

Écriture inclusive : liberté, égalité, sororité ?

How the debate on inclusive writing exposes language ideologies in France



Thesis MA Intercultural Communication

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Abstract

This research, conducted within the framework of the Master's program Intercultural Communication, was initiated in response to the recent debate on *écriture inclusive* in France. In 2015, after more than three decades of attempts to feminize job titles in France, the council for equality between men and women put forward several suggestions to make women more visible in writing, by means of orthographic and grammatical reforms. Once this movement started to gain ground in the public discourse, it led to a national polemic beyond compare. Although the position and roles of authorities will also be discussed, the main focus of this thesis is on the attitudes and ideologies of the general audience. This study analyses how speakers in France today evaluate recent proposals of inclusive writing, in an attempt to expose their underlying language ideologies. A questionnaire with qualitative elements revealed the awareness, attitudes and opinions of French respondents under the age of 25 towards *écriture inclusive* and other elements of their language. A semiotic analysis brought to light that the ideological reasoning of the speakers is mainly based on the strong indexical relationship between the most visible aspect of inclusive writing (*le point milieu*) and a social movement for the equality between men and women. The biggest divide in opinions can be traced back to two vastly different language ideologies: one in which language had the ability to influence society, and one in which it does not, which – in light of the relevant theories – can be understood as different conceptions of gender. This study offers a unique insight into language ideologies in France and concludes with some possible steps for further research.

KEY WORDS: *écriture inclusive, inclusive writing, language ideologies, grammatical gender, feminist language reform, French, semiotic processes*

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“ Une langue ne se fixe pas. L'esprit humain est toujours en marche,
ou, si l'on veut, en mouvement, et les langues avec lui. “

Victor Hugo (1827), Préface de Cromwell

1 | Introduction

In 2015, *le Haut Conseil à l'Égalité entre les Femmes et les Hommes* (HCE) of France published a practical guide with ten recommendations for public communication without gender stereotypes. According to the Council, government communication in France will continue to reproduce gender stereotypes if awareness does not increase soon. Based on the belief that communication can be an agent of social change, their recommendations are all aimed at making women more visible in writing and phasing out the hierarchy of gender that they argue currently exists in the French language. According to HCE, this can be done by marking both the feminine and the masculine, either by writing and naming both (*les acteurs* et *les actrices*) or by composing the word with the following formula: root word + masculine suffix + point + feminine suffix (*les acteur.rice.s*) (HCE, 2015).

Two years later, in May 2017, the communications agency *Mots clés* published a manual that builds on the recommendations of the HCE. The goal of their guide is similar: to encourage people to advance equality between men and women through their writing. The manual proposes three simple conventions, one of which includes the introduction of a new punctuation mark: *le point milieu* (Haddad, 2017). One key term that the guide proposes, *écriture inclusive*, was quickly picked up by the media to describe all concepts related to non-sexist writing, but mainly related to the use of the *point milieu*. Inclusive writing in its broadest sense is a way of writing that is non-discriminatory with regards to people who identify as female (Abbou et al. 2018). In contrast to the HCE's guide, this guide by *Mots clés* is principally directed at (commercial) organizations (Haddad, 2017).

Until September 2017, the topic of inclusive writing remained distant from the general public, until the French publishing house Hatier released an inclusive textbook aimed at children in the second year of elementary school (CE2). Following the recommendations of the HCE and *Mots Clés*, the textbook includes inclusive forms of writing by means of the *point milieu*, such as *artisan·e·s* (meaning both *artisans* and *artisanes*) and *agriculteur·rice·s* (*agriculteur* and *agricultrice*) (Pech, 2017). The move from a theoretical debate amongst agencies and advisory bodies to actual implementation in the classroom led to an unrivaled controversy. From the beginning of October on, national newspapers started publishing articles about inclusive writing

in large numbers. Right-wing newspaper *Le Figaro* took the lead by publishing seven articles about inclusive writing in one day (October 6th), of which two were featured on the front page. Left-wing newspaper *Libération* followed a month later with a front page and a spread of six articles dedicated to *écriture inclusive*. France's most read newspaper *Le Monde* even published a unique editorial piece written by their copy editors, in which they explain their considerations in applying or not applying inclusive writing; a topic on which they had not yet reached consensus.¹

A response from *l'Académie Française* – the highest council for matters pertaining to the French language – underlines how considerable this issue had become by the fall of 2017. On October 26th, they released an official declaration which raised a solemn warning against “inclusive writing that claims to be the norm”. The declaration – that can be found in appendix 10.1 – was unanimously adopted by all the members of the *l'Académie*. In the statement, they express their fear that inclusive writing will lead to a disunited language, create confusion, or even worse: result in illegibility. Mainly concerned with this new form of writing destroying the promises of the Francophonie and complicating the acquirement of French as a world language, the statement reads: “*la langue française se trouve désormais en péril mortel, ce dont notre nation est dès aujourd'hui comptable devant les générations futures.*”

On the 21st of November 2017, prime minister Édouard Philippe also publicly criticized certain aspects of inclusive writing. In a *circulaire* – an official ministry text for all employees of the civil service – he gave recommendations on what should and should not be used in French writing. The same day, all most prominent French newspapers opened with a headline stating that Édouard Philippe “bans inclusive writing in official texts”.² Hereby, the media unjustly reduced his position to a condemnation of inclusive writing. The circulaire indeed invites the reader to not make use of “editorial and typographical practices aiming at substituting the use of the generic masculine in order to stress the existence of a feminine form”. The prime minister condemns this for reasons of intelligibility and clarity of the norm. Although it promotes masculine as the neutral and generic form, the *circulaire* also accepts and even promotes other forms of inclusive writing proposed by HCE. The official text states that job titles should be adapted to the gender of the employee (*la ministre, la secrétaire Générale, la directrice*), it encourages systematic use of inclusive norms in recruitment texts and vacancies (such as *le candidat ou la candidate*) and it recommends to systematically feminize title functions (Philippe, 2017). In short, it only bans one aspect of inclusive writing: the *point milieu*. However, it was framed by the press media not as a

compromise, but a disapproval. In the same month, minister of Education Jean-Michel Blanquer had already added a political and nationalist dimension to the debate by tweeting: “Il y a une seule langue française, une seule grammaire, une seule République.” (Blanquer, 2017). These protectionist and purist statements make evident not only the intensity of the debate, but also the extent to which arguments are mainly ideologically motivated rather than linguistically.

France is known for distinguishing itself from other French speaking countries and regions such as Switzerland, Belgium and Québec when it comes to its strong resistance to feminization of the language (Dawes, 2003). In France, proposals similar to inclusive writing – such as feminizing title functions – have often raised hysterical reactions (Houdebine-Gravaud 1999: 46), and opposition from *l'Académie Française*. Although the internal structure of the French language allows speakers a wide range of options to make females visible, speaker's choices are – to a certain extent – restricted, more by ideological considerations than linguistic ones (Dawes, 2003). The fact that a female school principle has been called *directrice* for more than a century, whereas the female director of the central administration was still called *madame le directeur* until very recently, attests that the resistance for feminization of job titles is not merely linguistic (Cerquiglini, Becquer, Cholewka, Coutier & Mathieu, 1999).

This study therefore focuses on the ideological foundations in the heightened debate. The goal of this research is twofold: firstly, to study how the debate of inclusive writing fits into the bigger historical picture of language ideologies in France, understood as “the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests” (Irvine 1989:255). Secondly, the study aims to investigate the public opinion of this evolution. According to Damar (2010), fervent defenders of *la langue pure* have forgotten that ‘the objective norm’ constructs itself not only through the discourse of grammarians and representatives of *l'Académie*, but also by subjective norms and representations of Francophones with regards to their language. Ultimately, once a language is established as a standard, its survival depends on obedience to authority (Milroy, 2007). How speakers of French evaluate proposed changes to ‘their’ language therefore deserves attention. The aim of this research is not to predict the outcome of the ongoing debate, but rather to gain a deeper understanding of the forces at play.

Research questions and relevance

Because the topic is so recent, this thesis can serve as an exploratory study into the public opinion of French speakers towards these contemporary evolutions of the French language. Examples of evaluations of speakers in many languages show that the attitudes speakers have, and the value they attribute towards certain linguistic usages, play a key role in the survival and expansion of this usage. Metalinguistic attitudes – for example, what speakers think is correct, incorrect, formal or informal – teach us that their linguistic consciousness is structured, but at the same time structuring, because these attitudes influence their linguistic behavior (Morsly, 1990). Furthermore, these associations expose if *écriture inclusive* indexes a certain type of personality, political allegiance, or moral worth (Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994). Considering the high coverage and mediatization of the topic, it is to be expected that many speakers are already aware of inclusive writing, and have formed opinions themselves.

However, languages and speaker's attitudes towards them, don't appear out of nowhere. During different moments in history, languages become vehicles for political or social intervention, which makes every language fact intrinsically historical (Blommaert, 1999). Especially in France, language has served as an essential factor in the construction of the French national identity (De Certeau, Julia, Revel, 2002). We should therefore examine the current understandings and ideologies about language against the backdrop of previous evolutions and instrumentalizations of French. These considerations lead to the following research question:

Which language ideologies underlie the speakers' attitudes towards inclusive writing?

In order to understand the concept of inclusive writing, it is first necessary to understand the complexity of grammatical gender in French and the grammar rules that have caused outrage amongst the proponents of inclusive writing. The subsequent theoretical framework will provide analytical tools, in order to understand what language ideologies are and how they function. Having established this, I will delve next into the historical context to determine how 'French' became a 'standard' and 'fixed' language and to determine which authorities play roles of power when it comes to shaping and preserving this standard language. Through primary research – a quantitative survey with a qualitative element – I will determine how inclusive writing is received by the general public, and which dominant language ideologies we can deduct from this.

2 | Context

This chapter provides linguistic and institutional context in order to understand the essence of this debate which is centered around relatively complicated linguistic material. What is it about the French language that is allegedly *exclusive* in its current form?

2.1 Grammatical gender in French

The generic use of masculine words such as ‘man’ and ‘he’ is common in many languages, such as English and Dutch. In French, a language with a grammatical gender system in which all nouns are inherently masculine or feminine, this also is the case for words like *visiteurs* and *lecteurs* which are often used to address an audience consisting of both men and women – hereby omitting the female nouns *visiteuses* and *lectrices*. Thus, besides designating people and concepts that are grammatically masculine, the masculine form also serves a generic purpose. It is important to note the difference between words that often only have one form for both male and female referents (epicene words) and the use of the masculine form for both male and female referents (generic words). The English word “cousin”, for example, can refer to a man or woman. The French word *cousin* might also be used to refer to both categories (for example: *Un cousin est l'enfant de l'oncle ou de la tante d'une personne*), but hereby leaves out the existing female form *cousine*. Remarkably, masculine words can even be used when referring to solely a woman, such as in the title *Madame le ministre* (Schafroth, 2003). The *Académie Française* and other proponents of ‘proper use’ of the language, have always argued that it should be *le ministre* instead of *la ministre*, because it concerns an abstract notion designating a function and not a person. According to the *l'Académie*, “l’emploi du féminin dans La ministre, et dans Madame la Ministre, qui est apparu en 1997, constitue une faute d’accord résultant de la confusion de la personne et de la fonction.” (Académie Française, n.d.-a)

Romance languages inherited the obligation of *l'accord de l'adjective* and *l'accord du participe* from Latin (Yaguello 1978). This means all adjectives and participles in the French language need to conform to the grammatical gender of the corresponding word. In the case that there is a masculine and a feminine noun in one sentence, we can rely on the grammar rule “*le masculin l'emporte sur le féminin*”. This rule prescribes that all adjectives should conform to the masculine, rather than to the closest word or even the majority. In ‘correct’ standard French we

would therefore write: “*Le garçon et la fille sont intelligents*” instead of “*intelligentes*”. Furthermore, in order to describe a group of 99 women and one man, one must describe the group with the masculine plural pronoun *ils* instead of *elles*. This is also true in other Romance languages.

2.2 Defining the problem: the relationship between grammatical and social gender

The most common argument against the generic masculine or *genre non-marqué*, is that cognitively its use evokes a male association. The pronoun indexes the paradigmatic category of male, even when used generically. Because of this association, some feminists argue that the use of the masculine to include both men and women is simply sexist, as it renders women invisible (Schafroth, 2003). From this perspective, one could claim that the marked masculine gender is being constructed as the normative and powerful form. One argument in favor of the generic masculine is that the masculine form is linguistically neutral when used in its generic form. Furthermore, “The generic masculine makes sense from the point of view of linguistic economy, it is stylistically desirable and, in addition, indispensable in those cases in which it abstracts from referential gender and only indicates a function.” (Schafroth, 2003, p. 96).

Essentially, the issue is centered around different views on the relationship between grammatical and social gender. From a strictly grammatical standpoint, gender is a system of classification of nouns without a clear relationship to the real world. However, when it comes to animate nouns, one can observe a strong relation between the ‘natural’ and grammatical gender. As the *Dictionnaire de linguistique* states, “En français, quand il s’agit de personnes, le genre naturel (mâle / femelle) et le genre grammatical (masculin / féminin) sont le plus souvent associés (mais non constamment)” (Dubois, 1973, p. 230). The most evident examples of this correlation are the words for father, son and brother being masculine, and words for mother, daughter and sister being feminine. Yet when it comes to inanimate nouns, the accorded gender in French seems to be completely arbitrary. There is, for example, no clear reason why a window is feminine (*la fenêtre*) and a roof is masculine (*le toit*). Here we observe labels, that may as well have been called “yellow” and “blue”, rather than “masculine” and “feminine”. In the languages in which this nominal category does exist, it is nonetheless important to ask ourselves: how does this grammatical gender relate to social gender, and therefore to reality? Although the classifications outside of animate nouns are often arbitrary, “le genre est *perçu* et *vécu*, au moins jusqu’à un certain point, par les locuteurs, comme renvoyant à l’ordre “naturel “ des choses (...).” (Yaguello, 1978,

p. 93). Beyond the theoretical meaning or the representation of the linguistic code, it is therefore important to consider how it is perceived and experienced by the speakers of a language who do not necessarily make a distinction between the linguistic, pragmatic and ideological realm (I will elaborate on this in section 3.2).

Several psycholinguistic studies have concluded that grammatical gender does indeed influence the meaning and characteristics people attribute to words (Konishi, 1993; Flaherty, 2001). This sort of ‘chicken or the egg’ dilemma is a topic of discussion among linguists. Do French speakers perceive *la mer* and *la lune* as feminine because the nominal classification has endowed them with the feminine gender? Or are they feminine in the first place because of the symbolic or cultural values the ancestors connected to them? We can ask ourselves if the order of this causality actually matters for the speakers’ sociolinguistic reality. The crux of the matter is that the binary system as we know it today, although a strictly linguistic classification, is undoubtedly related, in part, to the social status of men and women and stereotypes about masculinity and femininity which are present in every society (Yaguello, 1978). Since the neuter form disappeared and was absorbed by the masculine gender in the evolution from Latin to French, the masculine gender can indeed act as a neutral form. However, what speakers see, is either a masculine or a feminine word, and the connotations that go along with these.

[2.3 Le masculin est plus noble](#)

How certain forms and rules become fixed in a certain time is also dependent on social factors. The way the grammatical rule of *le masculin emporte sur le féminin* was introduced and legitimized in the 17th century is especially representative of how linguistic codes can be explicitly based on extralinguistic factors: “ Parce que le genre masculin est le plus noble, il prévaut seul contre deux ou plusieurs féminins, quoiqu’ils soient plus proches de leur adjetif.” (Dupleix, *Liberté de la langue françoise*, 1651). Nucolas Beauzée, author of *Grammaire générale*, added in 1767 : “ *Le genre masculin est réputé plus noble que le féminin à cause de la supériorité du mâle sur la femelle* ”. This rule is still generally taught in all primary schools in France, although on November 7th 2017, 314 teachers of all educational levels published a statement in which they explained they would no longer teach this grammar rule and replaced it with the rule of proximity in which the adjectives *accord* to the closest noun instead of the masculine one (Slate, 2017).

