent. For a visual presentation of the results through tables, see Appendix 3 concerning the interviews and Appendix 4 regarding the observations. Now that the findings have been described, they need to be analysed in order to draw conclusions, test the hypotheses and respond to the research questions. For this purpose, the results from both research techniques will be compared as well as responses from individuals with different socio-demographic backgrounds and levels of English. In sum, the findings displayed in this chapter will serve as a basis for the discussion in the following chapter.

5. Discussion

This chapter consists of an examination and a discussion of the findings established in the previous chapter. It is divided into seven sections, one for each research question and the last one for the hypotheses. Thus, the aim of this chapter is to elaborate on the collected data in order to be able to answer the two main research questions and the four minor research questions, as well as to evaluate the hypotheses in light of the findings. In addition, the results from the present research are here compared to previous research and the literature review presented in Chapter 2.

5.1 First main research question

The first main research question is 'What are the French's attitudes when questioned in English by foreign tourists?'. The findings emanating from the interviews help to answer this question. The emotions that were most frequently felt in such situations were feelings of usefulness and interest. Far less often, but also relevant, were feelings of shyness, nervousness and embarrassment. What is interesting is the comparison of these results with those from the interviewees' interactions with tourists who speak French. Indeed, when communicating with tourists in their mother tongue, the respondents felt much more useful, and the feelings of shyness, nervousness and embarrassment were weak or non-existent. This demonstrates that the latter feelings were specific characteristics of being addressed by a tourist in English. In other words, when the respondents were questioned in English, their attitudes differed from when questioned in their own language, and a minority seemed to be uncomfortable and worried due to language differences. On the other hand, a majority continued to feel interested and useful, although the feeling of usefulness was slightly reduced when interacting in English, as opposed to interacting in French.

These findings are reinforced by the responses the interviewees gave to the question about their first thought when addressed in English by tourists. Whilst more people thought 'How can I help?' when interacting with a tourist in French compared with when interacting in English, fewer thought 'How can I best answer in English? / What is the best way to word my answer?'. This reveals that the interviewees were more preoccupied with their language skills when speaking English. Thus, although in the majority of the cases the respondents focused on

the needs expressed by the foreign tourists, they occasionally concentrated on the way they would utter their answer in English. Another thought that was seldom present when they were addressed by tourists in English, but absent with tourists who spoke French, was 'I don't understand what he/she is saying.'. It is therefore clear that a few respondents faced linguistic obstacles when interacting in English. It appears that some of these issues are similar to the ones that Wu (2012, cited in Cloudia Ho 2020), Liao et al. (2017, cited in Cloudia Ho 2020) and Trang (2015) observed in their studies. Indeed, these researchers describe tourism employees and interns who had an insufficient level of English to be able to interact with foreign visitors in Vietnam and Taiwan, including receptive and expressive language skills. Similarly, the answers the interviewees gave to question 18 in the interview guide indicate that a few participants struggled to understand what foreign tourists expressed in English and to utter a response in English that was proficient.

The responses that the participants gave to the second statement of Part IV and Part V of the interview guide also confirm this view. Whereas nearly all felt at ease with communicating with tourists in French, only half did so in English. It thereby seems that the English language occasionally created disagreeable feelings in some interviewees, feelings that were juxtaposed with a desire to help the tourists. This is probably the reason why the answers that the respondents gave to the last statement of Part V were split and spread out. In fact, many respondents showed difficulty in responding to this statement because on the one hand, they wished to treat English speaking tourists and French speaking tourists comparably, but on the other hand, they were not always able to do it because of language barriers, which bothered them. These findings bear resemblance to Jaworski and Lawson's (2005) observations on Polish attitudes towards interacting with visitors. They noticed a difference between Polish agritourism farmers' attitudes towards Polish vs foreign visitors. Although the Polish farmers wished and attempted to be as close to foreign tourists as to Polish ones, language barriers prevented them from it. Here also, it seems that the French interviewees had similar challenges.

To uncover attitudes towards the English language, the answers to the last statement of Part IV of the interview guide might be useful. They reveal that for the majority, the interviewees considered that foreign tourists should not learn French before visiting France, for a quarter, the respondents left this decision to the tourists themselves, and only a few meant that visitors ought to learn some French. This observation exposes that despite the fact that not all of the participants had positive attitudes towards the English language, most had. These results are in line with Flaitz's (1988) and Walsh's (2015) conclusions on French attitudes towards the

English language. Indeed, although they agree with characterising French positions at the national level as negative, their research provides some evidence that at the individual level, French attitudes towards English tend to be positive. In other words, the findings emanating from the interviews confirm previous research.

The last results that will be discussed regarding French attitudes when questioned by tourists in English concern the data collected during the observations. Despite the fact that it is common to say that observations cannot reveal attitudes, some attitudes can be hypothesised through observations of certain behaviours. In the present thesis, most participants in phase 2 showed a high degree of enthusiasm to help the 'tourists'. Indeed, some, for instance, used creative methods to give an accurate answer, especially when they did not know the way or could not speak English, and a few respondents ended the interaction with a nice word or phrase, such as 'Have a nice day!'. This eagerness both emphasises the findings from the interviews, which show that many interviewees had feelings of interest and usefulness when questioned in English by a tourist, and discloses friendly attitudes from the respondents. These results are inconsistent with the negative stereotypical tourist image Xiaojuan et al. (2012: 447) and O'Reilly (2005: 155-156) talk about. According to them, hosts have a tendency to view with a jaundiced eye tourists because of bad behaviours which have been associate to them. Nevertheless, the collected data in this study demonstrates general positive French attitudes towards foreign tourists.

5.2 Second main research question

The second research question is 'What are the French's practices when questioned in English by foreign tourists?'. To answer it, the results from the observations are the most relevant, since practice was their main focus. According to the findings, the majority of the participants stopped to help foreign tourists who addressed them in English. However, not all of them understood or spoke English. A few responded entirely in French and explained the way in their mother tongue despite the fact that the 'tourists' did not speak a word in French. Another small group mixed the few English words they knew with French, the language they were most comfortable speaking. Hence, language barriers did not seem to scare or inhibit them from helping tourists. One possible reason for this observation is that they may have hoped that the tourists understood some French or that their body language would facilitate comprehension. Approximately three

quarters of the respondents answered solely in English. Nevertheless, not all of them were understandable, either because they used wrong words or because their explanations had gaps. Thus, according to the results, slightly more than half of the respondents provided a sufficient answer when asked in English by foreign tourists.

As regards the middle-aged man who was observed during phase 2 and who did not receive any attention from the two French women he attempted to contact (see Subsection 4.2.3), only speculations can be made as to why this happened, whereas such situation did not occur for the 'tourists'. It could for instance be due to the difference of approach. The man asked 'Excuse me, do you speak English?'. This approach could be frightening to someone who does not speak English or only speaks a little. Indeed, they might be worried about being unable to understand the next question and therefore feel embarrassed. On the other hand, the approach used during this study was straight to the point, as the participants were not asked if they spoke English. Thus, it is possible that even though the respondents did not understand English per se, they understood the place requested and knew that they were able to answer. The fact that various approaches could provide different responses should be kept in mind when analysing the findings from this study. The ignoring of the middle-aged man could also be due to physical reasons. A single man addressing two women can appear more suspect and suspicious than a couple.

Along these lines, it is interesting that such a small number chose not to stop and help, and that among the majority who stopped, everyone took the time to listen and answer even if they did not necessarily speak English or know where the requested place was. Most of those who were observed used body language in addition to speech when indicating the way, whether they mixed languages or provided a response in a single language. Moreover, the use of Google maps is becoming more frequent in 2022, and some participants took advantage of this technology to ensure the accuracy of their answer or simply to support it. However, the majority met the tourists' request without such tools. In sum, great kindness was observed among most of the respondents. These observations are in line with the findings from the interviews, where 57.3% expressed feeling useful when questioned in English by tourists, and 59.2% expressed thinking first 'How can I help?'.

Lastly, it should be reminded that approximately one in eight (12.5%) of the individuals approached in phase 1 did not want to participate to the interviews. These persons are potential hosts that foreign tourists might have questioned. It cannot be ascertain that they would have refuse to help a tourist speaking English as the interaction between a host and a tourist diverges

from the interaction between interviewee and interviewer, but two features might be taken into consideration here. The first is that once again, the approach was different than in phase 2, regardless of the language of the approach. This means that here too it could be assumed that various approaches provide divergent responses. The second is that some individuals might dislike talking to strangers in general, whether they speak French or not. Concerning the examination and discussion of the findings on the respondents' capacity to understand and communicate with a tourist in English, these will be elaborated upon in Section 5.3 and Section 5.4.

