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“I don’t mind”: affective positioning and English in higher education

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Introduction

This study, conducted at Nantes University, aimed to gather attitudes, including affective responses of French-speaking academic staff to their professional use of English. These academics who use English at work, spoke about their language learning histories and described how they used English for research purposes. These responses were gathered as the Fioraso law (2013) was debated and passed. This law has had an impact on academics who are being encouraged to extend their use of English to teaching and not just for specialist research purposes. How these speakers describe using L2 English professionally is key to this study. Affective responses to this institutional transitional period in France have given rise to rich qualitative data. The methodological tools used for this study were 118 pre-interview questionnaires, 17 semi-directed interviews and their associated mind maps as well as teacher diaries. How researchers relate to the use of English at work has been analysed according to a framework of positioning in relation to dominant institutionalised discourses and the strength of their sense of belonging to a community of practice.

Literature review

Approaching affect

For the purpose of this article, affect will be framed within sociological approaches of the self in specific contexts (Goffman, 1959; Bourdieu, 1982; Bamberg, 2004; Mondada, 2013). I understand affect as being a range of responses to a social environment. These responses are visible and interpretable signs of emotion which are expressed and negotiated in social interactions involving language. When studying affective responses in a professional community, the community comes into play both as part of the initial stimuli which may result in certain emotions, but the community will also play a part in

observing, analysing and adjusting to the individuals who are part of that community (Wenger, 1999; Norton, 2000).

Recent models of approaching affect have tried to measure affective responses by using questionnaires to develop quantitative scales. Such studies place participants on a scale of strength of affiliation to a European identity (Grad & Rojo, 2008), or to L2 identity (Dörnyei, 2009) where learners of foreign languages feel more or less emotionally attached to a second language.

Blommaert's theoretical sociolinguistic scale refers to the "layered simultaneity" (reviewed by Arnaut, 2013: 5) of multiple identity memberships occurring on the same micro scale ("neighbourhoods") or level. Blommaert's scale is imagined as a vertical superposition of identity traits and memberships which are constantly under "processes of hierarchical ordering" which "are not juxtaposed, but layered and distinguished" (Blommaert, 2007: 1). The shifts up and down such a scale will also result in affective shifts.

Studies relating to speakers interacting in a group have also referred to weak to strong positioning with respect to the dominant discourse of a certain group (Bamberg, 2004; Georgakopoulou, 2007; Ige, 2010; Reid-Collins, 2013). These studies measure attitudes which include affective responses to external influences on members of communities who position themselves within or against dominant discourses which occur in day-to-day interactions or within institutional policy. Ige (2010) also reviews Ferguson's (1959) diglossic scale of high and low language varieties in academic contexts where speakers may have positive or negative attitudes to higher status languages for specific contexts (English for scientific communication for example). Lemke's (2008:18) scale-differentiated approach combines both the short and long term as well as membership in local and larger institutional communities.

We need a range of differentiated concepts from that of identity-in-practice or the short timescales of situated small-group activity, to notions of identity appropriate to larger institutional scales and lifespan development.

These scalar¹ approaches remain a theoretical framework to allow for the complexity of identity. They do not result in quantitative results which supply a number which supposedly gives a measure of how participants might feel "happy" or "anxious" or "sad". Ranges of weak to strong affective response, or weak to strong European identification, are flexible and may change from context to context. Although Blommaert's (2007) and Ominiya & Goodrith's (2006) hierarchical order of salient identity moments may be useful in expressing short term priorities (I feel more of a mother when I am with my son than when I am at work), it doesn't account for the continuous aspects of identity which are "the cumulative repertoire" (Lemke, 2008) of roles we have taken on and affects we have expressed in the past and which have repercussions in the present. Affective response where "pain matters, fear matters" (*ibid.*: 27) is central to Lemke's personality construction.

¹ Scalar approaches measure affective response in a quantitative type scale, ranging from weak to strong emotional responses in certain situations, or from weak to strong affiliations to certain group identifications.

A scalar approach may allow for quick modulations and shifts up and down a scale but it may also need revisiting to allow for seemingly contradictory affect expressed within one measured response. That is to say, one may feel happy and nervous, or ambiguously related to a certain community, where feelings of belonging and non-belonging may be expressed (Norton, 2000). If affect is “observable behaviour” then how should the researcher interpret minimal expressions of affect, which might be expressed by “I don’t mind”? In that case, we can choose to take a statement as given (Antaki & Widdicome, 1998) or to interpret it as a position which will either validate or reject other members of the community who *do* mind.