2.4 Governmental institutions

France is known for its academic tradition and purism (Yaguello, 1978) and has numerous organizations for the management and the defense of its language. The *Académie Française*, founded in 1634, is one of the most eminent language academies in the world which acts as an official authority on the French language. However, the legislative power and means to engage in language policy do not lie within the Academy, but within *La Délégation générale à la langue française et aux langues de France* (DGLFLF), whose main mission is to: “Garantir l'emploi du français, langue de la République, dans toutes les circonstances de la vie sociale, et favoriser son adaptation au monde contemporain.” (Ministère de la Culture, n.d.-b).

Commonly, implementation of orthographic reforms is a top-down process lead by these authoritative language bodies. With regards to the recent proposals of inclusive writing in France, the first step was made by *le Haut Conseil à l'Égalité entre les Femmes et les Hommes* (HCE), followed by several commercial organizations (Mots clés, Hatier), prior to being acknowledged by any official language authority. The HCE was established in 2013 and is entrusted with publishing an annual report on the state of sexism in France. Its mission is to lead the public debate on the policy of women's rights and equality. The president and the members of the council are directly appointed by the order of ministers (HCE, n.d.). Although it is an independent entity with a primarily consulting role, it is placed under the safeguard of the prime minister of France. Their *Guide pour une communication sans stéréotype* was their first initiative with regards to language and communication. Regardless of the many critiques, the list of organizations that signed HCE's ‘Convention of commitment for a public communication without stereotype of sex’ keeps on growing. Currently, the list includes ministries, municipalities, institutions for higher education, research institutes, prefectures and associations (HCE, 2019).

The fact that the terminology commission was initiated by the Minister of Women's Rights and inclusive writing by the Council for equality by men and women, underlines that these initiatives are first and foremost focused on changing societal structures or inequalities, and use language as a means to an end to achieve these goals.

3 | Theory

3.1 Defining language ideologies

My decision to concentrate on language ideologies is driven by two considerations. Firstly, because it emphasizes that language is strongly intertwined with social and political practices. Secondly, because “the term ideology reminds us that the cultural conceptions we study are partial, contestable and contested, and interest-laden” (Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994, p.10). In this section I will define language ideology as an instrument of analysis, with a focus on understanding language ideologies as mediating links between social structure and linguistic practices (Woolard 1998:3 in Gal & Woolard, 2001).

Among the wide variety of definitions of language ideologies, Irvine’s definition is particularly relevant for this research, as it emphasizes the social and political aspects of them. According to Irvine (1989: 225), language ideology can be defined as “the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests.” As such, language ideologies cannot be segregated from their historical and cultural environment; they are constructed from specific socio-political perspectives. In addition, Kroskrity (2004) reminds us that language ideologies are more than just ideas of the ruling class, but rather a diverse set of beliefs “used by speakers of all types as models for constructing linguistic evaluations and engaging in communicative activity”. They can be ideas about superiority about specific languages or varieties, beliefs about language contact and purism, about multilingualism and monolingualism, etc., hence why multiple language ideologies (can) co-exist. However, ideology can also be understood as a process that not only explains language, but also directly affects it.

3.2 Language ideologies and language structure

Michael Silverstein (1979: 193) highlights the transforming power of language ideologies as “sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use”. Silverstein was one of the first scholars to draw attention to the linguistic consciousness of the actual speakers of a language, a topic that remained mostly neglected by anthropologists and linguists until his publication (Kroskrity, 2004). He views linguistic awareness as a prerequisite that allows speakers to influence a language’s structure.

Silverstein illustrates this by giving an example of the American feminist movement that – through the process of awareness – took the agency to no longer use the generic “he”. In doing so, a usage that had been an accepted and arbitrary grammatical convention for centuries, came to be seen as a discriminatory and sexist practice in the 1960’s (Silverstein, 1985). There are three interconnected realms that underline Silverstein’s theory, which are summarized in the table below.

Table 1

Language and gender (as based on Silverstein, 1985)

Gender	as formal categorization ‘the structural’	Formal gender marks of noun phrases
	as a pragmatic category ‘the pragmatic’	Gender as implemented in ongoing speech as an indexical category
	as an institutionalized ideology ‘the ideological’	Rationalization of linguistic structure

It is not gender as a formal categorization or theoretical abstraction that informs these ideologies; it is the structure in use and the indexical values it holds for its users (the pragmatic level) which determine language ideologies of how language is or ‘ought to be’. It is only in the ideological realm that the formal categorization of ‘masculine’ versus ‘feminine’ is understood as ‘male’ and ‘female’, and that the asymmetry of inclusiveness of possible reference (masculine as unmarked and feminine as marked) becomes a problem. Although to Silverstein, this is a ‘misrecognition’ of gender as a structural category from gender in discourse usage, this movement does show that people committed to a certain ideological position with regards to language, have the agency and power to make a change in how formal linguistic structures are perceived, and how these are subsequently used.

3.3 Language and power

Nonetheless, we should not forget that speakers are still embedded in larger social and cultural systems (Kroskrity, 2004). Even practices or ideas that seem to be culturally shared, can represent the ideology of a specific elite. From this critical ideological point of view, Pierre Bourdieu (1991)

observes that culturally shared beliefs or practices are the representation of certain elites who – through a process of domination – obtained the complicity of other social groups and classes. The domination does not merely happen by the imposition of laws, nor is it voluntarily accepted by the speakers. Instead, recognition of the ‘legitimate’ language happens through a set of complicated mechanisms, of which a strict linguistic policy is only the most superficial aspect. According to Bourdieu, the linguistic community is a product of constant symbolic domination in which institutions reproduce the universal recognition of the dominant language.

In his highly influential work *Langue et pouvoir symbolique*, Bourdieu explains that this domination mainly occurred in the process of constituting a state, a point to which we will return in section 4.4. Focusing on France, he points out that once an official language (*langue d’État*) establishes itself as obligatory in political institutions, public administration and the educational system, it becomes the theoretical norm by which all linguistic practices are measured. Perhaps the most imposing agent within this official system, besides grammarians, are teachers: empowered to examine and sanction the linguistic performances of all *sujets parlants*. In this sense, Bourdieu forces us to think about the positionality of speakers in political and economic systems. There is often one position, one characterization of language that comes to be seen as the natural or objective one, “emanating not from any particular social position, but rather from the phenomenon itself” (Gal & Woolard, 2001).

3.4 Standard language ideologies

One of the most common naturalized language ideologies in the Western world is that of ‘standard’ languages. French and other world languages are believed to exist in standard forms, an idea that is generally taken for granted by people who live in standard language cultures.

However, the existence of any language as a distinct entity is always a discursive project, rather than an established fact (Sakai 1991). Milroy (2001: 531) suggests that “standardization consists of the imposition of uniformity upon a class of objects.” More often, the ‘standard variety’ is defined as ‘the highest prestige variety’, instead of the variety with the highest degree of uniformity (Milroy, 2001: 532). The prestige attributed is thus indexical, since it is not the variety itself that possesses the prestige, but the prestige-ascribed speakers of that variety (Milroy, 2001). In such ideological processes, indexical relationships form the foundation on which other sign relationships are built (Irvine & Gal, 2000).

Irvine & Gal (2000) developed semiotic analytical tools that underly – and thus can reveal – most language ideological reasoning. Two of them are particularly relevant when it comes to standard language ideologies: *iconization*, and *erasure*. *Iconization* is defined as “the creation of a naturalized link between the linguistic and the social that comes to be viewed as even more inevitable than associations generated through indexicality” (Bucholtz & Hall, p. 380). An example of this is the supposed relationship between a language, population and territory. As such, it can be understood as a form of *essentialization* (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004). *Erasure* is “the process in which ideology, in simplifying the sociolinguistic field, renders some persons or activities [...] invisible.” (Irvinde & Gal, 2000, p.38). Thus, when details that are inconsistent with a certain ideological position – such as multilingualism or variation in monolinguist ideologies – are eliminated. These processes will be used as tools to describe and compare features of language ideologies drawn on by the state, social groups within the state, and individuals.

4 | Language ideologies in France

When attempting to write out a ‘History of French’, there lies the danger of describing it as a ‘continuous unbroken history’ (Milroy 2007: 138), thereby legitimizing it as a standard. With that in mind, this section does not attempt to describe a detailed historiographic account of French language. Rather, it indicates important turning points in the standardization and maintenance of French and treats them in the light of language ideologies.

4.1 From dialects to linguistic unification

The *Ordonnance de Villers-Cotterêts* in 1539 is generally understood to be the first step towards linguistic unification in France. In this ordonnance, François I^{er} decreed that all legal documents ought to be printed in French from that point onward. Its main objective was to facilitate legal practices and discontinue the use of Latin in legal documents, though it also made great contributions to the diffusion of French in detriment of other languages and dialects in the Kingdom of France (Gordon, 2015). Ten years later, the *La Deffence et Illustration de la Langue Francoyse* by Du Bellay (1549) called on poets to write in their mother tongue (French). It is the first known source in which the word *deffense* is associated with the French language (Adamson, 2007). The word *defense* evokes a quite purist stance, by which Du Bellay refers to defending and protecting French from the widespread use of Latin and Italian. *La Deffence et Illustration de la Langue Francoyse* added an extra dimension to the use of French as set out by Francis I, underlying not only its suitability for legal and political communication, but also its appropriateness and beauty as a literary language. Du Bellay and his fellow poets left as their legacy “the conviction that French is innately suited to express the highest thoughts and passions of which humans are capable” (Adamson, 2007).

4.2 Institutionalization

At the beginning of the *Grand Siècle*, François de Malherbe (1555–1628) and Claude Favre de Vaugelas (1585–1650) were two key players in establishing the values of the French language. Malherbe criticized the use of neologisms, archaisms, Italianisms and dialectical and technical terms, since according to him, the French language should evolve around three core principles: *clarté*, *précision* and *pureté*. In 1635, *l'Académie Française* was officially founded by Cardinal

Richelieu, chief minister to King Louis XIII. Its founding was extremely important as it marked the point from which language was considered to play a principal role in the process of becoming a society and a nation. With Richelieu taking the role of *chef et protecteur* and with Louis XIII signing the *Lettres patentes*, the explicit national character of the *l'Académie* was underlined from day one. The primary function of the *l'Académie* was formulated as follows: “*de travailler avec tout le soin et toute la diligence possible à donner des règles certaines à notre langue et à la rendre pure, éloquente et capable de traiter les arts et les sciences*” (Article XXIV, Académie Française). In order to achieve this, *l'Académie* was – and still is – responsible for publishing a dictionary, a grammar, a rhetoric, and a poetic (article XXVI) as well as administering the spelling rules that apply to everyone (XLIV) (Académie Française, n.d.-c).

4.3 Le bon usage

Vaugelas was one of the first and most eminent members of the Academy and writer of *Remarques sur la langue française: utiles à ceux qui veulent bien parler et bien écrire*. In line with the principles set out by Malherbe, he defined and codified what should be seen as *le bon usage du français*. While Malherbe's commentaries and lectures primarily concerned literary style or recommendations for court usage, Vaugelas' *remarques* were aimed at anyone who wished to conform to the linguistic norms of the elite (Lodge, 1993). The work was published in 1647 and quickly became extremely influential. Together with Malherbe, Vaugelas was credited with ‘purifying’ French diction (Adamson, 2007). His views on good usage of the language were based on the language of the ‘court’.

Voicy donc comme on definit le bon Usage . . . c'est la facon de parler de la plus saine partie de la cour, conformement a la facon d'escrire de la plus saine partie des Autheurs du temps. Quand je dis la Cour, j'y comprens les femmes comme les hommes, et plusieurs personnes de la ville ou le Prince reside, qui par la communication qu'elles ont avec les gens de la Cour participant a sa politesse. (Vaugelas 1970: II.3 in Lodge, 1993, p.176).

He explicitly states that women can serve as a reference point for *bon usage* just as well as men. Perhaps because in western societies, women are known to be more sensitive to the status connotations of speech than men (Silverstein, 1985). His linguistic recommendations were thus based on a hierarchy of social reference points in which *la cour* is at the top of the pyramid, followed by people of the cities in which the Prince resided. He makes it no secret that ‘good

usage' of French is not based on intrinsic structural properties, but ultimately is based on 'good people' that spoke this variety. Here we can observe that the prestige attributed is indexical, since it is not the variety itself that possesses the prestige, but the prestige-ascribed speakers of that variety.

In the seventeenth century, the upper class in most provinces of the kingdom had adopted the standards set out by these 'good people' in the capital. The ability to speak a 'pure' form of French had become intrinsically linked to upward social mobility throughout the country (Lodge, 1993). Consequently, popular and merely oral usages of the regional dialects came to be seen as *patois*. Now used exclusively by peasants, dialects were regarded negatively and pejoratively in relation to literate or 'distinguished' usages. In 1694, *l'Académie Française* published its long-awaited first dictionary, which helped further distribute the standard. However, this first generation of the *bourgeoisie* that had access to the official language, still spoke their local dialect. This made them the perfect intermediaries during the linguistic unification of the Revolution (Bourdieu, 1991).

4.4 French in becoming a democracy

In 1784, Antoine de Rivarol published an essay, *Discours sur l'universalité de la langue française*, in which he presented the dominant languages on the European continent in order to demonstrate why they were incapable of competing with the superiority of the French language. Rivarol claimed that the French language possesses an inherent clarity and logic which makes it an ideal universal language. He supported the superiority of the French language by referring to works of France's most highly valued writers. According to Lodge (1993), this claim overlooks the important distinction between *language system* and *language use*. The qualities of these writers' work, as well as the clarity and logic that shines through their work is an attestation of the use these writers made of the system, not of the system itself. However, the inherent clarity and logic of the language are still regularly propagated by promoters of the standard language ideology (Lodge, 1993).

Bourdieu (1991) argues that during the Revolution, the imposition of a 'legitimate language' was part of a larger political strategy of eternalizing the achievements of the Revolution. "C'est dans le processus de constitution de l'État que se créent les conditions de la constitution d'un marché linguistique" (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 71). It is not difficult to find explicit examples of this imposition

in which the educational system played a huge role. From 1794 onwards, the national language policy indeed took on a more aggressive character, exemplified by the famous words of politician Barère in the rapport of the *Comité de salut public*:

“ Le fédéralisme et la superstition parlent bas-breton ; l'émigration et la haine de la République parlent allemand ; la contre-révolution parle l'italien, et le fanatisme parle le basque. Cassons ces instruments de dommage et d'erreur.”
 (B. Barère, quoted by Caput 1975: II, 106, in Lodge, 2013, p. 215).

In that same year, the *Rapport sur la nécessité et les moyens d'anéantir les patois et d'universaliser l'usage de la langue française* was presented to the *Convention Nationale*. The rapport, written by Henri Grégoire (1750–1831) and concerning the state of the French language in France, was based on a sociolinguistic survey that was filled in by a network of 43 informants throughout France. The results of the questionnaire mapped the variety of languages spoken by the population at the time. Although the generalizability of the questionnaire is questionable, the conclusion (as sustained by the national convention) was that hardly one in five French people had active and passive knowledge of the ‘national language’ as spoken in Paris. As can be derived from the title, the objective of this research was not only to map the languages that were spoken, but to use this to point out the urgency to “wipe out” *les patois* and “universalize the use of French.” (De Certeau, Julia, Revel, 1975, p. 4).