5.3 First minor research question

To answer the first minor question, which is 'To what extent do French people understand foreign tourists addressing them in English?', the results from the observations are the most pertinent, but the interviews can also provide result forecasts, as will be demonstrated. During phase 2, it was observed that almost all the respondents could answer the first question, which concerned directions on how to get to a specific location. However, the probability that they all understood the questions is negligibly small. One reason is that a few participants responded solely in French. Another is that several individuals misunderstood the conversation that ensued, for instance the question 'Is it far from here?'. A last reason that must be taken into consideration is that during the interviews, 7.3% of the interviewees admitted to not understanding a single word in English. Thus, the evidence suggests the contrary, i.e. it is rather likely that some participants did not understand the first question, but deduced the meaning from the context. Indeed, the type of requests from a tourist are limited, and the names of locations often remain the same in French and English. This view is supported by the fact that most of the individuals who were asked about the city hall did not know what it was before they were shown a photograph of it.

As mentioned in the preceding paragraph, the subsequent questions to the initial one were not always understood, and whilst a few individuals confused the meaning of words that resemble in sound, such as close ('near') and closed ('not open'), others asked their walking partner for translation. Nevertheless, these cases represent a minority of the conducted observations. Indeed, in the majority of the cases, the participants appeared to understand the questions as they provided accurate answers. Compared to the findings from the Special

Eurobarometer 386 (European Commission 2012: 21, 31), these results are far higher. Indeed, whilst the Special Eurobarometer 386 indicates that 39% of the French can hold a conversation in English and a quarter are able to understand the news on the television or on the radio, the present research reveals that approximately 85% of the respondents in phase 2 understood tourists who spoke English. It should be stressed that this study concerns the French interacting in English with tourists, and the level of English that is required for this task is often lower than the one needed for a conversation or to understand the news. It can therefore be expected that the results from the Eurobarometer indicate numbers that are lower. Furthermore, the proliferation of smartphones and internet services probably expose the French to more English now than ten years ago. Thus, despite the fact that these findings are not identical to the ones from the Eurobarometer, they are not necessarily contradictory.

Although the observations are better suited to assess to what extent the French understand a tourist who speaks English, the collected data from the interviews can also assist in the evaluation. Indeed, one of the questions asked during the interviews was 'In your opinion, to what extent do you understand people speaking English?'. The findings reveal that a minority of the interviewees (7.3%) claimed that they did not understand a word in English. This signifies that these individuals would be incapable of understanding tourists who speak English. Nevertheless, as argued previously, they could probably guess the object of the request. Some respondents (27.2%) said that they understood English just a little bit, which indicates that they understood tourists solely when the latter employed everyday language and basic syntax. The rest of the interviewees should be able to understand more or less what tourists say in English. The reason behind this affirmation is that tourists do not generally use a sophisticated vocabulary and frequently ask for the same kind of information, which means that the variety of words expressed is limited. Thus, someone who claims to understand English to a moderate extent or more should not encounter any difficulties in understanding English-speaking tourists.

It should be noted that the non-native speaker of French or English in phase 2 did not use foreigner talk when addressing the participants, even with those who had a low proficiency in English. Hence, the findings of Alfallaj (2016) were taken into account. Indeed, he observed that inhabitants and visitors in Saudi Arabia experienced misunderstandings when interacting together on account of foreigner talk. With the intention to facilitate comprehension, inhabitants adjusted their mother tongue when addressing non-native speakers, but it increased the difficulty of understanding instead of helping. In the present research, attention was paid to formulate complete sentences and speak properly to avoid such drawbacks.

It should also be pointed out that the interactions between tourists and hosts on the streets are generally brief. For this reason, to assess the French's capacity to understand what tourists tell them in English is not an easy task. Thus, the findings from the present thesis that concern the French understanding of tourists speaking in English are believed to offer an overview of the situation rather than a precise insight into it. Finally, another aspect that should be taken into account is that the non-native man who played the tourist during phase 2 had a slight Scandinavian English accent. The collected data might have been divergent if the tourist had a strong British accent or an Asian accent, for instance, as some accents are more difficult to understand than others depending on the listener.

5.4 Second minor research question

The second minor research question, which is 'To what extent do French people make themselves understood when interacting with foreign tourists who have not learnt French?' shares some resemblance with the previous one, and differs mainly in that it is often easier to understand a language than to speak it. This claim is most obvious with respect to toddlers, who understand much of what their parents say but can only utter few words. Here again, the answer to this research question necessitates the analysis of the findings from the observations. Nevertheless, prior to making any analysis, it should be noted that no body language was taken into account in the assessment of the understanding of what the participants said. Nearly all respondents used body language whilst indicating the way to follow, and in many situations, this led to a better understanding, as for example when a respondent indicated the direction by pointing to the left and said 'right'. However, as Boulet and Harrison (2014) affirm, body language is part of cultural heritage and it is thus difficult to evaluate what any foreign tourist would have understood from the French's gestures. It therefore did not seem appropriate to include gestures in the evaluation of the French's ability to make themselves understood.

According to the collected data, 40.7% of the respondents were estimated to have a beginner's or an elementary level of English. Of those, it was observed that 57% (23.2% of the total participants) provided responses that would not have been comprehensible to a foreign tourist who did not have any basic knowledge of French. The remaining 43% (17.5% of all the participants) made themselves understood to a little extent. The reason for this is their low English proficiency, which means that they sometimes used the wrong word and at other times

their explanations were too vague and contained information gaps. The rest of the respondents who had their level of English estimated (54.7%) made themselves understood to a very large extent, and the higher the level of English proficiency was, the more detailed the route description was, as could be expected.

Here once more, the findings differ from the results of the Special Eurobarometer 386. As a matter of fact, whereas according to the Eurobarometer, 39% of the French can converse in English (European Commission 2012: 21), the findings emanating from the observations reveal that 54.7% of the participants could make themselves understood when interacting in English with a tourist, as mentioned above. This discrepancy may stem from three probable reasons. Firstly, the requisite level of English for speaking with tourists is not comparable with the one for holding a conversation, as already stated in Section 5.3. Indeed, whereas this latter activity may demand, for instance, the use of multiple verb tenses, the present tense is often sufficient to explain the way to a tourist. Consequently, it is expected that the results from this study regarding those who can make themselves understood by a tourist would be higher than the findings from the Eurobarometer. Secondly, between 2005 and 2012, the level of English proficiency of the French population increased from 36% in 2005 to 39% in 2012 (European Commission 2006: 13, European Commission 2012: 21). If the growth rate (which is equal to 1.15% per year) remained the same after 2012, it is expected that the percentage of the French who can hold a conversation in English would reach 43.7% by 2022. In the absence of any concrete data, this is of course only speculation, albeit a probable one; not least because of a third reason: 'The orientation and planning act for the renewing of the school of the Republic' proposed by the French Minister of National Education entered into force in 2013, i.e. one year after the survey conducted by the European Commission. This Act gives more room and emphasis to the English subject in the French curriculum (Ministère éducation nationale 2019b). Indeed, from 2013 onwards, the French pupils have learnt English at an earlier stage, and more school hours have been dedicated to this subject. The Act is therefore believed to have affected the French proficiency in English over these last ten years, although this remains to be proven. For these three reasons, it can be asserted that the findings from this study and those from the Eurobarometer are not divergent but quite the opposite.

One comment that needs to be made, before discussing some of the findings from the interviews, is that the language used during phase 2 was ELF. In fact, neither the participants nor the 'tourists' were native speakers of English. According to Tréguer-Felten (2018) and Pitzl (2018), the utilisation of ELF may generate misunderstanding, non-understanding and/or

negotiation of meaning because the speech and understanding of each interlocutor is steeped in their cultural background. Such inconveniences are not believed to have occurred since the 'tourists' were well acquainted with the French culture. However, those are features to take into consideration in further research if the researcher is not familiar with it.

The last findings that are discussed in this section are those from the interviews. According to the interviewees' opinion, 10.7% of them spoke no English, 24.8% could use very basic words and expressions in English, and the remaining 64.5% managed to express themselves orally in English from a moderate to a very high extent. These results are roughly similar to the level of English that participants were estimated to have during the observations. This means that the same conclusions that are drawn for the observations can be applied here.