Studies which focus on individuals who are in transience, either as learners of an L2, migrants, or professionals who are undergoing institutional change, may give rise to more expressions of uncertainty or ambiguity where “transient, sometimes unclear relationships between self and other contribute to an individual’s position vis-à-vis a collective identity” (Wodak & Kryzanowski, 2008: 98). Kryzanowski uses the image of a threshold when describing these individuals performing new and changing identities. A pragmatic approach to observing affect through language will consider that words do not always mean what words say (Grundy, 1995). When apprehending affect through verbal and written cues only, the observer of affect plays the role of the detective who may or may not be on the right track. The right track in question is also constantly evolving and changing, as non-essentialist approaches to identities see people as undergoing constant change and not remaining fixed as an identity type. If we take into account studies of how individuals remain the same but also change over time (Locke, 1836; Lemke, 2008), we will accept that an affect expressed at one specific moment (Antaki & Widdicome, 1998) may be different at a later date. Within the field of identity studies, it is this semiotic description of identity which is most commonly taken into account (Caldas-Coulthard *et al.*, 2007: 29). A phenomenological description of experience is one which is more likely to evoke how the individual experiences and remembers emotions through his/her environment but these are not easily captured by linguistic definitions which necessarily result in hindsight, interpretation and modification.

When studying the contexts corresponding to how people feel and how they describe those feelings at work, the influence of *the Other* (Coffey, 2013; Grad & Rojo, 2008; Riley, 2007; Wolff, 1950) in terms of the institution, institutional policy, the community and other individuals will play a role in how they moderate their language in face-to-face interactions (Goffman, 1959). The words they choose to use in a professional interaction will also depend on politeness codes and appropriate register (Brown, 1987).

Positioning and role: attitude to national and institutional master narratives

The term master narrative is used in positioning analysis to refer to dominant discourses which individuals position themselves against in terms of their own identity. When placing affect within or against a community, Och’s definition of “stance” takes into account both the exchange of knowledge in an interaction and the affect associated to the interaction itself and the greater

epistemic environment of the speakers:

“Stance” means a display of a socially recognised point of view or attitude. Stance includes displays of epistemic attitudes, such as how certain or uncertain a speaker is about some proposition, and displays of affective attitudes (Ochs, 1993: 288).

Mondada (2013) distinguishes between a “knowing” and “unknowing” stance where there are “relative positions of knowing (K+) or not knowing (K-) participants” (*ibid.*: 3). The K+/K- role (knowledge giver and knowledge requester) is a constant negotiation between speakers who claim and who question. This means that affect comes into play within exchanges of linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1982) and positioning to and from the dominant and subordinate discourses in interactions. In communities of practice, individuals come together in an exchange and reinforcement of K trends. In these contexts, members can be actively participative or peripherally involved in the dominant discourse (Wenger, 1999).

Bamberg (2004) analyses interactions for evidence of the speakers adhering to or rejecting a given community, value-set, or even another speaker in the interaction. Bamberg also chooses three levels of positioning to analyse interaction:

- *level 1*: how the characters are positioned within the account;
- *level 2*: how the speaker/narrator positions herself within the interactive situation;
- *level 3*: how the speaker/narrator positions a sense of self/identity with regard to dominant discourses or master narratives (summary of Bamberg & Georgakopoulou’s levels of interactive positioning, 2008).

This study of how some scientists relate to the obligation of having to use English at work, and how they position themselves against macro-institutional discourse regarding the use of English in French academia (level 3 positioning) will give rise to useful data concerning affective responses. Setting one’s own language (in this case, French) against possible higher language varieties (in this case English) may result in a native speaker rejecting adherence to a community of speakers, in a specific context such as the Fioraso law (2013). The study of endangered language discourse (Reid-Collins, 2013) reveals all the possible negative affect stimulated by the term “endanger”, such as fear, anger or anxiety.

The minister for Higher Education and Research in France, Geneviève Fioraso has legitimised the gradual trend of incorporating English as part of Content and Language Integrated learning (CLIL), especially in non-literary disciplines in higher education. The new law concerning higher education and research (called “loi ESR” or “loi Fioraso”) states:

La langue de l’enseignement, des examens et des concours, ainsi que les thèses et mémoires, dans les établissements d’enseignement supérieur, peut être *une autre langue que le français*.² (My italics. L. 761-1 du Code de l’éducation 2013).