4.5 French today: strengthening linguistic unity

In 1992, the sentence “*la langue de la République est le français*” was added to article 2 of the constitution to reaffirm the linguistic unity of France. It is noteworthy that this happened just before the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML) was adopted by the Council of Europe in order to protect and promote regional and minority languages in Europe. France signed the treaty, but did not ratify it, because it was contrary to their recently adapted constitution. Within this framework, the *Loi du 4 août 1994 relative à l'emploi de la langue française*, better known as *Loi Toubon* (named after Jacques Toubon, Minister of Education of that time), was implemented. The main objectives of the law were to enrich the French language, to defend French as the official language of the republic, and to make the use of French mandatory in official government publications, state-funded schools, advertisements, audiovisual broadcasting, and French workplaces. The law does not concern non-commercial communications, such as private

communication, or art forms, such as books and movies. The implementation of the *Loi Toubon* shows the concern of the French state with protecting its language, facing influences from English and from minority languages that become more recognized on a European level (Académie Française, n.d.-d).

4.6 Feminization debates

The recent movement of inclusive writing is not the first effort to achieve linguistic equality in France. In 1984, a terminology commission for the feminization of job titles was established by Yvette Roudy, Minister of Women's Rights. The commission, chaired by writer Benoîte Groult, published their report with suggestions for female titles in 1986, stating that language must adapt to new realities and that, therefore, the growing presence of women in more functions must be translated into the French vocabulary (Burr, 2003). The morphological structures to make job titles feminine were not only demonstrated in the circulaire, but also by users in Belgium and Switzerland where similar forms were already implemented (Yaguello, 1978). However, the suggested changes were barely adopted in France. The topic resurfaced again in 1997, when seven female ministers claimed the title of *la ministre*. Although they were backed by prime minister Lionel Jospin and president Jacques Chirac, *l'Académie Française* kept insisting on the traditional use of the masculine noun *le ministre* (Dawes, 2003). The Académie Française has always made a clear distinction between the *métiers* on one hand and *fonctions*, *grades* and *titres* and on the other. Regarding the former, feminine forms do not pose any particular problem besides choosing which morphological construction to use to feminize it. *Fonctions*, *grades* and *titres* however, have to be clearly distinguished from the person; hence why feminine forms are not desirable (Académie Française, n.d.-b). When the government of Lionel Jospin (1997-2002) finally published the guide “*Femme, j'écris ton nom... guide d'aide à la féminisation des noms de métiers, grades, titres et fonctions*”³ in 1999, the Academy remained negative towards this change : “ l'Académie française déplore les dommages que l'ignorance de cette doctrine [que le genre masculin est le genre non marqué] inflige à la langue française et l'illusion selon laquelle une grammaire ‘féminisée’ renforcerait la place réelle des femmes dans la société “ (Académie 2005 as cited in Van Compernolle, 2007, p.108).

It is important to note that the *l'Académie*, with its male majority, was not the only reluctant force when it came to the feminization of job titles. In fact, women in high-level positions were

among the most passionate opponents of the change. Many females who had worked hard to reach the top of the hierarchy wanted to have the same titles as their male counterparts, because they were performing the exact same function (Yaguello, 1978). Their reluctance can also be explained by the fact that feminine versions of job titles often already had an established connotation of conjugality. The word “*ambassadrice*”, for example, the feminine version of “*ambassadeur*” that arose in the 16th century, was originally used to signify the wife of the ambassador, rather than a female ambassador. This century, the growing presence of women in high functions and their claim to feminine job titles seem to have shifted these connotations (Académie Française, 2019).

4.7 The latest developments

On March 1st 2019, while I was conducting my research, *l'Académie Française* published a declaration in which the majority of the academy approves the feminization of occupational and professional titles. This was a huge transformation in their stance on the issue. According to the Academy, the ease with which feminine forms are adopted to designate high functions over the course of the last 20 years, leaves no reason to disallow the wish of females to feminize their titles – even though, some women who are in positions that are still dominated by men prefer to be designated in the masculine form (Académie Française, 2019).

The declaration notes that the commission studied which practical evolutions would be wise to recommend, keeping in mind which linguistic difficulties the proposed evolutions would encounter. The recommendations are based on *le bon usage* of which the Academy claims to be the guardian. This implies that the Academy does not try to endorse or impose all uses, nor try to delay them, “*mais de dégager ceux qui attestent une formation correcte et sont durablement établis*” (Académie Française, 2019, p.4). In other words, they will clear the way for those usages that are already permanently established and are not in conflict with the structure of the French language. In the declaration, the Academy does not address other types of inclusive writing. One could therefore assume that they still consider *écriture inclusive* as a whole “a deathly threat”, as mentioned in their last declaration on this (appendix 10.1).

4.8 In short

On a national level, we can observe that a standard was created through deliberate efforts to make uniformity out of a territory that once was – and to a certain extent still is – linguistically heterogeneous. A textbook example of erasure, the imposition of French during the French Revolution reveals “how deeply monolingualism has been ingrained in liberal conceptions of *Liberté*, *Égalité* and *Fraternité*.” (Gal & Woolard, 2001). This ‘invented’ uniformity still is an important characteristic of the standardized language (Milroy, 2001), which the Académie Française tries to protect. Although the monolinguistic attitude of the French government has only become stronger and even included in their constitution, recent developments show that in observing usage of speakers, the Académie is becoming more tolerant to a singular aspect of inclusive writing: the feminization of job titles.

5 | Method

Drawing data from non-academic linguistic discourse can be done in many ways. I chose the method of questionnaires because it allows speakers to explicitly verbalize their views on inclusive writing, and it is a useful tool for discovering the attitudes and opinions of a big audience. Taking into account the limited time of 10 weeks, questionnaires allowed for a relatively large number of respondents in a short period of time. Furthermore, it allows respondents to express their thoughts anonymously.

5.1 Questionnaire design

Questionnaires have been criticized in the past for providing a “thin” description of target phenomena (Dörnyei, 2007). However, this can be nuanced through the use of qualitative data that relates to the questionnaire-derived data (Hua, 2016). To add richness to the quantitative data, I chose to add open-ended questions to the questionnaire, resulting in a mixed-methods approach. According to Dörnyei (2007), open-ended questions in questionnaires work particularly well if they contain certain guidelines. The questions are therefore either *clarification questions*, such as the “other, please specify,..”-box in addition to the multiple-choice items, or *specific open questions* about concrete pieces of information.

The aim of the first section of the survey was to get unrestricted personal associations, hence why the term *écriture inclusive* was not yet explicitly mentioned in the title or the introduction of the survey. Furthermore, it avoids giving the impression that the entire survey was about *écriture inclusive*, since the questionnaire was also about more general language ideologies and attitudes towards evolutions of the French language. In order to come off as neutral as possible, the introduction and the questionnaire itself incorporates a ‘moderate’ degree of inclusiveness – meaning the use of the *double flexion* – writing both the masculine and feminine form to designate a mixed group – without merging it and employing the *point milieu*. This can be seen in the introduction of the survey: “*Cher participant/Chère participante*” and “*des français et françaises*”.

The questionnaire consisted of 39 questions, divided into five themes, intended to address the research question. The entirety of the questionnaire can be found in appendix 10.2. The

majority of the questions consisted of multiple-choice and Likert-scale items. Since the request for demographic information can be experienced as discouraging, the personal and demographic questions were located at the end of the questionnaire – in line with the trend across social sciences (Hua, 2016). The themes were only visible to the researcher, to avoid guiding their associations of the respondents too much. The five themes were as follows:

- I. Associations, opinions and motivations on *écriture inclusive* (question 1 – 7)
- II. Attitudes towards different elements of *écriture inclusive* (question 8 – 13)
- III. Underlying views on language and society (question 14 – 21)
- IV. Standard language ideologies (question 22 – 28)
- V. Demographic and identity questions (question 30 – 39)

Part I focused on the associations, emotions and attitudes towards inclusive writing. Although unconventional, I decided to start the questionnaire by posing an open question about the sentiments a phrase in inclusive writing (with *point milieu*) evokes in the respondent (see question I). In order to avoid scaring the participants away, and to ensure that analysis would be feasible, only 3 associative words were demanded of the respondents. The rest of part I was focused on stance, attitudes and understanding of *écriture inclusive* as a whole. Part II of the questionnaire was centered around different elements and forms of *écriture inclusive*, in order to measure if there were certain elements that were evaluated as significantly more favorable than others. I expected, for example, that the *point milieu* would be met with more resistance than proposed changes that were initiated earlier in France, such as the feminization of job titles. These questions therefore allowed me to see these elements independently. Part III concerned questions about society and language in order to verify underlying values (For example: if someone does not find equality between men and women important, it is not surprising that this person finds *écriture inclusive* useless). Part IV elaborates on this societal element, but with a specific focus on the construct of ‘standard language ideology’ in order to discover to which extent elements of standard language ideology are present in the participants and if they affect their opinion on inclusive writing. Question 29 is an open question in which respondents could elaborate on a specific question of their choice or on the questionnaire as a whole. Part V is dedicated entirely to demographic questions in order to map the profiles of the participants and to make comparisons on the basis of age, gender, education and political preference possible.

5.2 Procedure

The questionnaire was designed in Google Forms, as it is a free software that allows for exportation of gathered data easily. The survey was online from the 27th of February till the 19th of March. Criteria involved the French nationality and a minimum age of 18. I used convenience and snowball sampling to reach my audience over Facebook and contacted French students from the peer feedback program in Utrecht via email. Four of the respondents offered to distribute the survey in their own network, by means of direct messaging and posting the survey in Facebook groups of their Faculty. The extent of generalizability of such non-probability sampling is often minimal (Dörnyei, 2007), but this choice was made on the basis of pragmatic limitations. In order to compensate, the characteristics and the limits of the sample in comparison to the population will be described in great detail.

5.3 Analysis

The survey data was exported from Google Forms into an Excel file and subsequently copied into the program IBM SPSS Statistics 24 where it was analyzed and interpreted. The Likert-scale items were treated as interval variables and analyzed by means of the independent sample t-test and One-Way ANOVA, depending on the grouping variables (two groups or more). The answers were analyzed according to the described in section 4.1. The answers to the open questions were studied closely and labelled in order to create categories for a more structured analysis. Subsequently, categories were derived inductively from this data, which can be found in appendix 10.3 and 10.4. The presentation and interpretation of the data will both be a part of Chapter 5: Results, allowing for an ongoing commentary. The theoretical implications of the results however, will be treated in the Discussion.

5.4 Respondents

The questionnaire generated 157 respondents, of which 150 were complete and met the requirements (respondents with French nationality). Those with a dual nationality (French + 1) were also included. After looking at the demographics, it became apparent that a certain age group was vastly overrepresented. Respondents under 25 represented 72.67% of the sample (109 respondents), whereas the other age groups only had between 4 and 18 respondents. Because the other age groups were too small and heterogeneous to comment on significant results, I decided to focus only on the youngest age group, in order to make relevant observations of this population.

Within the respondents between 18-25, I analyzed if there were other demographic outliers that could have influenced the results. With regards to the geographical distribution, the Paris metropolitan region was vastly overrepresented (45%) compared to the actual percentage of inhabitants of Île de France, which is around 18% (INSEE, 2019). The largest group of respondents was from Paris (24,8%). An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare stance towards *écriture inclusive* between respondents that lived in Île de France and respondents that lived in other parts of the country. Although on average, respondents from outside Île de France ($M = 1.98$; $SD = 1.333$) were more supportive of *écriture inclusive* than respondents from Île de France ($M = 2.52$; $SD = 1.568$), this difference was not significant $t(107) = 1.933, p = .278$. It is also important to note that 20,18% of the respondents were not living in France when they filled in the survey, due to the large number of international students who took part. However, an independent sample t-test between the respondents who lived in France ($M = 2.28$; $SD = 1.477$) and respondents who lived abroad ($M = 2.28$; $SD = 1.402$) revealed no significant differences $t(105) = .287, p = .101$. Since the differences in location did not seem to be of significant effect on the stance of the respondents, I decided to keep respondents from in and outside of France and from all postal codes in the sample.

Women were also over-represented in this sample (61,47 %), compared to 33,94 % men, 1,84 % non-binary and 2,75% of the respondents who did not want to specify their gender. The differences between genders will be discussed in the following sections when relevant to a specific question. The respondents have, on average, a very high educational level: 67,89% possess a university degree or are currently enrolled in a university program. 24,77% are enrolled in or have graduated from another form of Higher Education. 5,50 % graduated from high school and 1,83% did not want to specify their educational level. Although the descriptive statistics show that those who have a high school degree as their highest educational level are more strongly for inclusive writing (1 = absolutely for, 5 = absolutely against), a one-way ANOVA showed no significant differences between the different educational groups when it comes to their stance towards inclusive writing ($F(3,92) = 1.480, p = .225$).

Table 2

Educational level and stance on écriture inclusive

		<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Est-ce que vous êtes pour ou contre l'écriture inclusive ?				
Educational level	Je ne souhaite pas le préciser	1	1.00	
	Secondaire	4	1.50	.577
	Étude supérieure	23	2.70	1.185
	Bac +3 – Bac +5	68	2.56	1.331
	Total	96	2.53	1.289

Note. In order to interpret the means: 1 = absolument pour, 5 = absolument contre

The political preferences of the respondents were extremely scattered, as can be observed in Figure 1, although the majority of the respondents claimed to be left-wing. 24,77% of the respondents did not want to specify their political preferences and 12,84% indicated ‘autre’ and to specify their political convictions. These responses were very divergent as well. Of the overall age sample, 7,34% had no political preference because they were undecided, they did not want to position themselves or because the political spectrum in France was too complicated (“*Je ne me sens pas représentée par les élus actuels en France*”/ “*Je ne me positionne pas car choisir un camp oblige à être moins objectif*” / “*Le spectre politique français est bien trop compliqué à l'instant*”). The remaining 5,50 % used the ‘autre’ option to fill in a more specific political preference, such as a political party (*France insoumise*), a combination of responses (*centre-droite*) or a specific conviction (*gauche radicale anticapitaliste*). One response was as long as 254 words explaining the nuances of his political convictions. The fact that 37,61% did not want to specify or did not feel represented by the traditional political categories (from extreme left to extreme right) is a noteworthy finding in itself which shows the complexity of the French contemporary political spectrum.

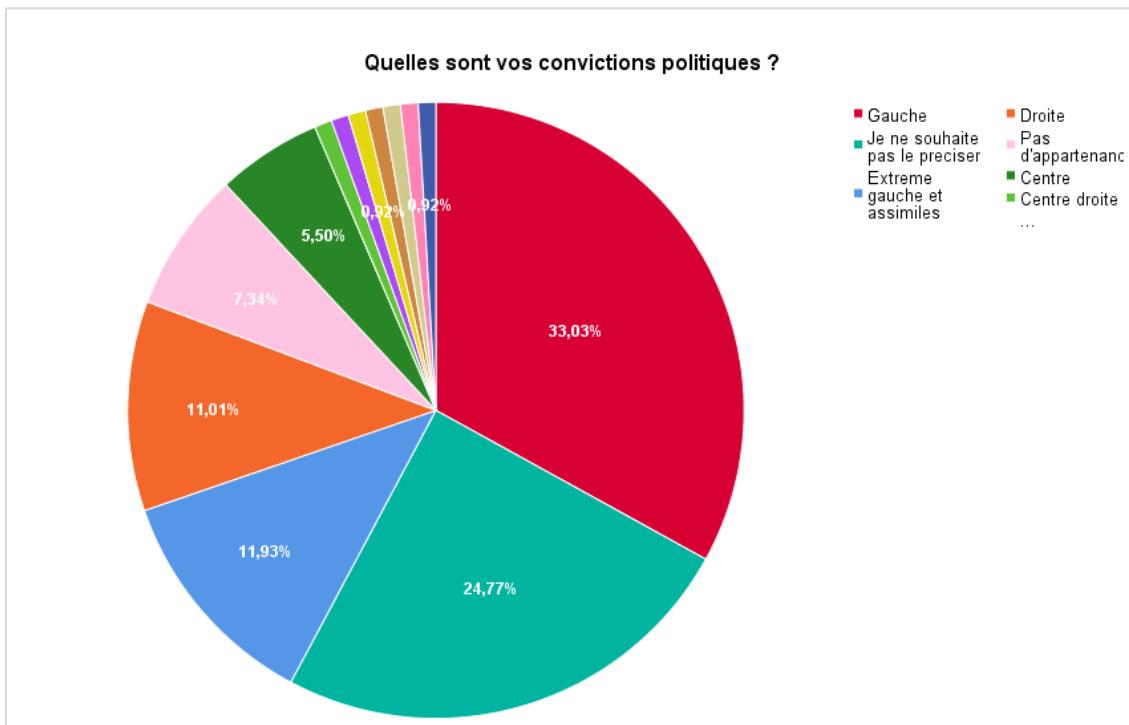


Figure 1. Political preferences

After recoding the ‘*autre*’ responses into more general categories (see table 2), one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the stance towards different elements of *écriture inclusive* between respondents from different political orientations. These results turned out significant ($F(7, 101) = 2.263, p = .035$). As table 2 shows, left-wing respondents were more likely to be in favor of inclusive writing than right-wing respondents. In treating the results, it is therefore important to keep in mind that the sample has a left-wing bias.