5.5 Third minor research question

The third minor question is 'What effect do socio-demographic variables such as age, gender and educational background have on the French's attitudes and practices towards speaking English with foreign tourists?'. To answer it, the findings from both the observations and the interviews will now be discussed according to the socio-demographic variables which the respondents belonged to. The first variable that will be elaborated is the gender of the participants. The findings from the interviews reflect that male respondents felt more interested (45.9% vs 39.8%) and useful (62.2% vs 52.8%) than women did, whereas women felt shy (21.3% vs 10.2%) and embarrassed (12% vs 6.1%) more frequently when addressed by a foreign tourist in English. However, both felt nervous to a comparable degree. With reference to the first reactions that tourists who address the participants in English tend to evoke, they were relatively similar for male and female respondents. Furthermore, although there was only a slight difference between male and female respondents with regard to their pleasure in speaking English with tourists, the contrast is striking when comparing their comfort level whilst practising such activities. In fact, there were far more male than female respondents who felt comfortable in interacting in English with tourists (61.3% vs 39.8%), and vice versa, there were far more female than male respondents who felt uncomfortable (42.6% vs 24.5%). Even though Flaitz (1988) had examined any correlations between gender and attitudes towards English, he concluded that the differences between women and men in terms of attitudes were

so minor that they were not worth mentioning. This study confirms this view as the attitudes of the female and male interviewees towards the English language were very much alike.

Regarding their practices, female participants were more likely to respond solely in French to a tourist who spoke English than male participants (10.4% vs 5.9%), they equally responded mixing English and French, and slightly more men spoke entirely in English (78.7% vs 74.3%). The percentage of those who provided a non-comprehensible answer was virtually identical for both genders. Lastly, their levels of English seemed to be equally distributed, except for the upper intermediate level, which contained more males (22.8% vs 16%), and the advanced level, which contained more females (6.9% vs 2.2%). These last results reveal that the percentage of men and the percentage of women who understood and made themselves understood when interacting in English with a tourist to a little, moderate and large extent were more or less equivalent. This is consistent with the findings from the Special Eurobarometer 386 (European Commission 2012) that show no significant difference between female and male French individuals who were able to hold a conversation in English, understand the news in English and interact online in English.

There now follows a discussion of the findings according to age, which is the second variable. As a reminder, it should be noted that this study divides the respondents into three age groups, i.e. 15-24 years old, 25-64 years old, and 65 years old and more. The results from the interviews show that the participants belonging to the three age groups perceived their interaction with an English-speaking tourist differently. The older the participants, the more they felt useful and embarrassed. By contrast, the younger the participants, the more they felt interested, shy and nervous. One might wonder why the younger generation, who spoke English relatively better than the older one (45.2% vs 28.9%) would feel more shy and nervous than their elders. One answer which an elderly lady gave during phase 1 might help to speculate on a reasonable explanation. To the question 'Do you feel shy or nervous when addressed by a foreign tourist in English?'[8], she replied: 'Oh no. I am too old for that!'[9]. With this response, she implies that shyness and nervousness are two feelings that disappear with age, maybe due to maturity. However, as this is the response of only one interviewee, no conclusions will be drawn here. Furthermore, the older the age group the participants belonged to, the more likely they had as their first thought 'How can I help?' or 'I don't understand what he/she is saying.'. On the other hand, those who thought first 'How can I best answer in English?' were more

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[8] Author's translation. 'Vous sentez-vous timide ou nerveux quand un touriste vous interpelle en anglais?'
[9] Author's translation. 'Ah ben nan. J'ai passé l'âge !'

likely to be young. As regards the pleasure that the participants took in speaking English with tourists, it decreased with age. This is also the case with how comfortable they experienced this situation to be. Whereas the majority of those between 15-24 felt at ease when talking English with tourists, most of those over 64 did not. Returning to the pleasure of speaking English that decreased with age, two causes can be proposed. First, it could be because of attitudes towards English. Indeed, Flaitz (1988) claims that the younger the French individuals, the better the attitudes towards English. Second, it could be due to the English proficiency of the respondents. The more the respondents master English, the more they may like speaking it. In fact, the results from the interviews display a higher English proficiency among those aged between 15-24 years old than among those aged over 64 (45.2% vs 28.9%).

Concerning the practices of the different age groups, they also differ. Indeed, the older the participants, the more likely they were to either speak solely French or mix French and English. In contrast, the younger the participants, the more they responded exclusively in English. Furthermore, the estimations of the levels of English during phase 2 reveal that the age group 65 and more contained most individuals who had both a beginner's and an advanced level of English. The majority of those who were estimated to have a low or upper intermediate level of English belonged to the age group 25-64 years old, and lastly, the younger the age group of the individuals, the more they had an elementary level of English. This unequal distribution does not allow ascertaining any conclusions, but it seems that with the exception of the highest level of English proficiency, the age group that tended to be more proficient in English, both to understand and make itself understood by tourists, was the one in the middle, then the youngest one and lastly the oldest one. However, when looking at those who gave incomprehensible responses, the youngest age group was the least likely to do it, followed by the middle group and then the oldest group. The latter findings are in line with both the conclusions from the Special Eurobarometer 386 (European Commission 2012) and Gerhards (2014). On the one hand, the results emanating from the Eurobarometer (European Commission 2012: 17) indicate that the younger generation, i.e. those aged between 15-24 years old, was the most likely to be able to hold a conversation in a foreign language. On the other hand, Gerhards (2014) affirms that the older the individuals are, the less likely they will be proficient in English because unless they have an employment where they can practise, they have not been using their English for many years.

The last socio-demographic variable that will be taken into consideration for the categorisation of the findings is the educational background. Since the respondents during phase

2 were not questioned about their educational background, the results emanating from the observations cannot be classified according to this variable. Thus, only the collected data from the interviews will be discussed here. The results reveal that interviewees with various educational backgrounds felt differently when addressed by a tourist in English. Those with a complete upper secondary school as their highest level of schooling were those who were more likely to feel interested and useful, and also less likely to feel shy and nervous. Those who sensed most embarrassment and shyness were those who had an incomplete upper secondary school as their highest education level. Moreover, this category was the one that felt the less interested and useful as well. As for those whose highest education level was higher than upper secondary school, they felt the least embarrassed, but also the most nervous. It seems therefore that the education background affected the respondents' attitudes towards speaking English with tourists. This view is confirmed by the fact that the different education groups had various first thoughts when addressed by tourists in English. The higher the education, the more likely the participants thought first 'How can I help?', and the lower the education, the more plausibly their first thought was 'I don't understand what he/she is saying.'. The three education groups seemed more or less equally concerned with how they could best answer in English, but those with a complete upper secondary school thought slightly less about this than the others. Regarding the pleasure in speaking English with tourists, and the comfort /discomfort that this context might create, it appears that here too, the level of education played a major role in influencing the respondents. Indeed, those who were most likely to enjoy speaking English with tourists were those with the highest education level completed, whilst those who disliked it the most were those with the lowest level of education. Moreover, those who were more comfortable with this task were primarily those with the highest level of schooling, whilst those who experienced the most discomfort were mainly those with the lowest level of schooling. These results were to be expected because people tend to be more comfortable doing something they master than the opposite.

5.6 Fourth minor research question

In order to answer the fourth and last minor research question, which is 'What effect does French people's English proficiency have on the French's attitudes and practices towards speaking English with foreign tourists?', the findings will now be classified and discussed according to the respondents' English proficiency. During the interviewees, the participants

gave their perspectives on their level of English. It is on these opinions that the first part of the following discussion will be based. The second part, by contrast, will be based on the level of English that the participants were estimated to have during phase 2.

The findings from the interviews reveal notable differences in attitudes among individuals with diverse levels of English proficiency. The better the level of English, the more interested and useful the interviewees felt when communicating with a tourist speaking English. Curiously, this condition also seemed to enhance nervousness, with the exception of those with an advanced level, who felt as nervous as those with a beginner's level did. One might wonder why the better the level of English, the more the respondents felt nervous. It can be suggested that unless individuals master the English language, the better they speak it, the more they focus on the form, thereby making room for a sense of nervousness, whereas the lower the level of English, the more they focus on the content of their responses to foreign tourists, but this remains to be proven. On the other hand, the lower the level of English, the more embarrassed the participants were. It may also be affirmed that embarrassment is a feeling that disappears when individuals acquire a good level of English because none of the respondents with an upper intermediate or an advanced level expressed feeling embarrassed when addressed by a foreign tourist in English. The level of English may also affect the first thought. Indeed, the findings indicate that the better the level of English, the more likely the interviewees would be to first think 'How can I help?'. By contrast, the lower the level of English, the more frequently the participants would think 'I don't understand what he/she is saying.'. The latter result is expected, given the fact that the better the level of English, the more and better one is supposed to understand English. Concerning the question 'How can I best answer in English?', the respondents to whom this thought first occurred were most likely those who had a lower intermediate level. This might be explained by the fact that those who had a lower level than lower intermediate probably answered foreign tourists in French or mixed English and French, whilst those with a higher level than lower intermediate found English words and expressions with greater ease. Lastly, it seems that the level of English impacts the attitudes towards speaking English with tourists as well. Indeed, the better the level of English, the more frequently the individuals liked doing it. On the other hand, the dislike of speaking English with tourists declined as the level of English improved, and it even disappeared from an upper intermediate level and above. The findings relating to the comfort in speaking English with tourists are similar. The better the level of English, the more comfort the participants would sense when addressing tourists in English, and the lower the level of English, the more

discomfort the interviewees experienced. In brief, among all the comparisons that were discussed in Section 5.5 and Section 5.6, the level of English is the variable that provides the most striking results.