Institutional language policies of this kind, which legislate for how people

² “The language of teaching, examinations, national diplomas, theses, and dissertations within institutions of higher education may be a language other than French” (*all translations in this article are my own*).

should speak, are generally unpopular. In 1994, the French Minister for Culture, Jacques Toubon passed law n° 94-665 to protect French culture and linguistic heritage. Article 4 of the Toubon law stipulated that foreign documents should be translated into both French and English, and that state institutions should use the French equivalent of English terms (*toile* instead of web, *courriel* instead of e-mail). In general, up to the passing of the Fioraso law in 2013, French civil service, commerce, advertising and education were under the legal obligation of using French, or French translations of English terms. Nevertheless, even the initial version of Toubon's law was toned down by the "*Conseil constitutionnel*" (Constitutional Council) because it contradicted article 2 of the French Constitution and article 11 of the Freedom of Speech Act (Article XI, Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen, 1789: 6). These articles state that "French is the language of the Republic", but that it is for individuals to "freely decide what words are most appropriate to express their thoughts"³ (Decision made by the constitutional council on 29 July 1994, cited in Chansou, 1997: 33). It also brings to light that a legal definition of a French word is near impossible. When a law wishes to ensure the use of French words, it is then faced with determining whether a term is essentially "French".

Such an attack to personal freedom was picked up on during the Toubon era when forbidding people to publish in English resulted in a counter-reaction of the press ridiculing Toubon as Mr. All Good (Tout Bon), for example (Anon., 1996). Today, Geneviève Fioraso could argue that she is opening up the possibility for content classes to be taught in other languages than French, however this has been criticised as diminishing the role of French as an international language of communication and interpreted as a political pressure on academic institutions to increase the use of English. Whereas the law can be interpreted as simply lifting the ban on English set by the outdated Toubon Law, Fioraso has been criticised for not openly stating that the "other language" is that other imperialist language, English. It was in this context that the study was devised and carried out.

Methodology

The first stage of data collection took the form of an online bilingual questionnaire sent to academics working at scientific academic departments at the University of Nantes, France. The invitation was sent out via an email list server entitled "enseignants-sciences" and the participants were invited to answer in French or in English. One of the last questions of the questionnaire asked for an open response as to why they had chosen to answer the questionnaire either in French or in English. The questionnaire was used to obtain demographic information about the participants such as gender, age and professional academic discipline. The aim of the questionnaire was also to pinpoint the areas in which academics used English. The participants were invited to describe, via open responses, how they felt about using English, both at work

³ "[l]e droit pour chacun de choisir les termes jugés par lui les mieux appropriés à l'expression de sa pensée".

and outside, in terms of affective response. Questions concerning how and to what extent the participants used English were to be the basis for further qualitative inquiry during a follow-up interview which lasted approximately 30 minutes. The response rate to the survey was 35.9% (118 responses/328 registered members of the mailing list). Of these, 17 agreed to be interviewed.

The 17 L1 French/L2⁴ English-speaking participants were not necessarily representative of a whole scientific community. Some of the participants had strong positive or strongly negative affect towards using English and this is what may have drawn them to talk about it. The initial questionnaire was anonymous whereas a one-to-one interview of this kind lifted the anonymity concerning a response to what is, in effect, a discussion about working conditions. Indeed, one participant believed that I was collecting data for the Fioraso ministry to gauge the response to the law.

Pseudonym	Gender	Academic discipline	Language (s) chosen for interview
Ben	M	Marine biology	FR
Brieuc	M	Cardiology	FR
David	M	Information technology	EN
Emma	F	Bio-chemistry	FR/EN
Erwan	M	Physics	FR
François	M	Information technology	FR/EN
Henri	M	Physics	FR
Jennifer	F	Maths	EN
Larry	M	Neuro-biology	FR/EN
Max	M	Maths	EN
Mickael	M	Molecular biology	FR
Miriam	F	Biology	FR
Paul	M	Geology	EN
Philbert	M	Environmental science	EN
Philippe	M	Analytical chemistry	EN
Stéphanie	M	Biology	FR/EN
Vera	F	Marine-biology	FR

Table 1 - Information about the professional academic participants

35% of the interviewed participants were women, which was a slightly higher response rate to the initial online questionnaire of 28%. This percentage also reflects the ratio of female academics at the Nantes Science University (95 women, 233 men for the academic year 2012-13). There was no direct correlation between what the participants said during the interview and their academic field. However, there was a higher participation rate from biologists. Many of the participants chose to do all or part of the interview in English. This was in keeping with the overall tendency of the participants who decided to answer the online questionnaire in English. Some of the questionnaire participants answered the questionnaire in English because French was their L2. These participants were not included in the interview process as the focus of my study was L2 speakers of

⁴ L1: first acquired language, sometimes referred to as mother tongue; L2: formally learned language.