Table 3

Political preferences and stance on inclusive writing

		<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Favorable à [éléments écriture inclusive]				
Convictions politiques	Extrême gauche	13	1.69	1.11
	Gauche	37	1.92	1.14
	Centre	6	2.83	1.72
	Centre droite	2	4.50	0.71
	Droite	12	2.75	1.91
	Extrême droite	1	5.00	.
	Pas d'appartenance	11	2.45	1.51
	Je ne souhaite pas le préciser	27	2.19	1.52

Note. In order to interpret the means: 1 = absolument pour, 5 = absolument contre

6 | Results

Keeping in mind the opportunistic sample and modest number of respondents - especially compared to the population we want to say something about - it must be said that these results cannot be generalized to the population of French people from 18 till 25. However, they can be used to describe notable tendencies.

6.1 Results Part I : First associations

The first question asked respondents to indicate how they felt about a sentence in which the *point milieu* was applied (see appendix 10.2). When looking at the responses, it stands out that although the question concerned *sentiments*, many people did not respond with emotions, but with (specific) associations. The majority of responses concern inclusiveness, equality and evolution such as “*Inclusivité*” or “*Égalité, justice, féminisme*”. Certain respondents comment on the uselessness of the intentions of writing (“*Inutile ridicule, pas une évolution linguistique*”) whereas others comment on the form (“*moche saccadé*” . “*difficile à lire*”). Considering the more sentimental responses, there seems to be quite an even distribution between positive and negative sentiments, with the positive including “*Joie, fierté, Victoire*” and “*I love it*” and the negative emotions including “*Dégout, haine, déprime*” and “*Agacement*”. Only 13 out of 109 respondents claim to be indifferent or have no feelings towards the writing at all, and four call it normal (for a categorization of all responses, see appendix 10.3).

Six respondents mention the administrative, scholarly or formal character of the writing. This could mean that they have already encountered *écriture inclusive* in one of these contexts, or it could be due to the content of the sentence itself. In the additional room for comments at the end of the survey, one respondent added that she didn’t even know what to spot in the sentence, because she is already so used to it at her university. To question 3, where respondents were asked for associations, one respondent also indicated she associates this type of writing with “*un email de l’université*”. These responses show how quickly readers can become accustomed to inclusive writing through the median point, and the power educational institutions have in normalizing this type of writing once they start to use it consistently, especially because they play such a central role in examining the linguistic performances of students. From the answers it did not became clear if the students are also required to adopt inclusive writing themselves.

With regards to intelligibility, 86.24% of the respondents find the phrase written in inclusive writing understandable, although 27.52% of those respondents say they have to get used to this type of writing. When asked what they associate this type of writing with, the responses were quite evenly divided between “*un débat contemporain*”, “*le progressisme*” and “*une proposition féministe*”. 13,76% of the respondents associate it with a “*un mouvement politiquement correct*”. The others had more explicit associations in which their opinion also clearly emerges, such as :

- a) “*c'est plus qu'une proposition, c'est un outil de lutte et de représentation dans la langue*”
- b) “*la destruction de la langue française au profit d'une minorité fasciste voulant imposer son idéologie par la force et la censure*”.

It is important to note that at this point in the survey, the term ‘écriture inclusive’ or its objectives are not yet mentioned. Nonetheless, very strong associations are already elicited only by seeing the *point milieu* applied in a sentence. This suggests that the respondents have a very high level of awareness with regards to this evolution in the French language. Yet, not everyone knows that there are other suggested reforms that are a part of inclusive writing (see Figure 2). In fact, 22% thinks that inclusive writing is merely writing both the masculine and feminine form with help of the *point milieu*. According to 20,8% of the respondents, inclusive writing concerns all usages that make women more visible in the French language. Since this was a question where people could tick multiple boxes, the majority of the respondents (43,12%) picked several answers, of which the number of combinations were too many to visualize. However, more people than initially expected knew that inclusive writing involves more than only the use of both the masculine and the feminine suffix by means of the *point milieu*. The majority of the respondents is for ‘certain elements’ of inclusive writing, as can be seen in Figure 5.

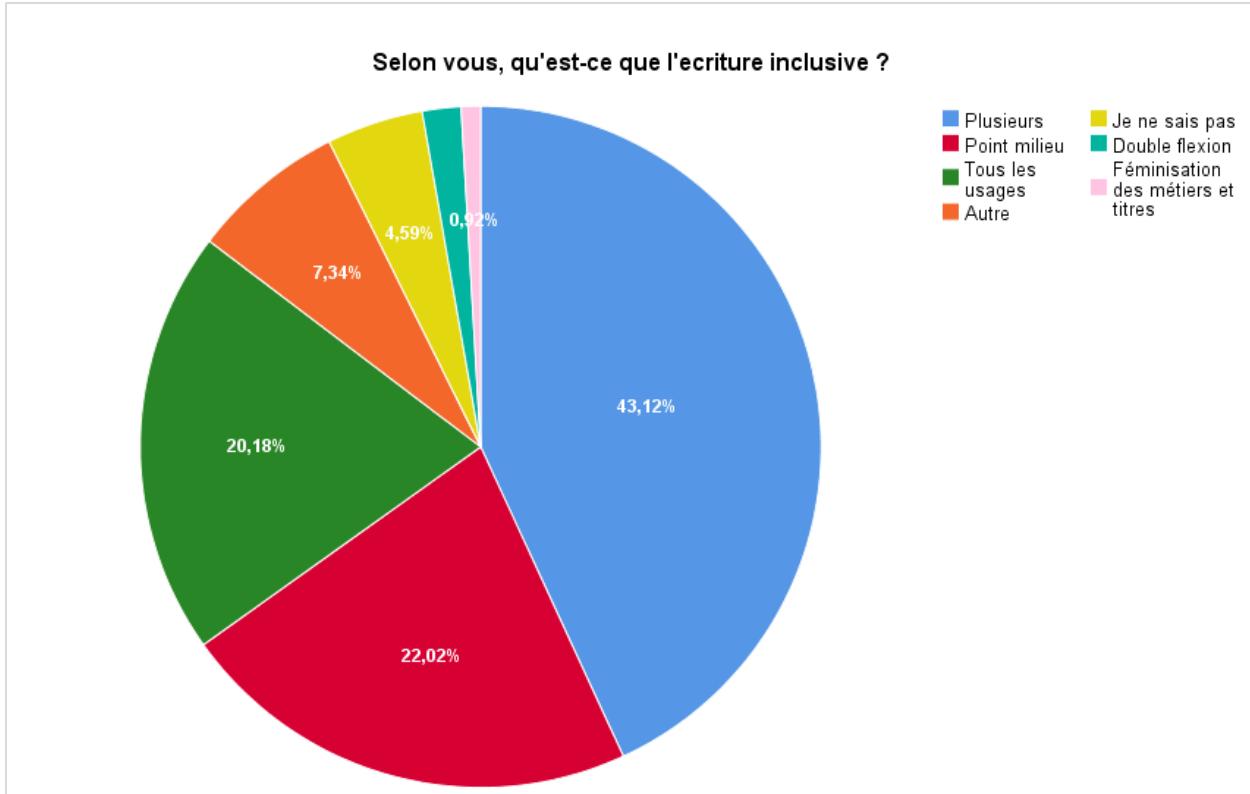


Figure 2. What is inclusive writing?

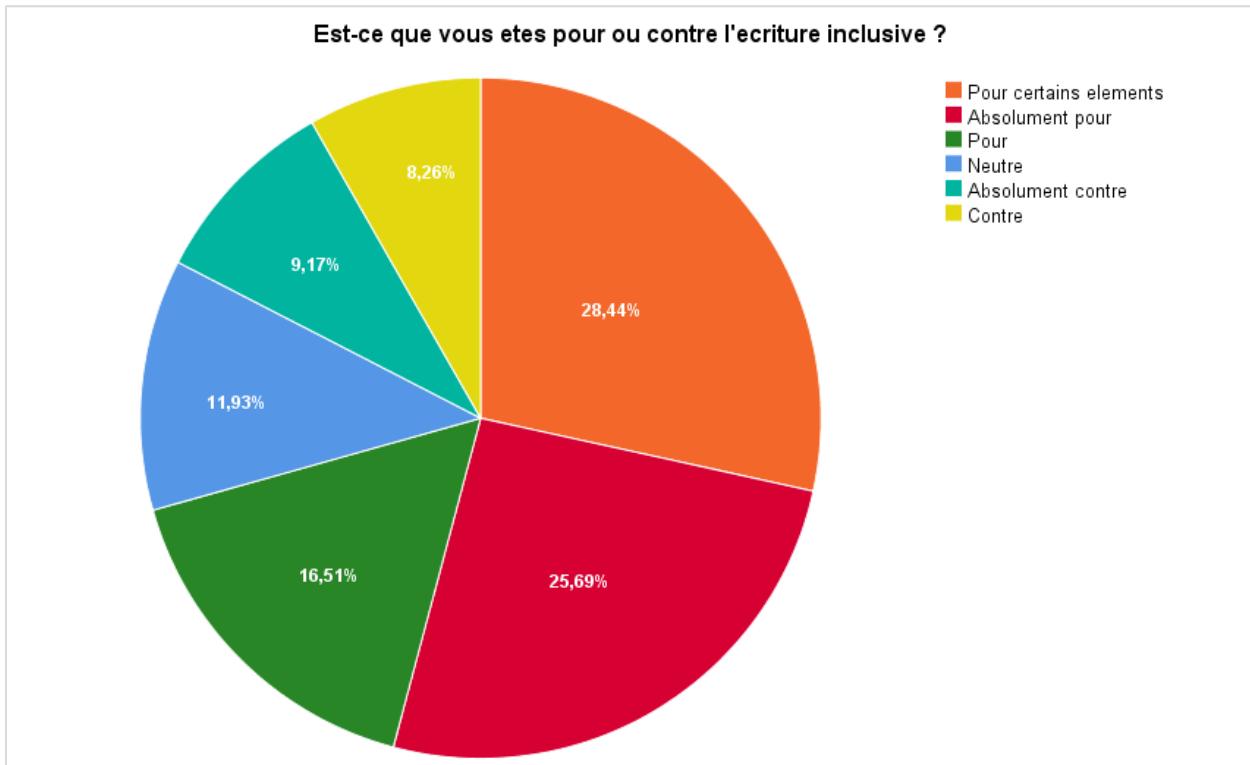


Figure 3. Stance towards inclusive writing

In the following open question, respondents answered why they were for or against inclusive writing. For this question, there were no restrictions or instructions with regards to the length of the answer. Some people responded in one word while others did so in multiple paragraphs, of which the longest response consisted of 287 words. All responses per category can be found in appendix 10.3.

Arguments for *écriture inclusive*

The proponents of *écriture inclusive* had similar main motivations for their choice, of which almost all were centered around the concepts of equality, inclusiveness, feminism, or the visibility of women. What stands out in the arguments is the assumed relation between the grammatical gender and social gender. In many arguments such as ‘*égalité*’, it is not clear whether the respondents refer to a linguistic equality in writing the masculine and the feminine gender, or equality between men and women in society. Proponents tend to base their arguments on the idea that language influences perceptions. Some of them mention this explicitly (see quote c and d), whereas others immediately go on to list the societal effects the new form of writing will bring along. Answers such as ‘*réduire les inégalités entre les sexes*’ and ‘*l'égalité et inclusion*’ show the presupposition that changing unequal representations of gender in language will change inequalities between sexes, even to the point of equal salaries, as exemplified by the quote e.

- c) *Le langage structure notre façon de penser. Une écriture inclusive, sur le long terme peut donc avoir des effets bénéfiques par rapport aux rapports de genres et stéréotypes que nous avons intériorisés.*
- d) *L'égalité, parce que le langage est une institution qui façonne notre perception du monde. Le rendre moins sexiste c'est changer nos manières de voir les femmes et la société.*
- e) *Je suis une femme et je pense que ça pourrait faire avancer notre condition (salaires égaux, mêmes possibilités de carrières...) (...) [sic].*

For some, *écriture inclusive* is seen as a (first) step in a bigger process of achieving equality between men and women:

- f) *Faire progresser les mentalités et le féminisme en général, en commençant par l'écriture inclusive.*

- g) *L'usage normalisé de l'écriture inclusive est une étape nécessaire dans la lutte contre le patriarcat dans la mesure où la langue participe du fait social.*

Several respondents who were in favor of (certain elements of) inclusive writing, pointed out that this should only, or mainly, concern administrative texts, respecting “the beauty of the language” in a literary context. It is considered very important for official documents such as legal documents and government communication to apply inclusive writing, but not all proponents believe it should be ‘forced’ in other domains.

Arguments against

The arguments against *écriture inclusive* are more divergent, although they are mainly centered around three objections:

- 1) It makes French too complex to read or write. Some respondents add to this that French is already difficult to learn as it is, both for native and non-native speakers, which was also mentioned in the declaration of *l'Académie Française* (Appendix I).
- 2) It is aesthetically displeasing. For some, the aesthetic issues counterbalance the initial support of the idea: “*Je suis partagée: pour car j'aime la visibilité des femmes mais contre parce que c'est sacrément moche*”.
- 3) There are better ways to advance the position of women in society, or it will not change reality at all (“*Ce n'est pas en changeant la langue française que les femmes obtiendront des droits vraiment égaux par rapport aux hommes*”). Seven respondents call it a “*distinction inutile*” or say it is even counterproductive: “*son inutilité trahi son objectif militant*”.

The third point directly opposes the assumption in many pro-arguments that changing the language will change society. The arguments vary from the stance that the generic masculine has nothing to do with concealing women in society, to the fact that introducing inclusive writing would only be a superficial change.

Three respondents say *écriture inclusive* is no longer French, or it is against the nature of French; implying that there is such a thing as a nature in language. This reflects a very essentialistic view on the language, in which everything that is new or unknown is described as non-French. It is

placed outside the frame of French. From their arguments it becomes clear that their objections concern the *point milieu*, but they do approve the feminization of job titles or the use of the *double flexion*. Only one respondent mentioned the fact that this modification of the language is not approved by the francophone academic authorities or governments. This was not used in any other anti-arguments. However, in the additional comments, one respondent suggested that for such profound modifications of the language, the public should be consulted through a referendum, it should be approved by the parliament and subsequently, the Academy should verify if it is in line with the founding principles of the language. Another respondent brings up the Academy because she does no longer want the institution to exist: “*c'est un repère de vieux hommes blancs conservateurs, il ne représentent ni ne connaissent plus le français actuel.*”

Another interesting point that was only raised once is that *écriture inclusive*, in its currently proposed format, only puts more emphasis on the binary distinctions in a time where genderqueer movements are fighting to break this binary opposition. The only two non-binary respondents in the sample stated to be absolutely for inclusive writing because it would promote equality. Another respondent, who identified as female, added to this point that *l'écriture épicène* is also used for queer persons because it allows them to break with the binarity of the language.³

6.2 Results part II: Different elements of inclusive writing

As can be seen in the chart below, the most supported elements of *écriture inclusive* were *feminisation des noms de métiers* and *féminisation des noms de fonctions, grades ou titres*. These two were measured separately, because in the past, French women were known to be hesitant of feminization of higher function titles. However, the results of this questionnaire show an even higher support of this type of feminization, which suggests that for this younger generation, the reluctance for such feminization is no longer present. Notably, these numbers support the latest position of the Academy in this issue (2019), in which they claimed to respond to a linguistic demand and societal evolution.