The collected data emanating from the observations provide somewhat limited information about the practices of the French according to their level of English proficiency. Indeed, due to the fact that the respondents were not asked about their level of English, solely those who gave a positive response had their level of English evaluated. This means that there is no explicit information on the level of English of those who gave a negative response, except for the few who answered 'I don't speak English.'. Thus, although it would be reasonable to believe that the better the level of English, the more likely one were to give a positive answer; this claim cannot be ascertained from collected data. Nevertheless, the observations show that those who gave positive responses had all kinds of levels of English. In other words, the language barriers that some respondents encountered did not seem to restrict them from responding to tourists who questioned them in English. The difference in practice between individuals with various levels of English rests in the language they employed and the complexity and detail of their response. Those with a beginner's level of English responded exclusively in French. Those who had an elementary level of English either mixed French and English or said only few basic words in English without constructing any proper sentences. The majority of those who had a low intermediate level responded entirely in English with short simple sentences. They may have had gaps but they often remembered the missing word when they heard it from the 'tourist'. The participants who had an upper intermediate level responded entirely in English, formulating longer and more complex sentences than those with a lower intermediate level. In the last category, those who had an advanced level of English proficiency responded fluently in English without searching for words. In addition, the route description that they provided was detailed and precise. In sum, despite the fact that the respondents' levels of English seemed to affect to a very little extent their intention and attempt to help tourists who spoke English, it influenced the way they responded to these.

5.7 Hypotheses

In addition to addressing the above-mentioned research questions, four related hypotheses were posed and presented in Section 1.2. Both the interviews and the observations carried out allowed

for their testing, and the present section contains a discussion on their plausibility or their rejection. For convenience, each hypothesis will be reintroduced and discussed one by one, and a short conclusion will be drawn at the end of each paragraph.

Hypothesis 1: The French do communicate in English with foreign tourists.

The research that has been conducted, through both the interviews and the observations, reveals that the majority of the participants responded positively to foreign tourists who addressed them in English. However, not all French replied in English during phase 2 as less than one in ten responded exclusively in French. This finding is supported by the fact that 10.7% of the interviewees during phase 1 admitted that they did not speak a word of English. Furthermore, less than one in six mixed English and French when responding to a foreign tourist who spoke English. Once again, the results from the interviews support this observation. Indeed, 24.8% of the interviewees reported to speak only basic English. It is therefore understandable that some of them mixed French and English when they encountered a vocabulary gap. Returning to the French who did respond exclusively in English to foreign tourists, as it is the notion articulated in hypothesis 1, the observations reveal that their number reaches three quarters of those who were observed. Thus, findings collected via the observations appear to confirm to a large degree hypothesis 1. Nevertheless, it should be stipulated that hypothesis 1 does not specify if the communication is comprehensible or not. If that were the case, testing hypothesis 1 would have provided different results, as not every French respondent who answered entirely in English spoke in an understandable way.

Hypothesis 2: The French who do not communicate in English with foreign tourists do not do so because they have a negative attitude towards English.

During phase 1, the majority of the interviewees expressed that, according to them, foreign visitors to France do not need to learn French. This implies that they expected foreign tourists to address them in English or another foreign language, and that they considered it normal. Furthermore, 42.7% of the interviewees declared to feel interested when questioned by tourists in English, and several of them elaborated their responses by adding that they were interested in using their English skills. In addition, 70.9% of the participants stated that they liked interacting in English with tourists, and among the 9.2% who admitted disliking it, several specified that they did not like it because they did not master it. Thus, the reason why they disliked communicating in English was not due to any negative attitudes towards English, but rather an inability on their part. In sum, the findings obtained through the interviews convey

positive attitudes towards the English language from the French population. With regard to the collected data obtained through the observations, they show that the vast majority (95.4%) of the respondents provided a positive response to the 'tourists'. This indicates that the French are willing to help visitors who request it without taking account of the language employed. Hence, the data derived from the interviews and the observations are combined to reject hypothesis 2. Indeed, both techniques employed in this study reveal positive attitudes towards the English language, and by consequence, it seems very unlikely that the French would not communicate in English because of negative attitudes.

Hypothesis 3: The French who do not communicate in English with foreign tourists do not do so because of a lack of oral proficiency (listening and speaking skills) in English.

The respondents during the interviews were not asked specifically in which language they interacted with foreign tourists, thereby the findings emanating from phase 2 seem more adequate to test hypothesis 3. It was observed that 23.6% of the participants did not answer entirely in English, but answered either in French or mixed English and French. Those who responded exclusively in French were asked to translate what they were saying into English, but they answered that they were unable to do so and apologized for it. It thereby became clear that they did not provide a response in English because of inability. Concerning those who mixed French and English, it was obvious from their speech that their level of English was low, and by consequence, the reason why they did not speak solely English was vocabulary gaps they encountered. This, combined with the five respondents (1.8% of the observed participants) who did not provide a positive response because they did not speak English, reflects that the French who lack oral proficiency in English do not communicate in English with foreign tourists. Hypothesis 3 is therefore accepted.

Hypothesis 4: The French who do not communicate in English with foreign tourists do not do so because of discomfort. Indeed, it may be that the French have adequate skills in English, but feel embarrassed when using it in public.

The participants' attitudes when addressed in English by tourists are best reflected in the interviews. The collected data emanating from the interviews indicates that 34% of the interviewees felt discomfort when such situations occurred. During phase 2, 76.4% of the participants answered exclusively in English. One might be tempted to believe that there is a relationship between these values, and that those who did not answer solely in English had feelings of discomfort. Nevertheless, there is no evidence to claim this, as the interview guide

did not include any questions on the language that the participants used in order to respond to foreign tourists. This is therefore a flaw in this study. However, a link can be established between the English proficiency and discomfort that respondents in phase 1 felt when they were asked to speak English to tourists, as mentioned in Section 5.6. It was suggested that the better the level of English, the less discomfort the interviewees experienced, and as hypothesis 3 was accepted, the question may arise of a potential link between discomfort and not speaking English to tourists. The observations reveal that among those who gave a positive response, those who did not communicate exclusively in English had a low proficiency in English. If hypothesis 4 were to be accepted, this would imply two components: those who had a low level of English felt discomfort and those who felt discomfort had a low level of English. However, the interviews indicate that among those who could not speak English or only spoke it to a very little extent, 27.4% did not feel any discomfort. Moreover, among those who felt discomfort, 24.3% stated to be able to express themselves in English to a moderate or large extent. These results suggest that those who did not answer exclusively in English during the observations, did not necessarily feel discomfort and that those who felt discomfort might have communicated solely in English. It consequently seems unreasonable to draw any conclusions regarding a potential relationship between discomfort and the language used to answer tourists. Hypothesis 4 remains to be tested, but is tentatively rejected because the feeling of discomfort does not seem to be the cause for not speaking English, but rather the level of English proficiency.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Summary

This thesis investigated the French's attitudes and practices towards interacting in English with foreign tourists. In other words, this study was an attempt to discover what the French's opinions and feelings are when addressed in English by foreign tourists and how they respond. In addition, it was interested in uncovering any relationship between these attitudes and practices and various variables, such as age, gender and English proficiency. In order to achieve this aim, a multiple quantitative method was carried out during the winter of 2021/2022 in Paris. Two research techniques were selected to collect data that could be rich enough to reflect the full range of the French's attitudes and practices. The methodology was divided into two phases. During phase 1, 206 respondents were interviewed about their experiences with communicating with foreign tourists in English. During phase 2, a new sample of 280 participants was observed when questioned in English about directions. These two research techniques, which include interviews and observations, allowed gathering relevant findings that were analysed and discussed in the previous chapter, and which will now be used in order to provide some concluding answers to the research questions. However, before drawing any conclusions, it should be stressed that this study only suggests plausible relationships, and does not link cause with effect.