English. When the participants arrived for interview I re-iterated the possibility of doing the interview in French, English or both. On the whole, the response was “I don’t mind!” making full use of its phatic or polite function. This initial, non-recorded response was interesting as it showed what language the participant deemed appropriate for the interview, after shifting from a greeting which had started in French. It also highlighted the wish of some of the participants who wanted to practise their English. Those who made a strong stand about doing the interview in French were also the ones who expressed the most negative affect towards English usage and the Fioraso law. The question of competency in relation to the other members of the scientific community and affect was therefore a significant one. This will be discussed *infra*.

Mind mapping as a mixed methods tool in qualitative research

The rationale for asking the participants to draw a mindmap at the beginning of the interview is in keeping with other qualitative studies which have used mindmapping as a pre-interview tool (Wheeldon & Faubert, 2009; Busch, 2012) or who use visual aids such as photographs during interviews (Meinhof & Galasinski, 2005). Omoniyi’s Hierachy of Identity model (which also uses visual stimuli) predicts that depending on the context (of the interview) and the image, the resultant qualitative data will reveal the salient choices that the participants will make during that interaction. Mind maps are complementary to this approach as they are based on immediate concepts, key words and hierarchies (Buzan, 1974; Wheeldon & Faubert, 2009).

The participants were asked to visually represent how much they used English in the workplace and how much they used English outside of the workplace. Most of the participants decided to represent this in the form of a pie-chart. The participants were asked to comment and criticize the mindmapping activity and to describe its limitations. Two participants decided that they would rather describe these distinctions orally than draw a picture.

Data processing

The interviews were transcribed and analysed using the frameworks of analysis described in the literature review. The mind maps were studied as complementary to the interview, keeping in mind the following research questions: to what extent do participants quantify an affective response to using English? To what extent do participants make clear distinctions between the personal and professional in general? In keeping with a current trend in scalar studies, the mind maps were also studied to see if they revealed hierarchies or categories which were relevant to the interview context.

The agency and function of the interviewer were taken into account, with respect to why the participants had chosen to take part in the interview. At the end of the interview, the participants were asked why they had taken part in the interview and whether they had any questions.

The following results will give examples from a sample of the 17 participants, with a greater final focus on participant Emma. The names given are pseudonyms.

Translations are given when the participants spoke in French. The English quotations are direct quotations from the participants who spoke in English.

Results and discussion

Five major results emerged from the analysis of the positioning and attitudes of the participants. Firstly, the participants made a distinction between personal and professional uses of English and this was associated with affect-rich and affect-poor language. Secondly, the participants referred to English as being a higher variety for scientific communication. Thirdly, affect was modulated depending on how the participants positioned themselves against an idealised community of scientists and to how they evaluated their own competence as L2 speakers. These views were set against the current educational context of the Fioraso law. Finally, mixed affective responses were expressed which took into account the individual in his/her community.

Affect in terms of spheres of language use

On the whole the participants made distinctions between personal and professional spheres. They re-iterated this during the mindmapping which reinforces this distinction visually.

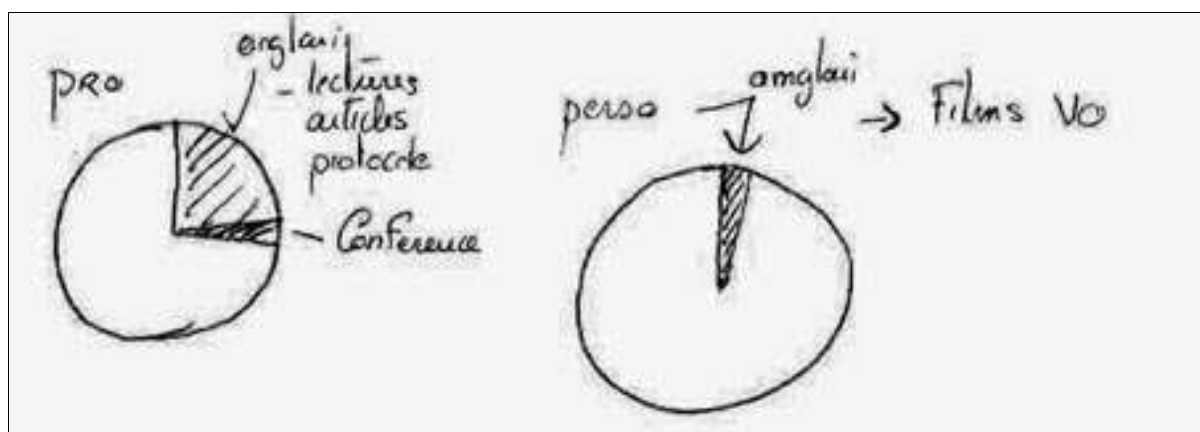


Figure 1 – Miriam’s mindmap, showing perceived quantities of how much she uses English for “pro” (professional) and “perso” (personal) uses