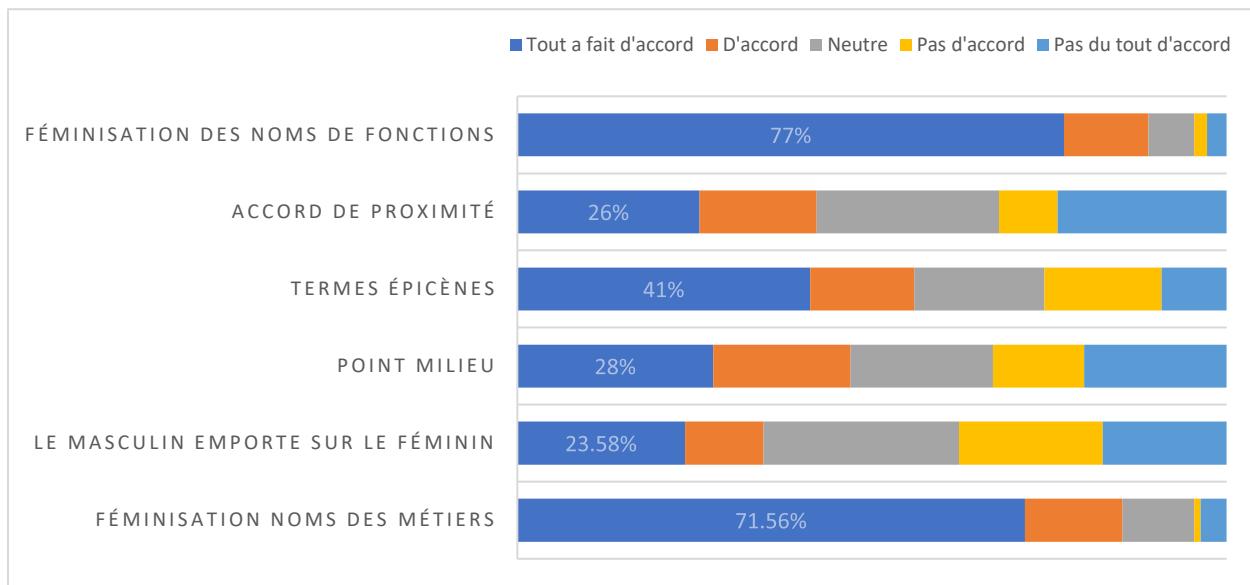


Figure 4. Different elements of inclusive writing

After the feminization of job titles, the element that garnered the most support and the least opposition was the use of epicene terms such as “*droits humains*” instead of “*droits de l’Homme*”. With regards to inclusive grammar, the respondents were rather divided. We can observe that more people were in favor of the *accord de proximité*, as proposed in *écriture inclusive*, than the traditional grammar rule *le masculin l’emporte sur le féminin*. However, it is worth noting that more respondents are in favor of the *point milieu* than are in favor of the *accord de proximité*. Although the grammar rule “*le masculin l’emporte sur le féminin*” was expected to be experienced as more explicitly sexist than the generic use of the masculine, the addition of a feminine suffix at the end of words was evaluated as more favorable than replacing the rule.

6.3 Results part III: Society

In this section of the survey there were several questions with notable outliers. For instance, 60,55% of the respondents strongly agreed that a good command of the French language is important to succeed in society, and 90,83% strongly agreed with the statement “*L’égalité entre les hommes et les femmes est une chose importante pour moi*”. Only 40,37% strongly agreed with the statement “*Je m’identifie comme féministe*”, although an additional 25,69% claimed to agree

with the statement. An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare identifying as feminist to gender. Women ($M = 1.87$; $SD = 1.072$) appeared to identify more strongly as feminists than men ($M = 2.68$; $SD = 1.311$) (see Table 1). This difference was significant: $t (102) = -3.401$, $p = .001$. Similarly, an independent samples t-test revealed that women ($M = 2.37$; $SD = 1.126$) agreed more strongly with the statement that the French language is sexist than men ($M = 2.95$; $SD = 1.311$). This difference was also significant: $t (102) = -2.341$, $p = .021$. However, an independent samples t-test revealed no significant differences between men and women when it comes to their stance on inclusive writing: $t (102) = -.841$, $p = .402$. This was notable, because it was expected that women would support visibility of female forms more firmly. However, female speakers overall are known to communicate more in standard forms than men (Silverstein, 1985).

With regards to education there are some interesting findings. First of all, 66,06% say that the promotion of equality between men and women is an educational matter. Many people who chose ‘*autre*’ indicated that it is a matter of politics and education, or of all three factors together. Furthermore, 55,13% of the respondents absolutely agrees that school is the ideal environment to bring about social change. However, less than half of this number thinks that public schools should promote inclusive writing. Nevertheless, a meaningful positive correlation was found between support for inclusive writing⁵ and the statement “*l’école est le lieu idéal pour provoquer un changement social*” ($r = .412$ $N = 109$, $p=.000$). Evidently, the correlation between support for inclusive writing and support for teaching inclusive writing in schools had an even stronger positive correlation ($r = .706$ $N = 109$, $p=.000$).

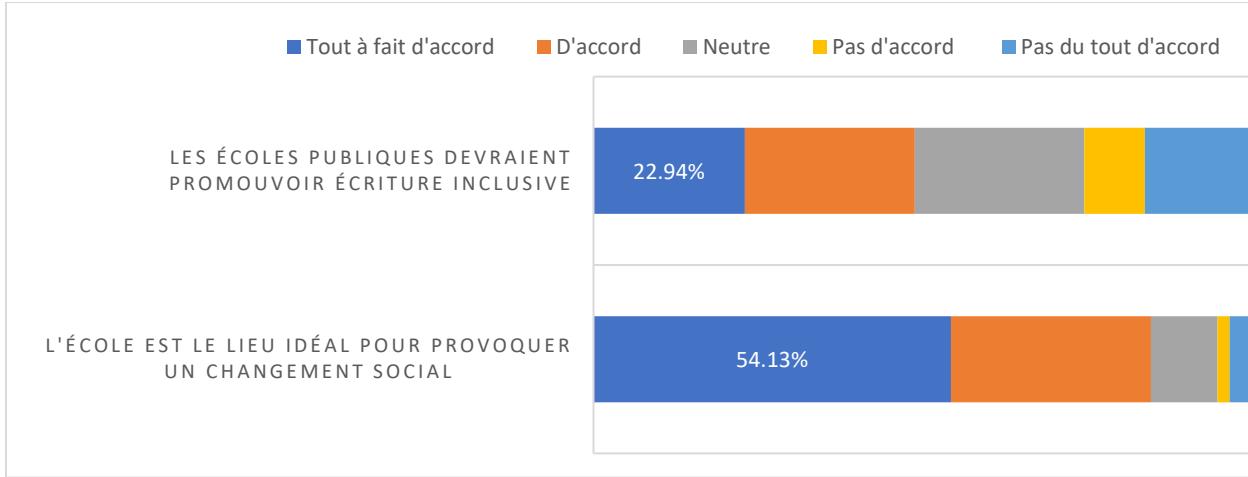


Figure 5. The role of education

6.4 Results part IV: Standard Language Ideologies

Whereas the Académie Française claims the French language is in mortal danger as a result of inclusive writing, the general public, under the age of 25, does not seem to agree. Almost half of the respondents respond that the French language is not threatened. Those who say French is threatened, think it is more threatened by new technologies and by the English language than by the movement of inclusive writing (see figure 8). The figure also shows that many people filled in a different threat, which included: the disinterest of younger generations, stupidity and ignorance, a lowered interest for the importance of the French language, orthographic reforms, and mostly the low level and low requirements of national education. As figure 9 demonstrates, respondents agreed the strongest with the statement that the French language constitutes a fundamental aspect of their national identity.

Although the majority of the participants (57,8%) did not think that the French language is threatened, an even bigger majority (59,63%) does agree that it is important to have laws intended to protect the French language. This rather contradictory result might indicate that the respondents are content with the laws (*Loi Toubon*) that are already in place to (pro-actively) protect French and that therefore, they feel that the French language is already sufficiently protected from in- and outside threats.

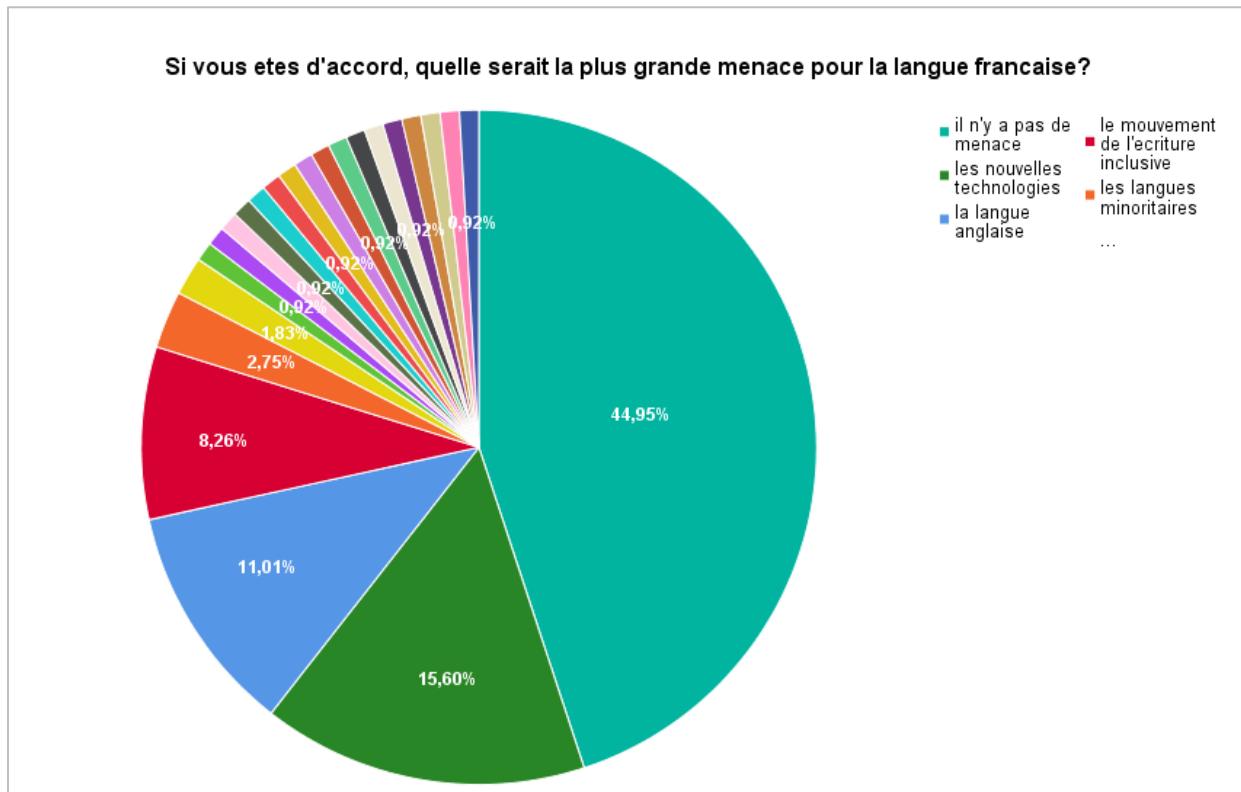


Figure 6. Threats to the French language

So, how do these elements of standard language ideologies relate to inclusive writing? A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between favorable of the inclusive writing and the above statements. A meaningful negative correlation was found between support for inclusive writing and the statement “*Il est important que tous les citoyens parlent le même français standard*” ($r = -.335$ $N = 109$, $p=.000$), which tells us that respondents who attach more value to a homogeneous linguistic landscape, are less likely to be supportive of inclusive writing. Similarly, a meaningful negative correlation was found between support for inclusive writing and the statement “*La langue française constitue un aspect fondamental de l'identité nationale*” ($r = -.305$, $N = 109$, $p=.001$), “*Il est important d'avoir des lois destinées à protéger la langue française*” ($r = -.313$, $N = 109$, $p=.001$) and “*La langue française est menacée*” ($r = -.364$ $N = 109$, $p=.000$). No significant correlation was found between thinking that French has inherent qualities other languages don't have and being in favor of inclusive writing.

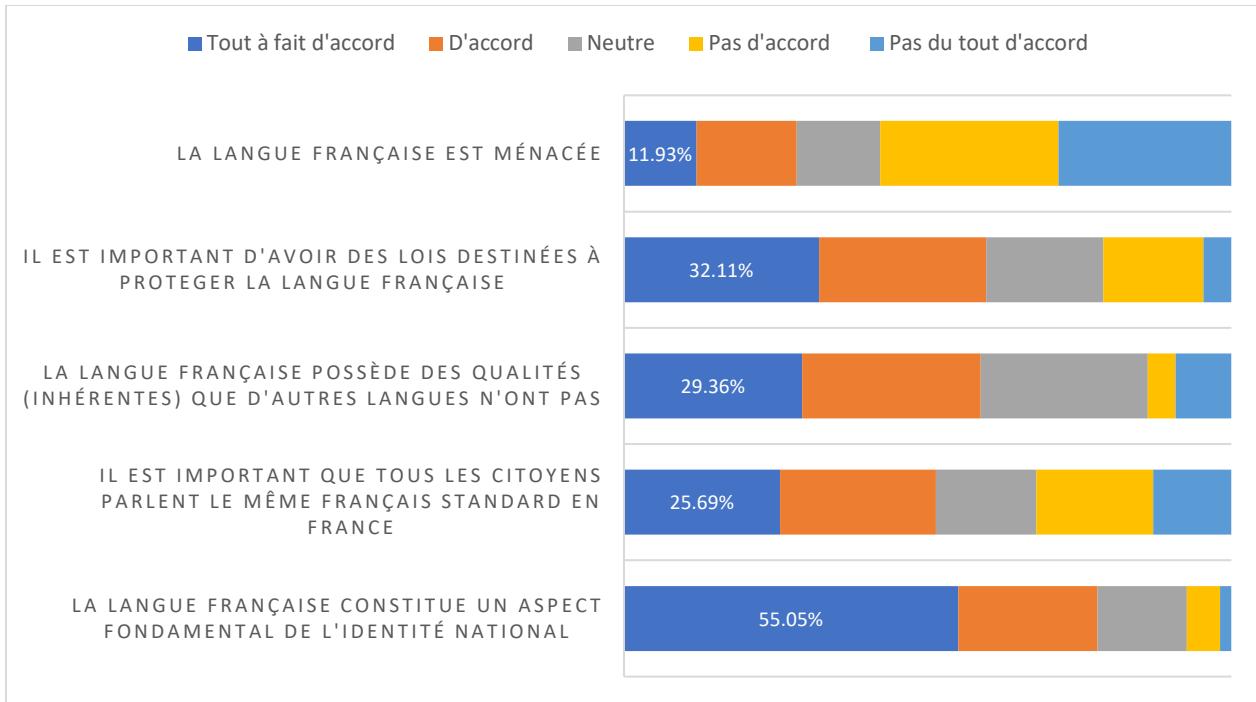


Figure 7. Common elements of standard language ideologies

Although the French language is considered such an important part of the national identity, and thus fulfills a symbolic function, the majority (63,30%) of the respondents think that the primary function of the language is to be a communication tool. Some respondents can't decide on one main function of the language, but think it rather is a combination of all functions: a communication tool, a marker of social and national identity, and a reflection of society. For some this means that language is a tool for every person to express their ideas and their identity individually. Others think that it is a reflection of society as a whole, even saying that a drop in the 'level' of the language indicates that society is not doing well. One respondent adds that language also has a cultural and artistic function.