The first main research question concerned the French's attitudes when questioned in English by foreign tourists. According to the findings, the most common feelings that the French experience when addressed by a tourist in English are first usefulness and second interest. Both indicate positive positions towards the foreign tourist. In addition to these common feelings, a few French feel nervous, shy and embarrassed. These three emotions appear to be caused by language barriers, because when addressed by tourists in their mother tongue, the interviewees barely experienced any nervousness and shyness and never sensed any embarrassment for not being able to help. Furthermore, the French in general seem willing to help and are interested in the tourist's questions, but occasionally they are more preoccupied with the way to utter their response than the request itself. In brief, the findings seem to reveal favourable opinions towards speaking English with foreign tourists, but language issues might create some discomfort among certain individuals. Moreover, attitudes towards ELF are also

positive as only a few respondents meant that visitors should learn French before coming to France. In brief, the findings from this study display favourable opinions towards both foreign tourists and the English language in general.

The second main research question regarded the French's practices when addressed by a foreign tourist. Although there are exceptions, it seems that the vast majority of the French stop and attempt to help foreign tourists despite language barriers. Their responses can be classified into three categories: a few are exclusively in French, slightly more are a combination of English and French, and the majority are entirely in English. One might conclude then that despite the fact that most of the French provide positive responses to foreign tourists who speak English, not all of them give a comprehensible answer, if body language is disregarded. In fact, the great majority of the French seem to use body language when responding to foreign tourists, but as Boulet and Harrison (2014) claim, gestures are tainted by culture, and the understanding of French gestures by foreign tourists is beyond the scope of this thesis. What is relevant, however, is that the observed respondents who stopped to help seemingly tried their best to make themselves understood, either through gestures, the use of Google maps or the English they knew. It can thus be concluded that the French's practices appear to be centred on others when they are addressed in English by tourists.

The first minor research question aimed to investigate to what extent the French can understand tourists who question them in English. Based on the analysis of the results emanating from both research techniques, it seems that a considerable amount of the French comprehend tourists who speak English with a slight Scandinavian accent to a large extent. The present study does not allow to draw any conclusion about the French's understanding of other accents of the English language because no tests have been conducted with different accents. Furthermore, it appears that the few French who understand English-speaking tourists to a little extent or to a very little extent manage to guess the meaning of the request when the latter is about direction and they recognise the name of the requested location.

The second minor research question concerned the extent to which the French can make themselves understood by foreign tourists who have not learnt any French. According to the findings, approximately half of the responses would have been understandable to a tourist who had not learnt French, if the body language is disregarded. Considering that a few French respond to foreign tourists in French, that others mix French and English, and that some of those who use exclusively English in their response make language mistakes, this portion seems reasonable. Moreover, it is in line with the findings from the Special Eurobarometer 386

(European Commission 2012). Hence, it appears appropriate to suggest that approximately half of the French make themselves understood to a tourist who has no basic notion of French to a large or very large extent, about a quarter make themselves understood to a moderate or little extent, and the remaining quarter do not make themselves understood at all.

The third minor research question was interested in relationships between French attitudes and practices towards interacting in English with foreign tourists and socio-demographic variables. The findings reveal little variation between genders, at least in their practices. Regarding their attitudes, French women seem to be more shy and embarrassed than men when addressed by foreign tourists in English. They also appear to sense more discomfort. In contrast, French men seem to feel more interested and useful and to be more comfortable in communicating in English with tourists. However, both French men and women seem to appreciate interacting with tourists in English to the same extent, and both understand and make themselves understood also to the same extent. Concerning the variable of age, the differences are more tangible, and it looks as if this variable affects both the attitudes and the practices of the French. Indeed, it seems that the older the French are, the more pleasure and discomfort they will have in interacting in English with foreign tourists, and the more useful and embarrassed they will feel in such situations. On the contrary, the younger the French are, the less pleasure and discomfort they will experience when communicating in English with foreign tourists, and the more they will sense feelings of interest, shyness and nervousness. Moreover, it appears that the younger the generation, the more they are concerned with how to utter an accurate response, whilst the older the generation, the more they are preoccupied by the request of the tourists or their incapacity to understand. When it comes to their practices, it seems that the older the French individuals are, the more likely they are to either answer in French or mix French and English, whereas the younger the individuals, the more plausibly they will respond exclusively in English. In addition, although this has not been proved, it looks as if the French who might understand foreign tourists best and who might make themselves understood best are the ones belonging to the age group 25-64 years old. Lastly, it seems that the variable of education also affects the attitudes of the French towards interacting in English with foreign tourists. According to the findings, the higher the level of education the French have, the more likely they are to speak English with tourists and feel comfortable doing it. By contrast, the lower the level of education the French have, the more shyness, discomfort and embarrassment they will feel, and the more they will focus on their incomprehension when questioned in

English by tourists. The French who have completed upper secondary school as their highest level of education appear to be the ones who feel and experience most interest and usefulness.

The fourth minor research question investigated the plausible effects that the variable of English proficiency might have on French attitudes and practices towards speaking English with foreign tourists. Of all the variables mentioned in this thesis, the level of English proficiency is the variable that seems to influence the French's attitudes and practices the most. Indeed, the examinations of the findings reveal the most striking differences in attitudes and practices between the various levels of English of the French. The results suggest that the better the level of English of the French, the more they like speaking English with foreign tourists and the more they feel interested, useful and at ease about doing it. Conversely, it appears that the lower the level of English of the French, the more they dislike speaking English with foreign tourists and the more they might sense embarrassment and discomfort. When it comes to French practices, the lower the level of English, the most probably the French are to either respond in French or mix English and French, whilst the higher the level of English, the more likely they are to interact solely in English with foreign tourists. Similarly, the level of English affects the details and the structure of the responses uttered by the French. The better the level of English, the more elaborated the description provided might be, and the more complex and correct the sentences that form this description might also be.

In sum, the popular opinion mentioned in Section 1.1, which says that the French are not willing to speak English and dislike it has proved to be largely false. Indeed, the findings from this study reveal positive French attitudes towards speaking English with foreign tourists. However, it is true that not every French is able to respond to a foreign tourist in English, due to low English proficiency. Yet according to the collected data more than half of the participants provided responses in English that were understandable from large to a very large extent. The question is rather how France compares to other countries in Europe which are similar in terms of population size and the quality of the educational system.

6.2 Limitations

The most important limitation of this study is the size of the sample. Albeit 486 respondents (206 for the interviews and 280 for the observations) being a large number, it should be recognised that it is an exceedingly small proportion of the French, estimated at around 67

million in 2019 (Insee 2019). Professional surveys therefore operate with larger samples, a more accurate diversification of respondents and also calculate a margin of error. For this reason, this thesis does not assert to generalise French attitudes and practices towards speaking English with foreign tourists, but rather provides some ideas on these matters and suggests a potential overview of them. In other words, this study is believed to generate greater knowledge and create better understanding about these French attitudes and practices, but does not claim to make a generalisation of the findings. However, the semi-randomised selected sample was estimated to be a good representative of the French population regarding the percentage of individuals classified according to gender and age.

Another limitation of this study is the residence of the participants. Despite the fact that the interviewees during phase 1 came from different places all over France, it is quite likely that a large portion of the participants during phase 2 resided in Paris. Thus, although the former respondents shared opinions that could be found at different places in France, the latter most probably for the great majority represented residents of Paris. With Paris being an international city, one is more likely to meet a person who speaks English there than in other locations in France. In other words, Paris might not be representative of rural parts of France, for example. However, as Paris is the most popular destination in France, it is where the concentration of tourists is the densest. Hence, even though the results emanating from the observations might not be representative of the entire French population, they indicate in a realistic way situations that a large portion of tourists may face.

6.3 Outlook

The present thesis covered many aspects of French attitudes and practices towards interacting in English with foreign tourists such as comprehension, first reaction, language choice and states of comfort. However, some features remain unknown and could be the subject of further research in the same field. Although there is a large number of possible research areas related to the present study, only three will be presented here. The first concerns the discussion which was held in Section 5.3 about English accents. As explained there, this study provides data about the French's comprehension of a Scandinavian accent. It would be interesting to discover if a study involving various accents of English from around the world would have provided similar findings. Nevertheless, this seems to be a challenging task to realise, as it would demand

the participation of a broad number of fictional tourists. Hence, it is suggested starting with an English accent from the inner circle, e.g. one of the British accents. In this way, the French's understanding of English would not only be tested as a lingua franca, but also as a foreign language, as one of the speakers (the tourist) would be a native English-speaker.