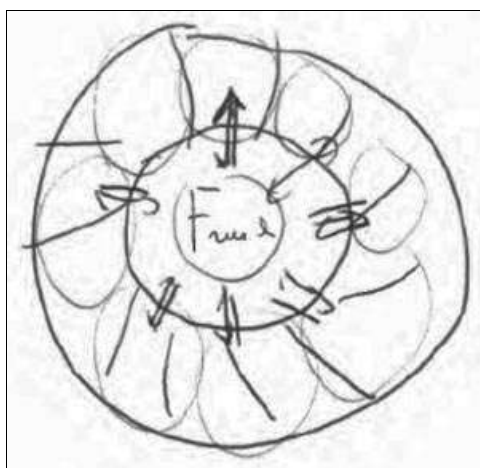


Figure 2 – Larry’s mindmap, showing “French” at the core

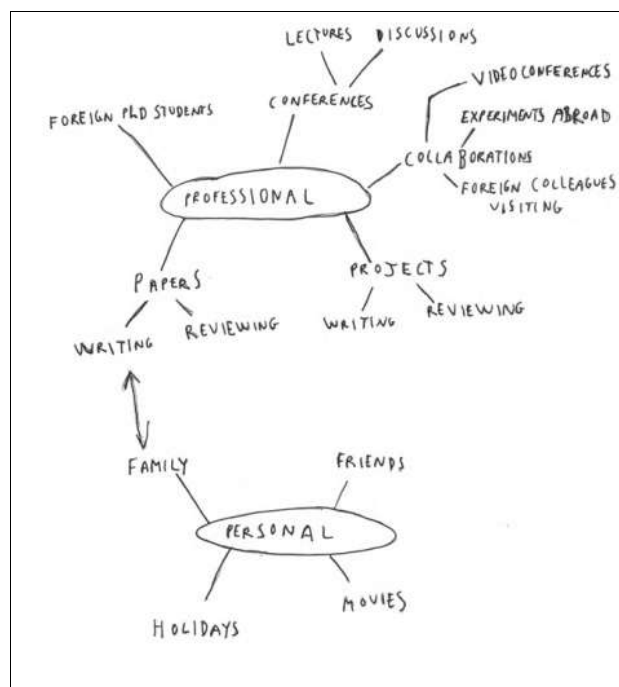


Figure 3 – Philippe’s mindmap, showing greater detail for the use of English in the professional sphere

Although I had expected some criticism from the participants of the mindmapping activity itself, especially in relation to making such a sharp distinction between the professional and personal, all the participants (apart from Larry) focused on this distinction in detail. Larry who had spent five years working in the USA said that an extended stay in an English-speaking country had had an effect on what he referred to as an initially L1 core self. Larry evokes an approach to identity that sees individuals as unchanging (often described as core or essentialist identity), which is mostly stable over time and shaped, not inherently altered by experience.

The drawings clearly divided the professional and the personal but also included far greater detail or gave greater quantitative weight to how English was used in the professional domain. This can be explained by the fact that the focus of the interview was the use of professional English in general. It also showed an interesting correlation between how greater emotional response could be visually represented as a greater or smaller quantity depending on how great or small a burden it was on the individual.

The distinctions also had repercussions on what the participants referred to as affect-rich language, which was associated with the personal or social sphere of identity and to neutral, affect-poor language which was associated with the professional sphere. In terms of how English was divided between these two spheres, the participants distinguished between ESP (English for Specific Purposes) or what they referred to as “scientific English” and general English.

Zhang’s studies refer to the dichotomy between how language changes depending on the professional or personal context. On a purely semantic scale, the vocabulary used for the home will differ from vocabulary used to refer to the workplace including verbal choices where

the processes are more action-oriented in the business world (*e.g.* sell, manage, manufacture, deliver, confirm) than in the everyday life world (*e.g.* know, see, pray, feel, die, lie, marry). The goings-on of the two worlds are essentially different (Zhang, 2007: 403-4).