7 | Discussion

In this section, the results of the questionnaire will be discussed in greater detail in light of the relevant theories. As mentioned in the literature review, the thin line between linguistic and social structures can be examined by looking at indexical ties. The semiotic framework laid out by Irvine & Gal (2000) allows us to explore the role of language ideologies as mediating constructs between linguistic forms and social phenomena. The answers to the open questions revealed that most respondents perceive a very clear and almost inevitable tie between the use of the *point milieu* and a movement for the equality between men and women, which is a clear example of *iconization*. The *point milieu* is an aesthetic component of inclusive writing that is very visible to the audience through its markedness and novelty. Not only the form, but also its ideological foundation was remarkably visible and acknowledged by the speakers. Whereas this indexical relationship is normally established on the basis of a repetitive association between the characteristics of a language and its users (Irvine & Gal, 2000), for example a certain accent that gets associated with speakers from a certain background, this step seems to be missing in the case of inclusive writing. Even respondents who do not exactly know what inclusive writing is, or which elements exactly are a part of it, quickly associated it with feminism or inclusiveness. The observation that an ideological tie can precede the actual usage, can be an interesting addition to Irvine & Gal's semiotic framework (2000). The majority of the ideological reasoning of the respondents is on the basis of this strong ideological and indexical relationship.

The biggest divide could be observed between the two most dominant language ideologies in the metalinguistic discourse of the speakers: one in which language is seen as a vehicle for change, and one in which language does not influence societal changes. The former leads to the idea that equal representations of gender in language will lead to more equality between men and women in society, while the latter thinks that language does not have the power to do so. From the 'vehicle for change' point of view, a lot of power is attributed to language, change that will be as far-reaching as equal salaries. From the 'no influence' point of view, it is believed that improving equality should come from strictly political or social measures, and language should be left out of this. Not only are these two ideologies directly competing with each other, they also are based on different perceptions on gender as put forward by Silverstein (1985). Whereas the 'vehicle for

change' ideology basis itself on the pragmatic level of gender, language in use, the 'no influence' ideology holds on to a strictly grammatical conception of language. This helps us understand the complexity of the debate, in which both sides are putting forward arguments that rationalize language in a different domain, leading to an even bigger divide. Furthermore, the 'vehicle for change' ideology further supports the idea of Yaguello (1978) that from the point of view of many speakers, gender is perceived as a representation of the 'natural' or social order. Linguists should, therefore, ask themselves if hanging on to the strict grammatical code as a rationalization of its neutrality is sufficient, when speakers mainly perceive its indexical and referential meaning.

Certain arguments against inclusive writing - especially against the *point milieu* - seem to only be about the form, for example that it would not be stylistically desirable, or too complicated to read. In the light of the historical establishment of French however, we can observe that these comments are a legacy of an ideology which requires French to be beautiful and clear. This confirms previous critical ideological research on language, by showing how pervasive and naturalized certain ideas about language are. The analysis also revealed that speakers who more strongly supported purist or protectionist statements, on average were more negative about inclusive writing. From this standard language ideology perspective, French is conceptualized as one homogenous language in which variety in writing is not appreciated. However, it must be said that the supporters of inclusive writing are not necessarily contesting the dominant language ideologies either. In wanting to impose these reforms on all users, or all authorities, they actually reproduce the ideologies which structure the linguistic market: one standard language that applies to everyone within the borders of France, albeit a less sexist standard. This does not mean that nuanced responses are lacking. Several respondents are in favor of inclusive writing for the public administration, or universities, but think that it should be limited to this realm. People attribute a certain responsibility to authorities to be inclusive, but do not find it necessary to 'impose' this on the general public, commercial institutions or the arts. Although the role of the French state in constructing and protecting the standard is still significant, as illustrated by the relatively recent implementation of the *Loi Toubon*, almost no speakers referred to the position of the government or linguistic authorities to reinforce their statement.

Although on average, women identified more strongly as feminists than men, and also agreed more strongly with the statement that the French language is sexist than men, this difference did not translate into their opinions on inclusive writing. The expectation was that females would

be more supportive of *écriture inclusive*, because it would make them more visible in writing. However, this could be balanced out by the fact that female speakers overall communicate significantly more in standard forms than men (Silverstein, 1985). However, the considerable support for feminization of job titles, both from men and women, shows that connotations towards feminine job titles have shifted since the first debates 35 years ago.

The findings confirmed the expectation that more recently introduced elements of inclusive writing (such as the *point milieu*) would be more strongly opposed by the speakers than elements that were initiated several decades ago (such as the feminization of job titles). Although both elements are part of the same objective of making women more visible in writing, and both elements rest on the belief that language can be an agent of social change, their evaluation also seems to depend on a feeling of habituation and recognition. This indicates that speakers' attitudes depend on more than dominant language ideologies only. Respondents who had already been habitually exposed to inclusive writing with the *point milieu*, for example in universities, found it to be normal, not explicitly feminist. Likewise, in the case of feminization of job titles, it is not necessarily the underlying language ideology in the broad sense that has changed, but the perception of a linguistic element that comes to be seen as more 'natural' or 'normal' over time. The most recent declaration of the Académie Française also shows that although the members of the Académie still believe that title functions are strictly a theoretical abstraction, their sudden approval of inclusive writing is based on years of *usage*: of increasing use of feminine job titles in society. If anything, this proves the significance of looking at attitudes and usages of speakers themselves, which are often – if not always – a good indicator of language structures that will later be established as norms.

8 | Conclusion

This study set out with the aim of answering the following research question:

Which language ideologies underlie the speakers' attitudes towards inclusive writing?

Firstly, the responses of the participants towards inclusive writing and other evolutions in the French language, and their willingness to elaborate their views, were proof of their high awareness with regards to inclusive writing and their interest with regards to their language. Although many nuanced opinions were formulated as well, the biggest ideological divide within the answers leads back to different views about the relationship between language and society. Most opponents who are against inclusive writing are not against feminism. In fact, they do think equality between men and women in society is important, but do not see how writing differently could contribute to this. At the same time, proponents of inclusive writing attribute a lot of power to the change a language can make in society, arguing that an equal representation in their language will lead to a more equal representation in society. This leads to two competing ideologies which refer to different domains of gender, making mutual understanding troublesome.

The preceding discussion outlines that the majority of the attitudes of the speakers towards inclusive writing are based on a strong ideological tie between one element of inclusive writing (the *point milieu*) and the social meaning (feminism) – regardless of their standpoint. Hereby, this research demonstrated that in the case of *écriture inclusive*, this ideology is projected onto the users of this sign, not the other way around. Exactly because this ideology is rendered so visible, it is open to evaluation: both from avid support, as from the strong criticism or contempt.

However, even though it is the most ideological marked form, the *point milieu* is not the most opposed element of inclusive writing. In fact, the introduction of the *point milieu* was found more favorable than the replacement of the rule *le masculin l'emporte sur le féminin* by the *accord de proximité*. Although this grammar rule and its origins are explicitly sexist, whereas the generic masculine is not, the application of the rule is not opposed as strongly. Presumably, the respondents were not aware of the origins of the rule, or simply attached more value to visibility of the feminine form in pronouns, than adjectives or verbs.

Moreover, the findings showed that speakers' have a multi-dimensional view on the role of a language. Although the majority of the respondents think that the primary function of the language is to be a communication tool, they also think it can be a vehicle for social change, and a marker of national identity. Language ideologies of the speakers are multiple and multi-layered, and within the speakers, they can be contesting.

From a methodological perspective, I hope to have demonstrated how focusing on such a specific orthographic and grammatical reform, can render visible language ideological elements that are usually not overtly discussed. It is from this perspective that feminist language reforms become an important site for ideological production. It is exactly when respondents are asked about why they are for or against a movement such as *écriture inclusive*, that their arguments expose their underlying assumptions and views about what language is and what it ought to be. Regardless of whether the debate changes the sociolinguistic reality or not, the metadiscourse on inclusive writing is very telling for the language ideologies in France.

8.2 Limitations

As pointed out earlier, the small sample of this research does not allow us to generalize the results to the entire population of French people between 18 and 25. Furthermore, the sample mainly concerned highly educated respondents, and included a majority of women and people with left-wing political views. Because generally speaking, a young left-wing audience tends to be more progressive, this has undoubtably had a major impact on the results.

The current survey opened with a phrase written in inclusive writing with use of the *point milieu* in order to evoke sentiments and associations, without giving any further explanation or definitions of inclusive writing. Although this proved to be a very effective way to generate responses, this might have influenced respondents' perceptions in the rest of the survey, automatically linking inclusive writing to this particular orthographic sign.

In this thesis, France and its linguistic history have been studied as if they exist in a vacuum. However, with regards to today's interconnected world, and the position of France in the Francophonie, there are of course other speakers, cultures and movements outside of France that could be of influence on the language ideologies of French speakers. Feminist movements abroad and the feminization of grammar and orthography in other francophone countries in particular, could be of great interest for a comparative study.

Finally, because of its common-sensical nature, and my own exposure to standard language ideologies, certain ideologies of the respondents might have been insusceptible to my observation. Nevertheless, I think my relative distance to the French sociolinguistic landscape has helped me decenter from the respondents' perspectives.

8.3 Future research

Since this was one of the first studies into *écriture inclusive*, and to my knowledge the first one on inclusive writing and language ideologies, it had a very explorative character. Consequently, it raises just as many questions as it answers. More than a historical overview is needed to understand how certain ideological positions become commonplace. Further research will be necessary to evaluate the influence of other instruments of ideological production. A discourse analysis of press media and social media could expose the ideologies in this highly mediatized debate, and compare those to the ideologies of the general public.

Since the biggest constraint of this research was the limited and non-representative sample of the French population, future research should investigate whether the results would be similar with a larger, more diverse group of participants with different socioeconomic backgrounds and ages. Furthermore, a comparative study focusing on language ideologies in other francophone countries where feminization is more accepted would prove insightful. It could reveal whether certain ideologies are specific to France, or are more widely shared.

This thesis was aimed at uncovering attitudes and ideologies with regards to *écriture inclusive*. Research into the actual *use* of inclusive writing could reveal if the discussed language ideologies in France have truly changed usage and linguistic structures, and what the consequences are in educational settings, when writing inclusively. Especially in the light of the recent declaration of the *Academie Française* with regards to the feminization of job titles, the interrelation between norms and use is of growing importance for research.

9 | Notes

1. The following articles were covered on the front page:

Pech, M. E. (6 October 2017). Féminisme : les délires de l'écriture inclusive, *Le Figaro*
 De Montety, E. (6 October 2017). Pauvres lecteur·rice·s, *Le Figaro*
 Écriture inclusive (6 November 2017). Juste une mise au [·], *Liberation*

The editorial in *Le Monde* was the following:

Gilbert, M. & Hérold, M. (25 November 2017). Parmi les correcteurs du « Monde », un débat animé, *Le Monde*

Pech, M. E. (6 October 2017). L'écriture inclusive, nouveau marotte des féministes, *Le Figaro*
 Pech, M. E. (6 October 2017). De Poutou à Philippot, les politiques s'en emparent, *Le Figaro*
 Pech, M. E. (6 October 2017). Pour les grammairiens, le masculin est aussi neutre, *Le Figaro*
 Pech, M. E. (6 October 2017). Michael Edwards : « Comment lire ce charabia ? », *Le Figaro*
 Pech, M. E. (6 October 2017). Cher.e.s lecteur.rice.s, appri voisez la novlangue égalitaire *Le Figaro*

2.

Battaglia, G.D. & Pietralingua, C. (23 November 2017). Édouard Philippe décide de bannir l'écriture inclusive des textes officiels, *Le Monde*

Pech, M.E. (22 November 2017). Édouard Philippe bannit l'écriture inclusive de l'administration, *Le Figaro*

Mallaval, C. (22 November 2017). Etrange priorité : Matignon bannit l'écriture inclusive des textes officiels

3. The title “*Femme, j'écris ton nom...*” refers to a famous poem by Paul Eluard “Liberté” which was written and published during the second world war (April 3rd 1942). In the poem that consists of 21 quatrains, Eluard lists all the places on which he would write “*Liberté*”. The leitmotiv, with which every quatrain ends, is “*j'écris ton nom*”. The poem is now considered an ode to liberty, and a symbol of resistance against the German occupation. By choosing this title for their guide in which they propose 2000 examples to help feminize masculine job titles, the authors make a strong reference to liberty and oppression (Koninklijke Bibliotheek, n.d.).

4. The fact that this person used the term ‘epicene’ could mean that she only refers to the epicene elements of inclusive writing. However, she could also refer to inclusive writing as a whole,

because these terms are often used interchangeably. Ultimately, inclusive writing with the use of a *point milieu* could also be considered positive for genderqueer people when used in the first person singular (“*je suis heureux·se*”), because it could be employed to denote an identification with both genders simultaneously. Although it is not mentioned in the guides by HCE or Mots Clés, and does not really seem to have been a point of attention in the discussion around inclusive writing, I think it is important to note that in the francophone realm, also non-binary linguistic forms have started to occur. There are certain suggestions put forward to create neutral pronouns or mixed pronouns to designate trans, agender, non-binary or gender fluid people, such as *iel, iels, yels, ille ou illes*, and also indefinite or demonstrative pronouns such as *toustes, celleux, ceulls* (Abbou et al., 2018). However, inclusive writing as proposed by HCE could also be inclusive for these groups. Ultimately, inclusive writing with the use of a *point milieu* could also be considered positive for genderqueer people when used in the first person singular (“*je suis heureux·se*”), because it could be employed to denote an identification with both genders simultaneously. It can also be viewed as the beginning of a system on which it is possible to elaborate. In a guide against sexual harassment written by L’Association féministe de l’Unil (Université de Lausanne), the writers used an extra suffix (x) to mark a neutral gender, for example: *étudiant·e·x·s universitaire·x·s* (<http://www.formation-sans-harcelement.ch/brochure/>). It is not clear yet if this is also already used in France.

5. Q8, Q10, Q11, Q12 and Q13, were computed into a new variable: Average_EI. This interval variable – which was an average of the support for the different elements of inclusive writing – allowed me to test bivariate correlations with other interval variables, such as statements about education, or statements with regards to standard language ideologies.

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11 | Appendices

10.1 Déclaration of l'Académie Française

Déclaration de l'Académie française sur l'écriture dite "inclusive"

Le 26 octobre 2017

Déclaration de l'Académie française

**DÉCLARATION DE L'ACADEMIE FRANÇAISE
SUR L'ÉCRITURE DITE " INCLUSIVE "**

**ADOPTEE A L'UNANIMITE DE SES MEMBRES
DANS LA SEANCE DU JEUDI 26 OCTOBRE 2017**

Prenant acte de la diffusion d'une " écriture inclusive " qui prétend s'imposer comme norme, l'Académie française élève à l'unanimité une solennelle mise en garde. La multiplication des marques orthographiques et syntaxiques qu'elle induit aboutit à une langue désunie, disparate dans son expression, créant une confusion qui confine à l'illisibilité. On voit mal quel est l'objectif poursuivi et comment il pourrait surmonter les obstacles pratiques d'écriture, de lecture – visuelle ou à voix haute – et de prononciation. Cela alourdirait la tâche des pédagogues. Cela compliquerait plus encore celle des lecteurs.

Plus que toute autre institution, l'Académie française est sensible aux évolutions et aux innovations de la langue, puisqu'elle a pour mission de les codifier. En cette occasion, c'est moins en gardienne de la norme qu'en garante de l'avenir qu'elle lance un cri d'alarme : devant cette aberration " inclusive ", la langue française se trouve désormais en péril mortel, ce dont notre nation est dès aujourd'hui comptable devant les générations futures.