The second proposed study for further research regards the approach that tourists employ to address the French. As discussed in Section 5.2, an identical approach was employed for each participants in phase 2. However, when a real tourist was observed adopting a fundamentally different approach to address two women, he received a divergent response than those noted in this study. It was therefore suggested that the approach might influence the French's practices and maybe also their attitudes. It would be interesting to investigate if this statement is confirmed by observing English-speaking 'tourists' who approach the French in several distinctive ways and examining any correlations. Alternatively, further research could also focus exclusively on one approach which is different from the one employed in the present study, e.g. starting the conversation by saying 'Excuse me, do you speak English?'.

The third and last proposed area of further research revolves around the place where the study was carried out. As argued in Section 6.2, the fact that the observations were conducted only in Paris has been a limitation. A complementary study could be to carry out the exact same research in another location in France, preferably more provincial. This could expose whether the results were influenced by the metropolitan character of the site of study or if they give an accurate rendering of the French's attitudes and practices towards speaking English with foreign tourists in general. In closing, whatever further research one chooses to conduct, one can rely on this present study, which provides valuable knowledge and understanding in the field of the French's practices and attitudes towards interacting in English with foreign tourists.

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Appendix 1: Interview guide (translated from French)

I. General information

1. What is/are your native language(s)?

☐ French ☐ Other

If other, please specify: _____

2. What is your gender?

☐ Female ☐ Male ☐ Other

3. In which age bracket are you?

☐ 15-24 ☐ 25-64 ☐ 65 and more

4. What is your highest education level completed? (According to the French school system)

☐ Lower than upper secondary school ☐ Upper secondary school

☐ Higher than upper secondary school

5. What is your occupational status?

☐ Working ☐ Unemployed ☐ Retired ☐ Student

6. What is your place of residence?

☐ City ☐ Small/mid-size town ☐ Rural

II. English proficiency

7. What is your current level of English proficiency?

☐ Beginner ☐ Elementary ☐ Lower intermediate

☐ Upper intermediate ☐ Advanced

8. In your opinion, to what extent can you…?

	None	A little	Moderate	A lot	Most
… understand English texts?					
… understand people speaking English?					
… write correctly in English?					
… express orally what you want in English?					

III. Use of the English language

9. How many years did you study English at school?

☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 or more

10. Did you acquire English in another context?

Multiple answers possible.

☐ No ☐ Online games ☐ Travel

☐ Friends ☐ Family ☐ Other

If other, please specify: _____

11. How often do you…?

	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
… watch movies/videos in English?					
… listen to songs in English?					
… travel to an English speaking country?					
… speak English?					
… read in English?					

IV. Attitudes towards speaking English with foreign tourists

12. Have you ever been questioned by a foreign tourist in English?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please answer the following questions in this section according to your experience. If no, please answer them as if the situation occurred.

13. How do you feel when you meet a tourist who asks you a question in English?

Multiple answers possible.

☐ Interested ☐ Nervous ☐ Shy ☐ Useful

☐ Irritated ☐ Other

If other, please specify: _____

14. What is your first reaction when you meet a tourist who asks you a question in English?

☐ How can I help? ☐ I don't understand what he/she is saying.

☐ How can I best answer in English? ☐ Why did he/she choose me?

☐ Other

If other, please specify: _____
_____
_____

15. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I like talking English with foreign tourists.					
I am comfortable speaking English with foreign tourists.					
Foreign tourists should learn some French when visiting France.					

V. Attitudes towards speaking French with tourists

16. Have you ever been questioned by a tourist in French?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

If yes, please answer the following questions in this section according to your experience. If no, please answer them as if the situation occurred.

17. How do you feel when you meet a tourist who asks you a question in French?

Multiple answers possible.

☐ Interested   ☐ Nervous   ☐ Shy   ☐ Useful

☐ Irritated   ☐ Other

If other, please specify: _____

18. What is your first reaction when you meet a tourist who asks you a question in French?

☐ How can I help?   ☐ Why did he/she choose me?

☐ What is the best way to word my answer?   ☐ Other

If other, please specify: _____
_____
_____

19. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I like talking French with tourists.					
I am comfortable speaking French with tourists.					
I answer similarly to a tourist speaking French and a tourist speaking English.					

Appendix 2: Observation checklist

I. Phase 1

1. Numbers of individuals:

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5   ☐ _____

2. Gender:

☐ Female(s)   ☐ Male(s)   ☐ Mixed

3. Age estimation:

☐ 15-24   ☐ 25-64   ☐ 65 +   ☐ different age groups

4. First response:

☐ None (Go to Section IV)

☐ Negative (Go to Section II)

☐ Positive (Go to Section III)

☐ _____

II. Negative answer

5. What is the negative answer?

☐ *Je ne parle pas anglais*/*Je ne comprends pas* (I don't speak English/I don't understand).

☐ I don't speak English.

☐ *Je n'ai pas le temps* (I don't have time).

☐ *Désolé* (Sorry)

☐ Sorry

☐ _____

Go to Section IV

III Phase 2: positive answer

6. Language used to respond:

☐ French ☐ English ☐ Mixture of French and English

☐ _____

7. Estimated level of English proficiency

☐ Beginner ☐ Elementary ☐ Lower intermediate ☐ Upper intermediate

☐ Advanced ☐ _____

8. Answers the question(s):

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ _____

9. Provides a comprehensible answer

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ _____

10. The conversation goes further:

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ _____

Go to Section IV

IV Additional observations

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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_____

Appendix 3: Findings from the interviews

Table 3.1: Interview results (Part II)

	Number	Percentage
Participants in total	206	*100%*
7. What is your current level of English proficiency?		
Beginner's	32	*15.5*
Elementary	41	*19.9*
Lower intermediate	68	*33.0*
Upper intermediate	36	*17.5*
Advanced	29	*14.1*
8. In your opinion, to what extent can you…?		
…understand English texts?		
None	15	*7.3*
A little	45	*21.8*
Moderate	44	*21.4*
A lot	52	*25.2*
Most	50	*24.3*
…understand people speaking English?		
None	15	*7.3*
A little	56	*27.2*
Moderate	49	*23.8*
A lot	51	*24.8*
Most	35	*17.0*
…write correctly in English?		
None	36	*17.5*
A little	47	*22.8*
Moderate	50	*24.3*
A lot	47	*22.8*
Most	26	*16.2*
… express orally what you want in English?		
None	22	*10.7*
A little	51	*24.8*
Moderate	61	*29.6*
A lot	43	*20.9*
Most	29	*14.1*

Table 3.2: Interview results (Part IV)

	Number	Percentage
Participants in total	206	*100%*
13. How do you feel when you meet a tourist who asks you a question in English?		
Interested	88	*42.7*
Shy	33	*16.0*
Nervous	23	*11.2*
Helpful	118	*57.3*
Irritated	1	*0.5*
Embarrassed	19	*9.2*
Other	16	*7.8*
14. What is your first reaction when you meet a tourist who asks you a question in English?		
How can I help?	122	*59.2*
I don't understand what he/she is saying.	24	*11.7*
How can I best answer best in English?	58	*28.2*
Why did he/she choose me?	2	*1.0*
15. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?		
I like talking English with foreign tourists.		
Strongly disagree	12	*5.8*
Disagree	7	*3.4*
Neither agree nor disagree	41	*19.9*
Agree	79	*38.3*
Strongly agree	67	*32.5*
I am comfortable speaking English with foreign tourists.		
Strongly disagree	37	*18.0*
Disagree	33	*16.0*
Neither agree nor disagree	33	*16.0*
Agree	62	*30.1*
Strongly agree	41	*19.9*
Foreign tourists should learn some French when visiting France.		
Strongly disagree	73	*35.4*
Disagree	54	*26.2*
Neither agree nor disagree	52	*25.2*
Agree	24	*11.7*
Strongly agree	3	*1.5*

Table 3.3: Interview results according to gender (Part IV)