The following extract of an interview with Vera, reveals that she makes a clear distinction between what she deems to be scientific English and social English:

- Vera Et c'est vrai il y a l'anglais scientifique, qui est plus professionnel et l'anglais, je dirais plus communicatif, de convivialité je dirais.
- Alex C'est très différent pour vous?
- Vera Ah oui, tout à fait, Je n'ai pas de difficulté avec l'anglais scientifique à l'oral, et par contre pour l'anglais convivial, là j'ai vraiment du mal. Dans l'anglais scientifique il n'y a pas de ressentis, c'est très objectif. L'anglais scientifique c'est sujet verbe complément, point barre. Alors que l'anglais convivial, où l'on veut faire passer des ressentis, des émotions, des sentiments, je n'ai pas le vocabulaire.⁵

Vera expresses that she feels competent at scientific English but that she doesn't have "the vocabulary" in Zhang's terms, to describe "feelings, emotions or sentiments". Later in this turn, Vera spoke about colleagues she had met at conference dinners who later became what she described as "friends she emailed". Although this suggests that she is competent at social English, she still doesn't feel that she masters it as well as what she describes as "scientific English".

This is counter-balanced by Larry who also makes a distinction between different types of English but who feels that he needs both types in the professional context.

You cannot teach just by using scientific English. You need other words. There is scientific English in papers, for communicating at meetings, but for questions you need other types of English (Larry).

English as a higher variety for scientific communication

Language was another point of contention for discussing what was the most appropriate language for scientific academic communication. Repeated references were made to the L1 and L2, where in terms of endangered language discourse (Reid-Collins, 2013), English was referred to as a "higher" variety for the professional domain and French as a "lower" variety (Ige, 2010; Ferguson 1959): "French is not made for Science. French embellishes too much, English is an elegant short-cut (David)". Although embellishing could be seen as a positive action, it is seen as "too much" for what David describes as to-the-point science. This short cut is described positively as elegant too, as the type of attribute that he feels is appropriate for scientific language.

⁵ Vera: And it's true, there is scientific English, which is more professional, and English which is, I would say, more communicative, for socialising I would say.

Alex: These are very different for you?

Vera: Well, yes, they really are. I don't have any problems with scientific English orally, but for social English I really have a problem there. In scientific English it's subject, verb, object, and that's it. Whereas in social English, where we want to express feelings, emotions and sentiments, I don't have the vocabulary for that.

Emma identifies French as being a “problem” for her work where it fails to match up to English for searches on the internet for laboratory protocols. Her account shows that she has experienced looking for protocols in French and that this has failed. Again, in terms of endangered language discourse, this turn is of interest because she does not add judgemental clauses to the fact that

[q]uand on tape sur les moteurs de recherche en français on trouve pas forcément, on a souvent plus de résultats en anglais donc je l'utilise pour la recherche sur Internet et je m'en sers pour lire des publications puisque elles sont toutes en anglais (Emma).⁶

Unlike David, Emma's turn here is markedly lacking in language attitude with respect to her L1 (French). There is no expression of regret such as “unfortunately” as a starting adverbial. However, the fact that she has had to get round this source of trouble means that she refers to a professional, yet unspoken, burden (see Table 2). Reid-Collins's study (2013) showed that what is left unsaid can sometimes be as valuable as what is spoken outright. However, many of the academics' description of how French is, for their research needs, almost useless, appears to have already buried the “endangered language”.

Affect, the idealised community and competence

As we have seen, the participants seem to have resigned themselves to English being the necessary language of communication for science. Indeed 96% of these online survey participants had said that they wrote articles in English. How they positioned themselves with regards to the obligation of having to use English for professional purposes can be represented along a linear scale varying from a weak to a strong affective response.

STRONG		WEAK		STRONG	
<i>Je n'aime pas ça</i>	<i>C'est contraignant</i>	<i>Faut faire avec</i>	<i>Ça ne me dérange pas</i>	<i>J'aime bien</i>	<i>J'adore</i>
I don't like it.	It's a burden.	You just have to make do with it.	I don't mind.	I like it.	I love it.
Ben	Henri Emma	Max	Emma	Stéphanie Emma	Philippe, Paul

Table 2 - Strong-weak-strong affective scale

Weak to strong affective response of this kind is set against a value-system of what is deemed to be a “good scientist”:

Quand on fait des sciences il faut avoir un bon niveau d'anglais (Emma).⁷

You have to adapt yourself to the scientific community (David).

⁶ “When you type in searches on the internet in French, you don't necessarily get anything, you're more likely to get results in English, so I use English for research on the internet and I use it for reading publications as they are all in English” (Emma).

⁷ “When one does Science one needs to have a good level of English” (Emma).

which students or other colleagues may or may not match up to. How participants position themselves as different or similar to other members of the community was often a rich area for personal comment and affective response:

The others don't care about English (Larry and Paul).