Il est déjà difficile d'acquérir une langue, qu'en sera-t-il si l'usage y ajoute des formes seconde et altérées ? Comment les générations à venir pourront-elles grandir en intimité avec notre patrimoine écrit ? Quant aux promesses de la francophonie, elles seront anéanties si la langue française s'empêche elle-même par ce redoublement de complexité, au bénéfice d'autres langues qui en tireront profit pour prévaloir sur la planète.

10.2 Questionnaire

Évolution(s) de la langue française

Cher participant / Chère participante,

Merci de participer à cette recherche consacrée aux attitudes des français et françaises quant à la langue française. Cette recherche est menée sous l'égide du Master de Communication Interculturelle de l'Université Utrecht (Pays-Bas).

Répondre au questionnaire suivant ne vous prendra qu'une dizaine de minutes. L'enquête se compose principalement de choix multiples et des questions à échelle. Il y a également deux questions ouvertes.

Vos réponses seront strictement confidentielles et anonymes et les données ne seront utilisées que dans le cadre académique de cette recherche. Il n'y a pas de "bonnes" ni de "mauvaises" réponses au questionnaire ; il n'y a que des réponses qui correspondent le mieux à ce que vous pensez. Une analyse des résultats sera publiée par l'université cet été. Si vous avez des questions, des remarques ou si vous souhaitez être tenu au courant des résultats de cette étude, n'hésitez pas à m'envoyer un email à m.reijngoud@students.uu.nl

Merci beaucoup pour votre participation.

Michelle Reijngoud
MA Intercultural Communication
Universiteit Utrecht

*Required

1. Lire la phrase ci-dessous. Quel sentiment cette écriture évoque-t-elle pour vous ? (3 mots maximum) *

*Aux étudiant·e·s qui souhaitent déposer une demande :
veuillez contacter votre directeur·trice*

2. Est-ce que la phrase est compréhensible pour vous ? *

Mark only one oval.

- Oui, absolument
- Oui, mais il faut que je m'habitue
- Neutre
- Non, l'orthographe rend la lecture difficile
- Non, ce n'est pas lisible

3. À quoi associez-vous une telle écriture ? *

Mark only one oval.

- Un débat contemporain
- Une proposition féministe
- Un mouvement politiquement correct
- Le progressisme
- Other: _____

4. Connaissez-vous le concept d'écriture inclusive ? *

Mark only one oval.

- Oui, je peux l'expliquer
- Oui, j'ai un peu suivi les débats
- Je ne connais que le nom
- Pas vraiment
- Je n'en ai jamais entendu parler

5. Selon vous, qu'est-ce que l'écriture inclusive ? *

Tick all that apply.

- L'usage du féminin et du masculin par la double flexion ("le candidat ou la candidate")
- L'usage du féminin et du masculin par le point milieu (le candidat-e)
- La féminisation des métiers et des titres
- Tous les usages visés à rendre les femmes plus visibles dans la langue française
- Je ne sais pas
- Other: _____

6. Est-ce que vous êtes pour ou contre l'écriture inclusive ? *

Mark only one oval.

- Absolument pour
- Pour
- Pour certains éléments
- Contre
- Absolument contre
- Neutre

7. Quelle est la raison la plus importante pour laquelle vous êtes pour ou contre l'écriture inclusive ? *
-

Veuillez indiquer dans quelle mesure vous êtes d'accord ou pas d'accord avec les affirmations suivantes.

1 = tout à fait d'accord

2 = d'accord

3 = neutre

4 = pas d'accord

5 = pas du tout d'accord

8. Je suis favorable à la féminisation des noms de métiers. Par exemple: "agricultrice" *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Tout à fait d'accord

Pas du tout d'accord

9. Je suis favorable à l'accord dans lequel le masculin l'emporte sur le féminin. Par exemple: "les garçons et les filles sont beaux" *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Tout à fait d'accord

Pas du tout d'accord

10. Je suis favorable à l'usage d'un point milieu pour marquer le genre masculin et féminin. Par exemple : ingénieur·e·s, sénior·e·s *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Tout à fait d'accord

Pas du tout d'accord

11. Je suis favorable à l'usage des termes épiciènes comme "droits humains" au lieu de "droits de l'Homme" *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Tout à fait d'accord Pas du tout d'accord

12. Je suis favorable à l'accord de proximité dans lequel on accorde au masculin ou au féminin suivant que le dernier mot est masculin ou féminin. Par exemple: "les garçons et les filles sont belles" ou "les filles et les garçons sont beaux" *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Tout à fait d'accord Pas du tout d'accord

13. Je suis favorable à la féminisation des noms de fonctions, grades ou titres. Par exemple: l'ambassadrice, madame la ministre, madame la préfète *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Tout à fait d'accord Pas du tout d'accord

Veuillez indiquer dans quelle mesure vous êtes d'accord ou pas d'accord avec les affirmations suivantes.

1 = tout à fait d'accord

2 = d'accord

3 = neutre

4 = pas d'accord

5 = pas du tout d'accord

14. L'égalité entre les hommes et les femmes est une chose importante pour moi *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Tout à fait d'accord Pas du tout d'accord

15. Je m'identifie comme féministe *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Tout à fait d'accord

Pas du tout d'accord

16. La langue française est sexiste *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Tout à fait d'accord

Pas du tout d'accord

17. Des règles de grammaire sexistes peuvent maintenir des perceptions sexistes *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Tout à fait d'accord

Pas du tout d'accord

18. Une bonne maîtrise de la langue française est importante pour réussir dans la société *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Tout à fait d'accord

Pas du tout d'accord

19. Les écoles publiques devraient promouvoir l'écriture inclusive. *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Tout à fait d'accord

Pas du tout d'accord

20. L'école est le lieu idéal pour provoquer un changement social *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Tout à fait d'accord

Pas du tout d'accord

21. La promotion de l'égalité entre les hommes et les femmes ... *

Mark only one oval.

- est une question politique
 est une question d'éducation
 est une chose de la famille
 n'est pas nécessaire
 Other: _____

22. La langue française constitue un aspect fondamental de l'identité nationale *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Tout à fait d'accord

Pas du tout d'accord

23. Il est important que tous les citoyens parlent le même français standard en France *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Tout à fait d'accord

Pas du tout d'accord

24. La langue française possède des qualités (inhérentes) que d'autres langues n'ont pas *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Tout à fait d'accord Pas du tout d'accord

25. Il est important d'avoir des lois destinées à protéger la langue française *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Tout à fait d'accord Pas du tout d'accord

26. La langue française est ménacée *

1 2 3 4 5

Tout à fait d'accord Pas du tout d'accord

27. Si vous êtes d'accord, quelle serait la plus grande menace pour la langue française? *

Mark only one oval.

- la langue anglaise
- le mouvement de l'écriture inclusive
- les nouvelles technologies
- les langues minoritaires
- les langues migrantes
- il n'y a pas de menace
- Other: _____

28. La fonction principale de la langue c'est d'être : *

Mark only one oval.

- le reflet d'une société
- le reflet de l'esprit du temps
- un outil de communication
- un marqueur d'identité
- Other: _____

29. Avez-vous des commentaires supplémentaires sur l'un ou quelques des éléments du questionnaire ?

Données démographiques

30. À quel groupe d'âge appartenez-vous ? *

- Moins de 25 ans
- 25 à 34 ans
- 35 à 44 ans
- 45 à 54 ans
- 55 à 64 ans
- 65 ans et plus
- Je ne souhaite pas le préciser

31. Quel est votre sexe *

Mark only one oval.

- Femme
- Homme
- Non-binaire
- Je ne souhaite pas le préciser

32. Quel est le plus haut niveau de scolarité que vous avez obtenu ou que vous êtes en train d'obtenir ? *

Mark only one oval.

- Primaire
- Secondaire
- Étude supérieure
- Bac + 3 - Bac + 5
- Je ne souhaite pas le préciser
- Other: _____

33. Habitez-vous actuellement en France? *

Mark only one oval.

- Oui
- Non
- Je ne souhaite pas le préciser

34. Quel est votre code postal en France? (Si vous n'habitez pas en France, quel était votre dernier code postal en France). *

35. Est-ce que vous avez des enfants ? *

- Oui
- Non
- Je ne souhaite pas le préciser

36. Quelles sont vos convictions politiques ? **Mark only one oval.*

- Extrême gauche et assimilés
- Gauche
- Centre
- Droite
- Extrême droite et assimilés
- Je ne souhaite pas le préciser
- Other: _____

37. Quelle est votre nationalité?*Mark only one oval.*

- français
- Other: _____

38. Quelle est votre langue maternelle? (Si vous êtes bilingue, veuillez indiquer les deux langues)

*

Mark only one oval.

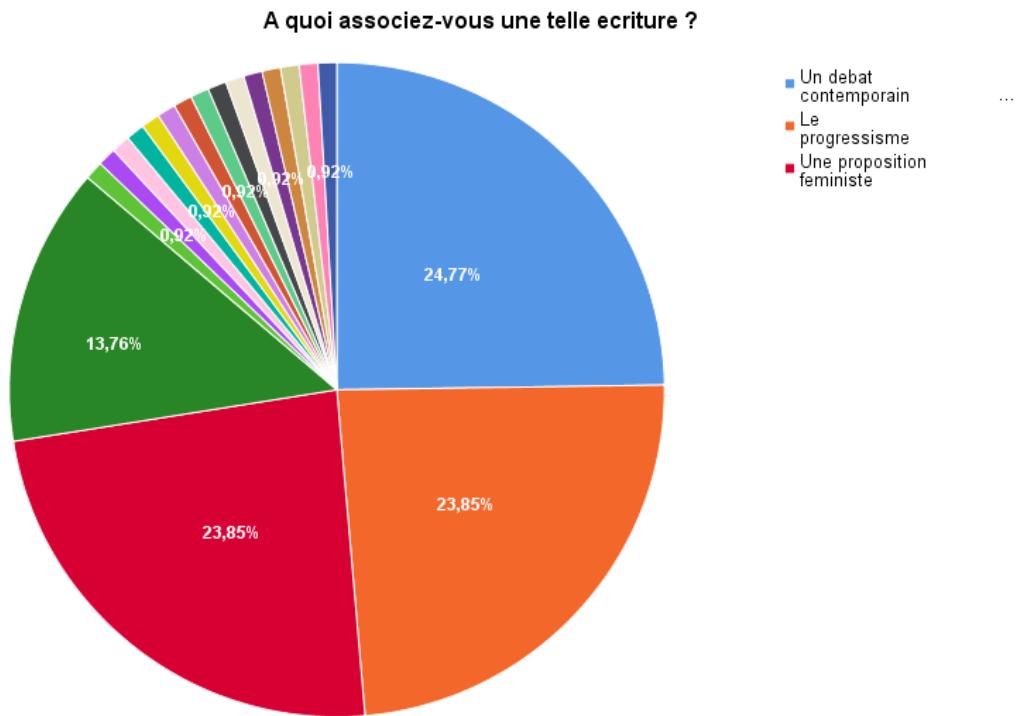
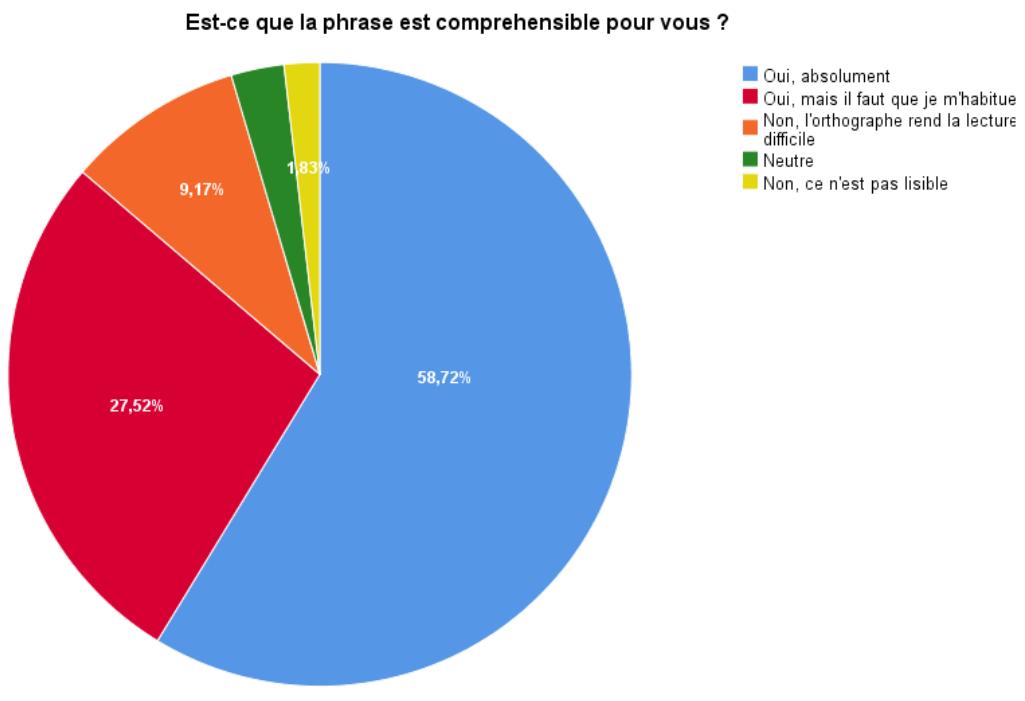
- le français
- Other: _____

39. Quelles sont les langues secondaires ou étrangères que vous parlez? **Tick all that apply.*

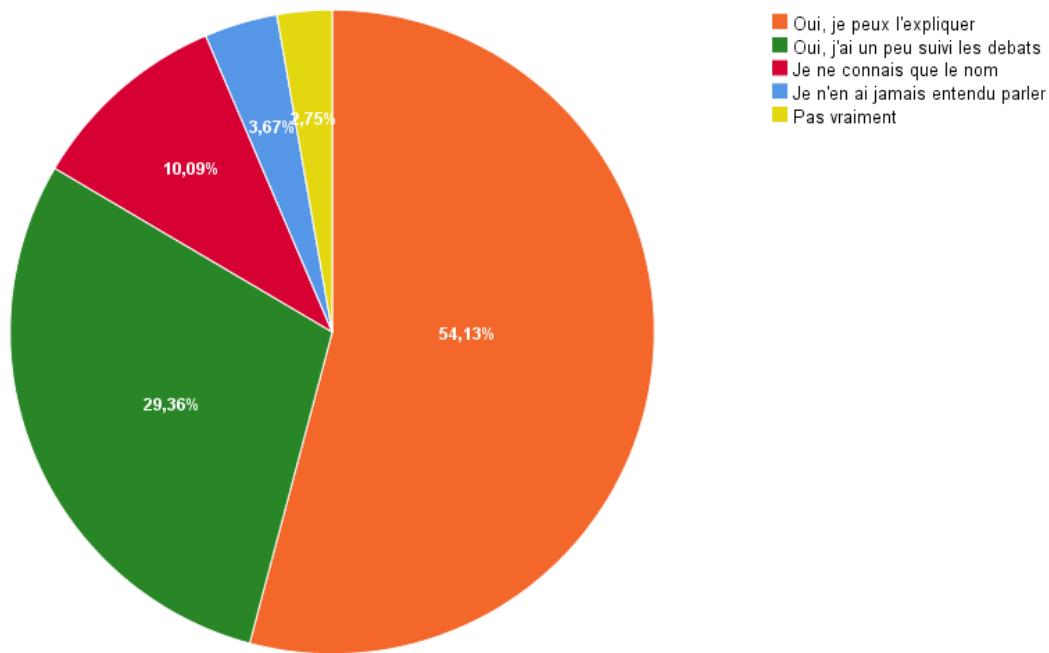
- l'anglais
- l'espagnol
- l'allemand
- l'italien
- l'arabe
- Je ne parle pas de langue secondaire
- Other: _____