	Women	Women (%)	Men	Men (%)
Participants in total	108	*100%*	98	*100%*
13. How do you feel when you meet a tourist who asks you a question in English?				
Interested	43	*39.8*	45	*45.9*
Shy	23	*21.3*	10	*10.2*
Nervous	13	*12.0*	10	*10.2*
Helpful	57	*52.8*	61	*62.2*
Irritated	1	*0.9*	0	*0.0*
Embarrassed	13	*12.0*	6	*6.1*
Other	7	*6.5*	9	*9.2*
14. What is your first reaction when you meet a tourist who asks you a question in English?				
How can I help?	62	*57.4*	60	*61.2*
I don't understand what he/she is saying.	13	*12.0*	11	*11.2*
How can I best answer best in English?	31	*28.7*	27	*27.6*
Why did he/she choose me?	2	*1.9*	0	*0.0*
15. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?				
I like talking English with foreign tourists.				
Strongly disagree	7	*6.5*	5	*5.1*
Disagree	5	*4.6*	2	*2*
Neither agree nor disagree	23	*21.3*	18	*18.4*
Agree	39	*36.1*	40	*40.8*
Strongly agree	34	*31.5*	33	*33.7*
I am comfortable speaking English with foreign tourists.				
Strongly disagree	26	*24.1*	11	*11.2*
Disagree	20	*18.5*	13	*13.3*
Neither agree nor disagree	19	*17.6*	14	*14.3*
Agree	25	*23.1*	37	*37.8*
Strongly agree	18	*16.7*	23	*23.5*
Foreign tourists should learn some French when visiting France.				
Strongly disagree	42	*38.9*	31	*31.6*
Disagree	23	*21.3*	31	*31.6*
Neither agree nor disagree	29	*26.9*	23	*23.5*
Agree	13	*12.0*	11	*11.2*
Strongly agree	1	*0.9*	2	*2*

Table 3.4: Interview results according to age (Part IV)

	15-24 y	15-24 y (%)	25-64 y	25-64 y (%)	65 y +	65 y + (%)
Participants in total	42	*100%*	119	*100%*	45	*100%*
13. How do you feel when you meet a tourist who asks you a question in English?						
Interested	26	*61.9*	47	*39.5*	15	*33.3*
Shy	10	*23.8*	19	*16.0*	4	*8.9*
Nervous	9	*21.4*	13	*10.9*	1	*2.2*
Helpful	21	*50.0*	67	*56.3*	30	*66.7*
Irritated	1	*2.4*	0	*0.0*	0	*0.0*
Embarrassed	0	*0.0*	11	*9.2*	8	*17.8*
Other	1	*2.4*	12	*10.1*	3	*6.7*
14. What is your first reaction when you meet a tourist who asks you a question in English?						
How can I help?	23	*54.8*	70	*58.8*	29	*64.4*
I don't understand what he/she is saying.	2	*4.8*	14	*11.8*	8	*17.8*
How can I best answer best in English?	17	*40.5*	33	*27.7*	8	*17.8*
Why did he/she choose me?	0	*0.0*	2	*1.7*	0	*0.0*
15. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?						
I like talking English with foreign tourists.						
Strongly disagree	1	*2.4*	6	*5.0*	5	*11.1*
Disagree	2	*4.8*	3	*2.5*	2	*4.4*
Neither agree nor disagree	8	*19.0*	26	*21.8*	7	*15.6*
Agree	16	*38.1*	47	*39.5*	16	*35.6*
Strongly agree	15	*35.7*	37	*31.1*	15	*33.3*
I am comfortable speaking English with foreign tourists.						
Strongly disagree	2	*4.8*	20	*16.8*	15	*33.3*
Disagree	8	*19.0*	18	*15.1*	7	*15.6*
Neither agree nor disagree	8	*19.0*	21	*17.6*	4	*8.9*
Agree	17	*40.5*	40	*33.6*	5	*11.1*
Strongly agree	7	*16.7*	20	*16.8*	14	*31.1*
Foreign tourists should learn some French when visiting France.						
Strongly disagree	20	*47.6*	38	*31.9*	15	*33.3*
Disagree	12	*28.6*	33	*27.7*	9	*20.0*
Neither agree nor disagree	7	*16.7*	30	*25.2*	15	*33.3*
Agree	3	*7.1*	17	*14.3*	4	*8.9*
Strongly agree	0	*0.0*	1	*0.8*	2	*4.4*

Table 3.5: Interview results according to education (Part IV)

	Lower than upper secondary school	Lower than upper secondary school (%)	Upper secondary school	Upper secondary school (%)	Higher than upper secondary school	Higher than upper secondary school (%)
Participants in total	25	*100%*	30	*100%*	151	*100%*
13. How do you feel when you meet a tourist who asks you a question in English?						
Interested	8	*32.0*	14	*46.7*	66	*43.7*
Shy	5	*20.0*	2	*6.7*	26	*17.2*
Nervous	2	*8.0*	2	*6.7*	19	*12.6*
Helpful	10	*40.0*	19	*63.3*	89	*58.9*
Irritated	0	*0.0*	0	*0.0*	1	*0.7*
Embarrassed	7	*28.0*	3	*10.0*	9	*6.0*
Other	2	*8.0*	1	*3.3*	13	*8.6*
14. What is your first reaction when you meet a tourist who asks you a question in English?						
How can I help?	11	*44.0*	16	*53.3*	95	*62.9*
I don't understand what he/she is saying.	7	*28.0*	7	*23.3*	10	*6.6*
How can I best answer best in English?	7	*28.0*	7	*23.3*	44	*29.1*
Why did he/she choose me?	0	*0.0*	0	*0.0*	2	*1.3*
15. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?						
I like talking English with foreign tourists.						
Strongly disagree	3	*12.0*	1	*3.3*	8	*5.3*
Disagree	3	*12.0*	1	*3.3*	3	*2.0*
Neither agree nor disagree	5	*20.0*	7	*23.3*	29	*19.2*
Agree	11	*44.0*	10	*33.3*	58	*38.4*
Strongly agree	3	*12.0*	11	*36.7*	53	*35.1*
I am comfortable speaking English with foreign tourists.						
Strongly disagree	14	*56.0*	4	*13.3*	19	*12.6*
Disagree	7	*28.0*	4	*13.3*	22	*14.6*
Neither agree nor disagree	3	*12.0*	7	*23.3*	23	*15.2*
Agree	1	*4.0*	7	*23.3*	54	*35.8*
Strongly agree	0	*0.0*	8	*26.7*	33	*21.9*
Foreign tourists should learn some French when visiting France.						
Strongly disagree	11	*44.0*	5	*16.7*	57	*37.7*
Disagree	3	*12.0*	10	*33.3*	41	*27.2*
Neither agree nor disagree	7	*28.0*	9	*30.0*	36	*23.8*
Agree	3	*12.0*	5	*16.7*	16	*10.6*
Strongly agree	1	*4.0*	1	*3.3*	1	*0.7*

Table 3.6: Interview results according to occupational status (Part IV)

	Student	Student (%)	Working	Working (%)	Unemployed	Unemployed (%)	Retired	Retired (%)
Participants in total	34	*100%*	111	*100%*	5	*100%*	56	*100%*

13. How do you feel when you meet a tourist who asks you a question in English?

	Student	Student (%)	Working	Working (%)	Unemployed	Unemployed (%)	Retired	Retired (%)
Interested	22	*64.7*	40	*36.0*	3	*60.0*	23	*41.1*
Shy	9	*26.5*	18	*16.2*	0	*0.0*	6	*10.7*
Nervous	8	*23.5*	13	*11.7*	0	*0.0*	2	*3.6*
Helpful	17	*50.0*	60	*54.1*	4	*80.0*	37	*66.1*
Irritated	0	*0.0*	1	*0.9*	0	*0.0*	0	*0.0*
Embarrassed	1	*2.9*	9	*8.1*	1	*20.0*	8	*14.3*
Other	1	*2.9*	12	*10.8*	0	*0.0*	3	*5.4*

14. What is your first reaction when you meet a tourist who asks you a question in English?

	Student	Student (%)	Working	Working (%)	Unemployed	Unemployed (%)	Retired	Retired (%)
How can I help?	20	*58.8*	64	*57.7*	1	*20.0*	37	*66.1*
I don't understand what he/she is saying.	1	*2.9*	12	*10.8*	1	*20.0*	10	*17.9*
How can I best answer best in English?	13	*38.2*	33	*29.7*	3	*60.0*	9	*16.1*
Why did he/she choose me?	0	*0.0*	2	*1.8*	0	*0.0*	0	*0.0*

15. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

I like talking English with foreign tourists.

	Student	Student (%)	Working	Working (%)	Unemployed	Unemployed (%)	Retired	Retired (%)
Strongly disagree	0	*0.0*	7	*6.3*	0	*0.0*	5	*8.9*
Disagree	1	*2.9*	4	*3.6*	0	*0.0*	2	*3.6*
Neither agree nor disagree	7	*20.6*	27	*24.3*	0	*0.0*	7	*12.5*
Agree	14	*41.2*	40	*36.0*	2	*40.0*	23	*41.1*
Strongly agree	12	*35.3*	33	*29.7*	3	*60.0*	19	*33.9*

I am comfortable speaking English with foreign tourists.