Les autres ont un meilleur niveau que moi (Ben).⁸

Nous sommes plusieurs à avoir des problèmes avec l'anglais (Miriam).⁹

The scientific community in question was referred to on a local level when referring to colleagues working at the same university, but the participants also referred to a greater scientific community which they would refer to when describing their attendance at international conferences.

Native speakers don't make the effort to speak slowly or repeat (Jennifer).

Je trouve ça difficile de répondre aux questions (Jennifer, Vera).¹⁰

My French colleagues are less understanding than native-speakers (Emma).

Je suis plus à l'aise quand je parle en anglais avec mon thésard portugais que quand je parle avec mes collègues au labo (Ben).¹¹

When the participants are positioning themselves within the framework of master narratives (positioning 3, Bamberg, 2004) there is repeated reference to “we”, “us” and “them” (Simmel, 1950; Coffey, 2013) “*on nous disait*” (we were told), “*on n’était pas obligé*” (we were not obliged), “*quand on fait des sciences*” (when one does science). “We/One” suggests a dominant (scientific) discourse which sets “the scientist” as a standard to be measured against. Birello *et al.* (2011) have studied the shifts between “personal” (*je*) and “reproduced” (*on*) discourse (*ibid.*: 85) in diaries written in French. Their study of “I” in teacher discourse focuses on the shifts that can occur with the use of “I”. “I” can then be sub-divided into “*I-person, I-language student, I-teacher in training, and I-future teacher*” (*ibid.*: 83). This shows that, depending on the context, the projection of “je” and “on” can vary. Using Riley’s (2007) personal identity framework we could also analyse how a speaker may refer to both the private self and social self, depending on how the individual includes or excludes him/herself from master narratives. This is evident in the marked shift between the use of “je” (I) and “on” (an intermediary between “one” and “we” in modern French) as a subject for opinion, the latter offering a greater “social” support for the participants’ opinions when they are framed using a collective pronoun.

Affective response to the Fioraso law

The attitudes concerning the possibility of teaching in English ranged from resigned acceptance to enthusiasm. When I asked the participants if they could envisage teaching in English, the responses varied from “I’d like to teach in

⁸“The others are better at English than me” (Ben).

⁹“Many of us have problems with English” (Miriam).

¹⁰ “I find it difficult to answer questions” (Jennifer, Vera).

¹¹ “I feel more relaxed speaking to my Portuguese PhD student in English than when speaking English with my French colleagues here” (Ben).

English tomorrow!” (Paul) to resigned acceptance: “I will do it if I have to” (Vera), “If we get a message from the Dean saying that we have to teach in English, then OK, I’ll do it” (Philippe) and “I’ll do it but my accent and grammar is not good enough” (Jennifer). None of the participants said that they would make a stand against the Fioraso law and refuse to teach in English.

All of the interviewed participants had already worked with PhD students in English on a one-to-one level, but only Emma had already had experience of teaching undergraduate laboratory classes in English. Subsequent observations of Emma teaching both in English and in French, as well as her diary entries, revealed that she engaged with the performance element of language learning in general, where speaking an L2 is to be someone else (Wilson, 2013). This is reiterated by Jenny, for example, when she says: “Il est plus difficile pour moi d’être naturelle en anglais”¹², where the L2 is perceived as a subtraction of a perceived integrative self.

Teaching the lesson in English was described as a game by both Emma and some of her students. Indeed, Emma started her first lesson with a labelling game as she wanted the students to think that doing a lab class in English would be “fun”.

Ont eu l’air d’apprécier le jeu de recherche des objets à partir des cartes avec leur noms en anglais (Day 1, Emma’s diary).¹³

Interestingly, this was not a concern of hers for the lessons she taught in French. Her diary entries reveal that she wanted to “lighten up” the English lesson as she was concerned that the students would find it daunting. She says little of her own affective response, apart from the physical toll teaching in English has on her (tiredness).

En fin de journée il est plus difficile de parler anglais à cause de la fatigue (Day 2, Emma’s diary).¹⁴

Joining in with other teachers of English in general, she expressed annoyance during a further interview at her students responding to her in French when she made the effort to speak to them in English. Regarding her attitude to her students and how they responded to learning English, she said:

Moi je trouve ça bien et de forcer, enfin de donner des opportunités, je trouve ça hyper-important. Je les ai vus en ABT [*Advanced Biology Training*] ils ont pas forcément tous un très bon niveau d’anglais et quand on fait des sciences il faut avoir un bon niveau d’anglais si on veut être au courant de ce qui passe, ben, avoir accès à tous les protocoles en ligne. Toutes les infos elles sont souvent en anglais donc c’est vraiment important s’ils veulent pouvoir communiquer (Emma).¹⁵

¹² “I find it harder to be natural in English” (Jenny).