	Student	Student (%)	Working	Working (%)	Unemployed	Unemployed (%)	Retired	Retired (%)
Strongly disagree	1	*2.9*	21	*18.9*	1	*20.0*	14	*25.0*
Disagree	7	*20.6*	14	*12.6*	1	*20.0*	11	*19.6*
Neither agree nor disagree	5	*14.7*	17	*15.3*	1	*20.0*	10	*17.9*
Agree	13	*38.2*	42	*37.8*	0	*0.0*	7	*12.5*
Strongly agree	8	*23.5*	17	*15.3*	2	*40.0*	14	*25.0*

Foreign tourists should learn some French when visiting France.

	Student	Student (%)	Working	Working (%)	Unemployed	Unemployed (%)	Retired	Retired (%)
Strongly disagree	15	*44.1*	37	*33.3*	2	*40.0*	19	*33.9*
Disagree	9	*26.5*	31	*27.9*	1	*20.0*	13	*23.2*
Neither agree nor disagree	8	*23.5*	25	*22.5*	1	*20.0*	18	*32.1*
Agree	2	*5.9*	16	*14.4*	1	*20.0*	5	*8.9*
Strongly agree	0	*0.0*	2	*1.8*	0	*0.0*	1	*1.8*

Table 3.7: Interview results according to level of English (Part IV)

	Beginner's	Beginner's (%)	Elementary	Elementary (%)	Lower intermediate	Lower intermediate (%)	Upper intermediate	Upper intermediate (%)	Advanced	Advanced (%)
Participants in total	32	*100%*	41	*100%*	68	*100%*	36	*100%*	29	*100%*
13. How do you feel when you meet a tourist who asks you a question in English?										
Interested	7	*21.9*	16	*39.0*	28	*41.2*	17	*47.2*	20	*69.0*
Shy	5	*15.6*	10	*24.4*	12	*17.6*	5	*13.9*	1	*3.4*
Nervous	2	*6.3*	5	*12.2*	9	*13.2*	5	*13.9*	2	*6.9*
Helpful	13	*40.6*	19	*46.3*	40	*58.8*	26	*72.2*	20	*69.0*
Irritated	0	*0.0*	1	*2.4*	0	*0.0*	0	*0.0*	0	*0.0*
Embarrassed	11	*34.4*	6	*14.6*	2	*2.9*	0	*0.0*	0	*0.0*
Other	2	*6.3*	2	*4.9*	7	*10.3*	2	*5.6*	3	*10.3*
14. What is your first reaction when you meet a tourist who asks you a question in English?										
How can I help?	12	*37.5*	17	*41.5*	38	*55.9*	30	*83.3*	25	*86.2*
I don't understand what he/she is saying.	11	*34.4*	8	*19.5*	4	*5.9*	1	*2.8*	0	*0.0*
How can I best answer best in English?	9	*28.1*	15	*36.6*	25	*36.8*	5	*13.9*	4	*13.8*
Why did he/she choose me?	0	*0.0*	1	*2.4*	1	*1.5*	0	*0.0*	0	*0.0*
15. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?										
I like talking English with foreign tourists.										
Strongly disagree	6	*18.8*	6	*14.6*	0	*0.0*	0	*0.0*	0	*0.0*
Disagree	2	*6.3*	3	*7.3*	2	*2.9*	0	*0.0*	0	*0.0*
Neither agree nor disagree	7	*21.9*	12	*29.2*	16	*23.5*	5	*13.9*	1	*3.4*
Agree	14	*43.8*	13	*31.7*	30	*44.1*	16	*44.4*	6	*20.7*
Strongly agree	3	*9.4*	7	*17.1*	20	*29.4*	15	*41.7*	22	*75.9*
I am comfortable speaking English with foreign tourists.										
Strongly disagree	21	*65.6*	15	*36.6*	1	*1.5*	0	*0.0*	0	*0.0*
Disagree	6	*18.8*	9	*22.0*	17	*25.0*	1	*2.8*	0	*0.0*
Neither agree nor disagree	2	*6.3*	11	*26.8*	16	*23.5*	3	*8.3*	1	*3.4*
Agree	2	*6.3*	4	*9.8*	27	*39.7*	22	*61.1*	7	*24.1*
Strongly agree	1	*3.1*	2	*4.9*	7	*10.3*	10	*27.8*	21	*72.4*
Foreign tourists should learn some French when visiting France.										
Strongly disagree	13	*40.6*	19	*46.3*	16	*23.5*	15	*41.7*	10	*34.5*
Disagree	5	*15.6*	9	*22.0*	23	*33.8*	11	*30.6*	6	*20.7*
Neither agree nor disagree	7	*21.9*	6	*14.6*	21	*30.9*	9	*25.0*	9	*31.0*
Agree	7	*21.9*	6	*14.6*	7	*10.3*	0	*0.0*	4	*14.0*
Strongly agree	0	*0.0*	1	*2.4*	1	*1.5*	1	*2.8*	0	*0.0*

Table 3.8: Interview results (Part V)

	Number	Percentage
Participants in total	206	*100%*
17. How do you feel when you meet a tourist who asks you a question in French?		
Interested	85	*41.3*
Shy	5	*2.4*
Nervous	3	*1.5*
Helpful	159	*77.2*
Irritated	0	*0.0*
Embarrassed	0	*0.0*
Other	18	*8.7*
18. What is your first reaction when you meet a tourist who asks you a question in French?		
How can I help?	172	*83.5*
What is the best way to word my answer?	28	*13.6*
Why did he/she choose me?	6	*2.9*
19. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?		
I like talking French with tourists.		
Strongly disagree	1	*0.5*
Disagree	3	*1.5*
Neither agree nor disagree	29	*14.1*
Agree	81	*39.3*
Strongly agree	92	*44.7*
I am comfortable speaking French with tourists.		
Strongly disagree	2	*1.0*
Disagree	1	*0.5*
Neither agree nor disagree	1	*0.5*
Agree	40	*19.4*
Strongly agree	162	*78.6*
I answer similarly to a tourist speaking French and a tourist speaking English.		
Strongly disagree	15	*7.3*
Disagree	52	*25.2*
Neither agree nor disagree	21	*10.2*
Agree	50	*24.3*
Strongly agree	68	*33.0*

Appendix 4: Findings from the observations

Table 4.1: Observation results

	Number	**Percentage**
Participants in total	280	*100%*
Type of answers		
Negative	13	*4.6*
Positive	267	*95.4*
Incomprehensible	73	*23.2*
Language used to respond		
Only French	23	*8.2*
Mix of French and English	43	*15.4*
Only English	214	*76.4*
Estimated level of English		
Beginner's	41	*14.6*
Elementary	73	*26.1*
Lower intermediate	84	*30.0*
Upper intermediate	54	*19.3*
Advanced	15	*5.4*

Table 4.2: Observation results according to gender

	Women	**Women (%)**	**Men**	**Men (%)**
Participants in total	144	*100%*	136	*100%*
Type of answers				
Negative	6	*4.2*	7	*5.1*
Positive	138	*95.8*	129	*94.9*
Incomprehensible	36	*25.0*	37	*27.2*
Language used to respond				
Only French	15	*10.4*	8	*5.9*
Mix of French and English	22	*15.3*	21	*15.4*
Only English	107	*74.3*	107	*78.7*
Estimated level of English				
Beginner's	22	*15.3*	19	*14.0*
Elementary	37	*25.7*	37	*27.2*
Lower intermediate	46	*31.9*	39	*28.7*
Upper intermediate	23	*16.0*	31	*22.8*
Advanced	10	*6.9*	3	*2.2*

Table 4.3: Observation results according to estimated age

	15-24 y	15-24 y (%)	25-64 y	25-64 y (%)	65 y +	65 y + (%)
Participants in total	60	*100%*	166	*100%*	54	*100%*
Type of answers						
Negative	6	*10.0*	5	*3.0*	2	*3.7*
Positive	54	*90.0*	161	*97.0*	52	*96.3*
Incomprehensible	13	*21.7*	45	*27.1*	15	*27.8*
Language used to respond						
Only French	3	*5.0*	12	*7.2*	8	*14.8*
Mix of French and English	5	*8.3*	25	*15.1*	12	*22.2*
Only English	52	*86.7*	129	*77.7*	34	*63.0*
Estimated level of English						
Beginner's	4	*6.7*	24	*14.5*	13	*24.1*
Elementary	23	*38.3*	40	*24.1*	11	*20.4*
Lower intermediate	16	*26.7*	53	*31.9*	14	*25.9*
Upper intermediate	9	*15.0*	39	*23.5*	6	*11.1*
Advanced	2	*3.3*	5	*3.0*	8	*14.8*