¹³ “They seem to have appreciated the game where they had to find the lab objects corresponding to the English labels I had given them” (Day 1, Emma’s diary).

¹⁴ “At the end of the day, it is more difficult to speak in English because I am tired” (Day 2, Emma’s diary).

¹⁵ “I think it is good to force, well to give opportunities, I find it really important. I have seen them in ABT, they don’t necessarily have a very good level of English and when one does science one needs to have a good level of English, if we want to know what is going on, to

Emma's shifts between the words "force", "give opportunities", "oblige", show that her *I-teacher* account hesitates over the appropriate labels to describe "the English medicine" which would be good for her students to take. She also shifts between what she may feel is appropriate in teacher discourse. When referring to her students, she really *does mind*, ("c'est hyper important", "c'est vraiment important"). In her opinion, the students who study biology in English in the advanced biology training course do not have a "good enough level of English" to be "scientists". Here she is referring to her own membership categorisation of what a "scientist" is, and how the students have not yet achieved competence ("when you do science you need a good level of English if you want to know what is going on, to have access to *all* the protocols on line, and to be able to communicate"). The "all" is significant here as it is the only reference to how being able to read both French and English protocols may be useful to a scientist. It shows that when she is starting to talk about communication in general, then all the language tools "scientists" have are an asset. However, the "all" is placed alongside the "often", and French slips back to its lower variety when she concludes with "all the information is often in English".

Mixed affective responses

Affective responses varied depending on how the participants positioned themselves in their community, on their personal language learning histories and on the immediate context of the interview and the interviewer. Those who claimed that they "didn't mind" using English were either positioning themselves against a real or imagined community of colleagues. "I don't mind" also expressed a resigned acceptance of working conditions in general, where "English" was perceived as another "job" to do. Henri's comment seems to indicate that he doesn't expect any positive affect from work in general:

Ça fait partie de mon travail, je ne me suis pas vraiment posé la question si c'était agréable ou pas (Henri).¹⁶

Ce n'est pas forcément juste, on écrirait mieux, avec plus de nuance, si on écrivait directement en français (Miriam).¹⁷

Miriam refers to the context of the Fioraso law and the obligation of having to use English at work as being unjust. To her, there is a loss of quality in her work when she writes her articles in English and she imagines that this would also affect her quality of teaching.

The term "minding" or "bothered" in French can also be a measure of affective response which varies from the socially moderate ("être dérangé") to the extreme and socially excluding label of mental instability ("elle est dérangée" [she is deranged]). Stating strong opinions about "minding" may also

have access to all the protocols on line. All the information is often in English, so it is really important if they want to be able to communicate" (Emma).

¹⁶ "It's part of my work, I have never really asked myself if it is enjoyable or not" (Henri).

¹⁷ "It isn't very fair, we would write better, with greater nuance, if we wrote directly in French" (Miriam).

have been deemed too strong or inappropriate for being expressed during these interviews which took place in the workplace.

Emma's positioning and her resultant affective responses go beyond the graded scale in Table 2.

Ah oui, moi j'aime bien. Au contraire ça permet d'entretenir un peu, même si je parle pas souvent. J'aime bien, oui. Ça ne me dérange pas (Emma).¹⁸

Making references to many of the items listed in Table 2, she varies her response, from quite liking, to liking to not minding. In this turn, she shows that she is aware of how other members of her community may mind, she also makes reference to how "minding" and "contrary" positions can come into play within a tempered and socially integrative response to greater institutional pressure.

Conclusion

The academics in this study observed each other along a shifting scale of greater institutional discourse. They positioned themselves within this master narrative of what they perceived to be good scientific practice. The current master narrative, states that "scientists" need to be good at English to be successful professionally, for research purposes. The participants respond to this model by expressing affective concern about not being able to meet up to an idealised standard of professional L2 competence, or by embracing it to the full, even to the detriment of their own, "lower" variety L1, if needs must. The professional and personal spheres of identity are linked to language where the more "embellished" L1 has shifted to the personal sphere. Affect-poor, generic English has already been a part of these scientists' lives for research purposes for over ten years. A newer aspect of its professional presence, framed by the passing of the Fioraso law, is now revolutionising the classroom in France. Undergraduate content classes taught by non-native academics will be a rich terrain for further study in identity, affect and education.

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¹⁸ "Ah yes, I quite like it. On the contrary, it enables me to keep it up a bit, even if I don't speak it very often. I like it, yes. I don't mind" (Emma).

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