10.3 Charts of all results (age 18 – 25)

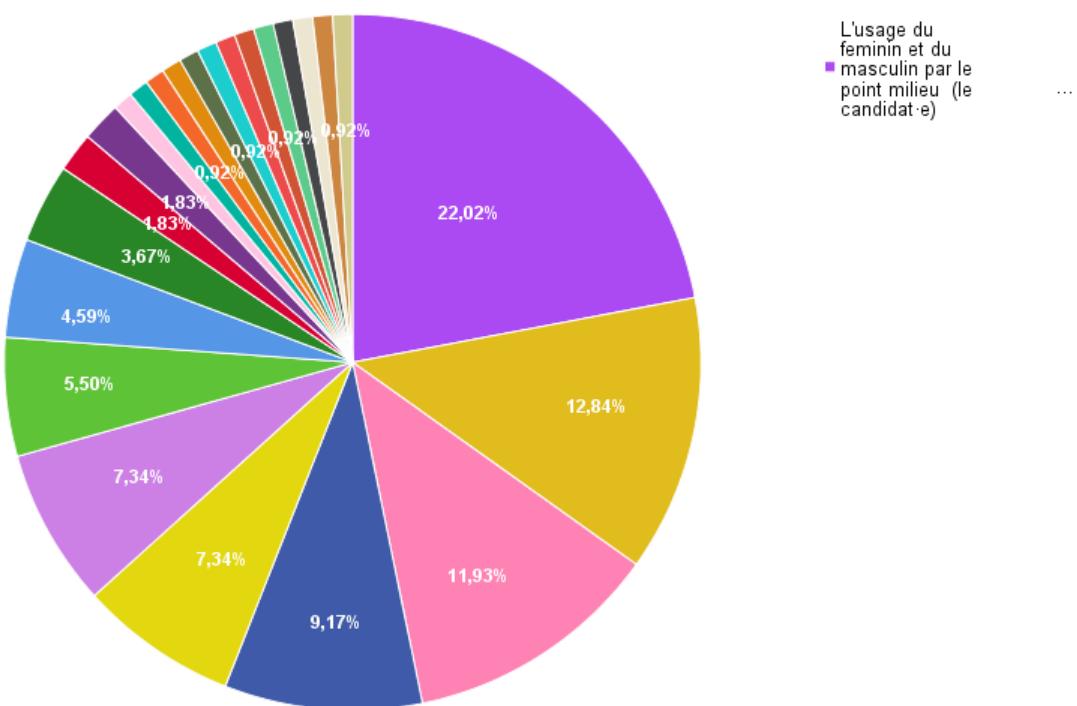
Part I

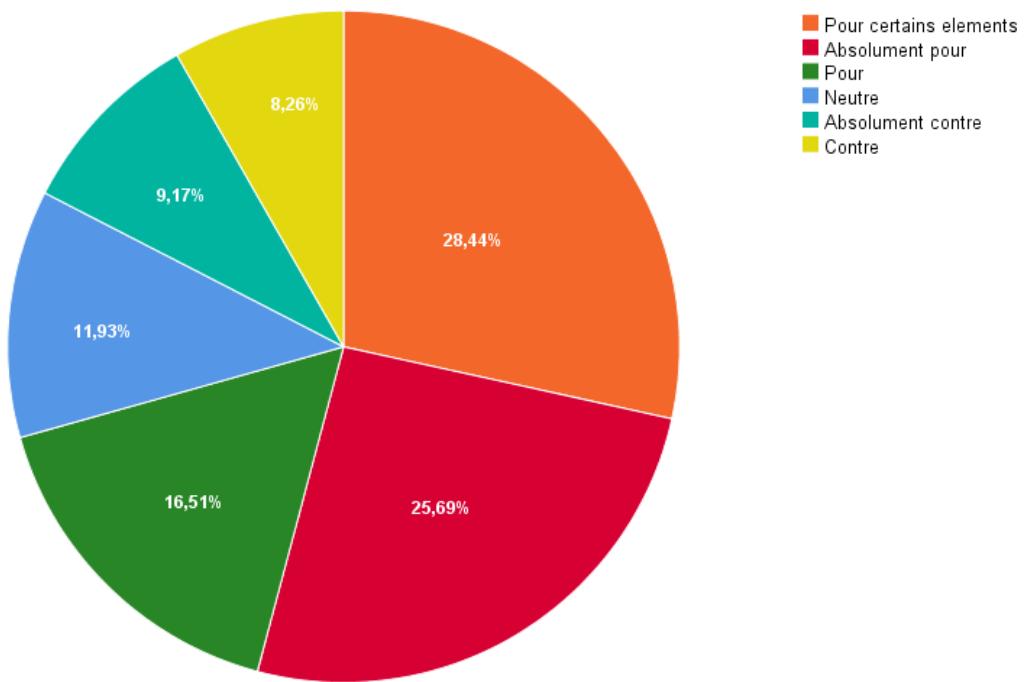


Connaissez-vous le concept d'écriture inclusive ?

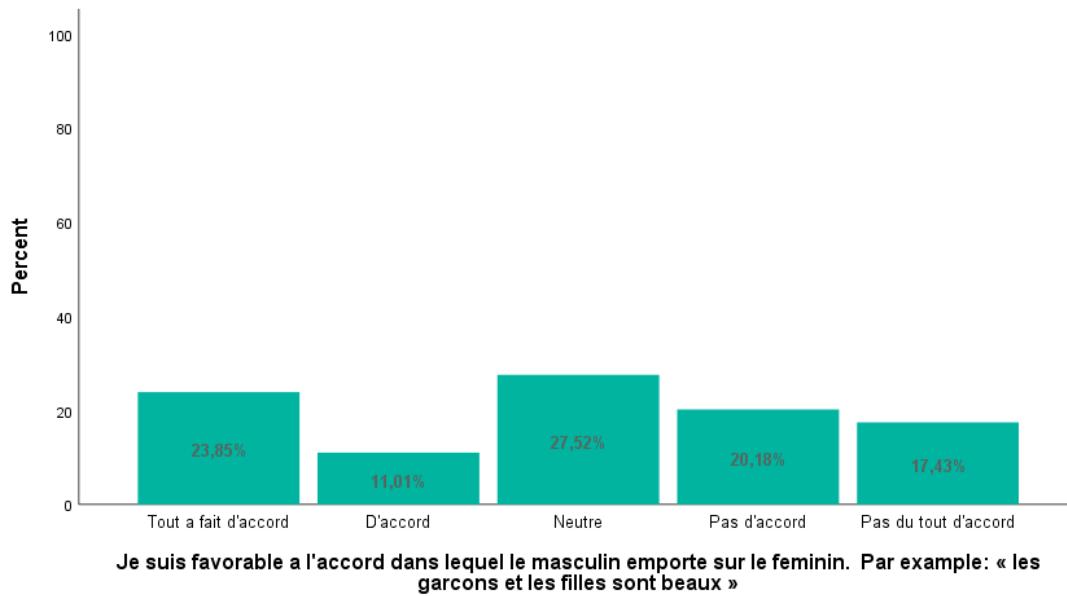
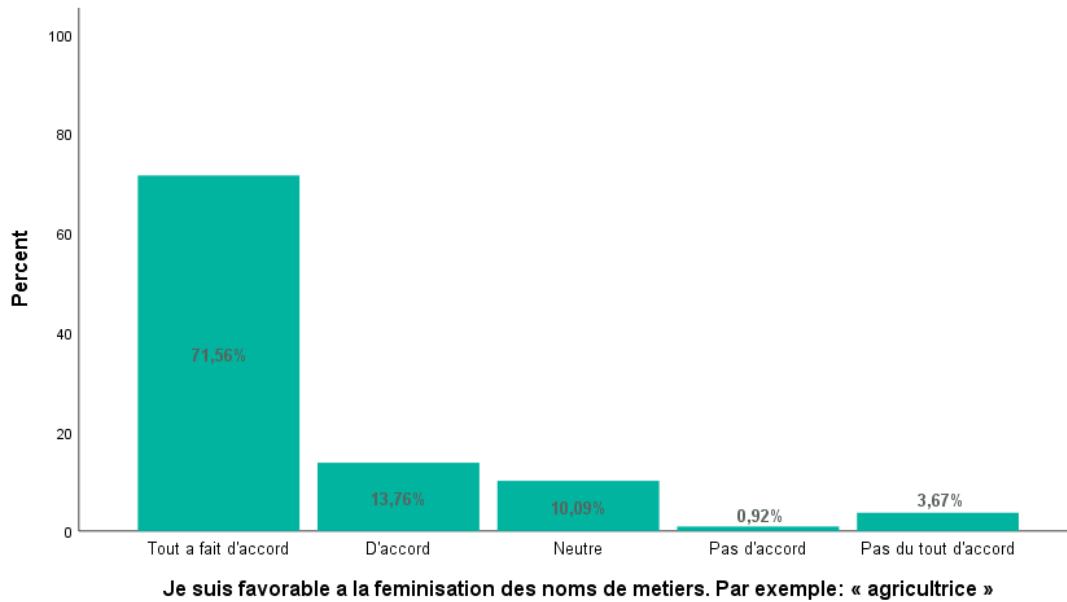


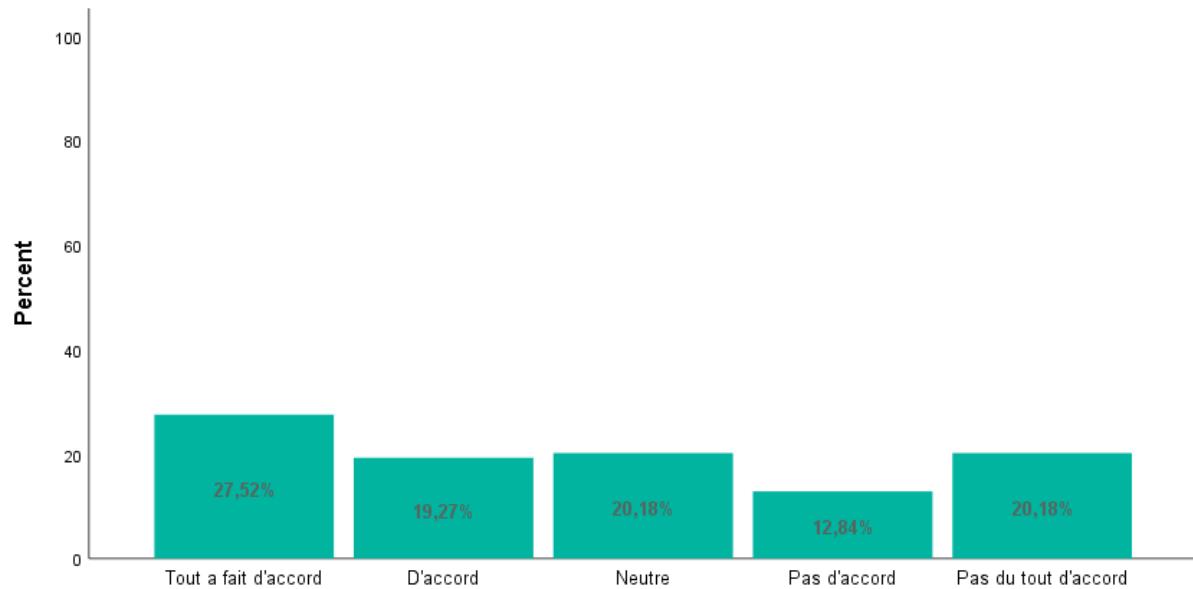
Selon vous, qu'est-ce que l'écriture inclusive ?



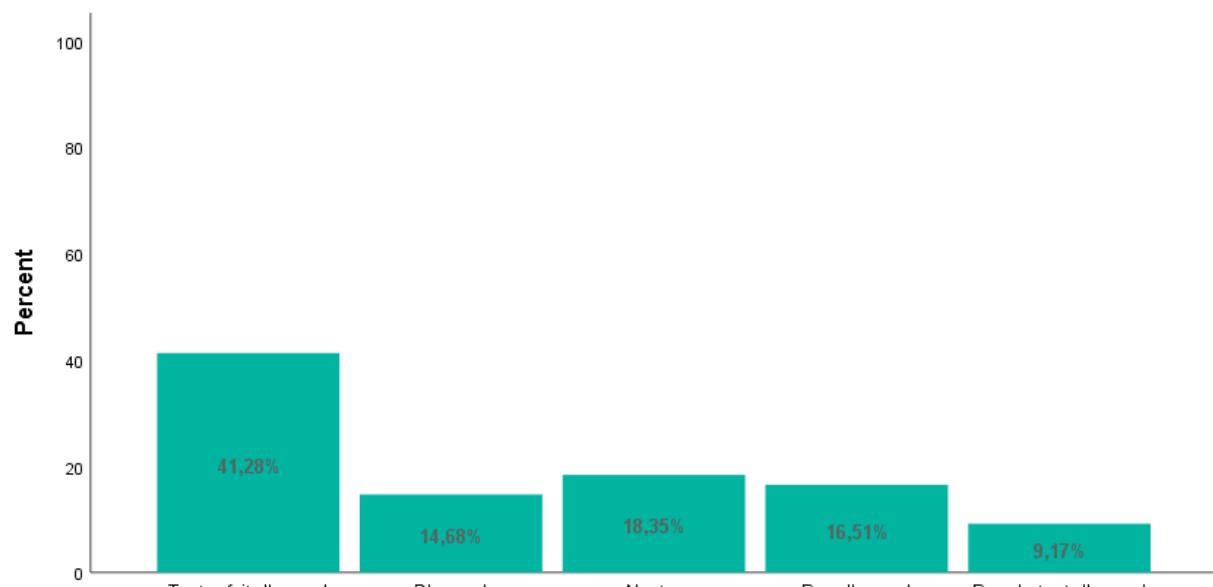
Est-ce que vous êtes pour ou contre l'écriture inclusive ?

Part II

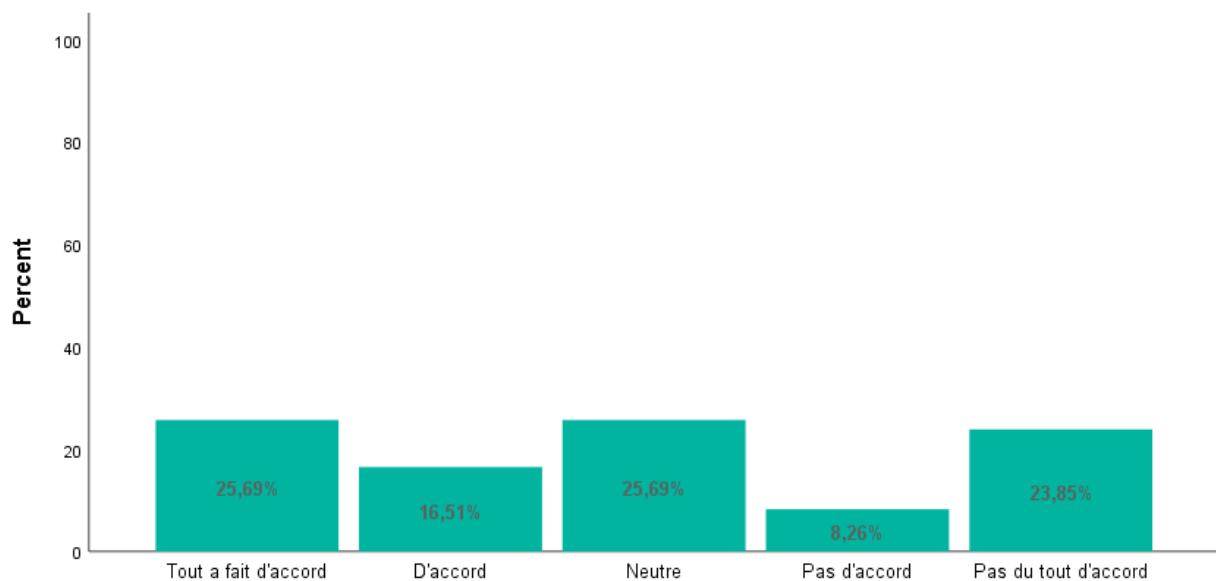




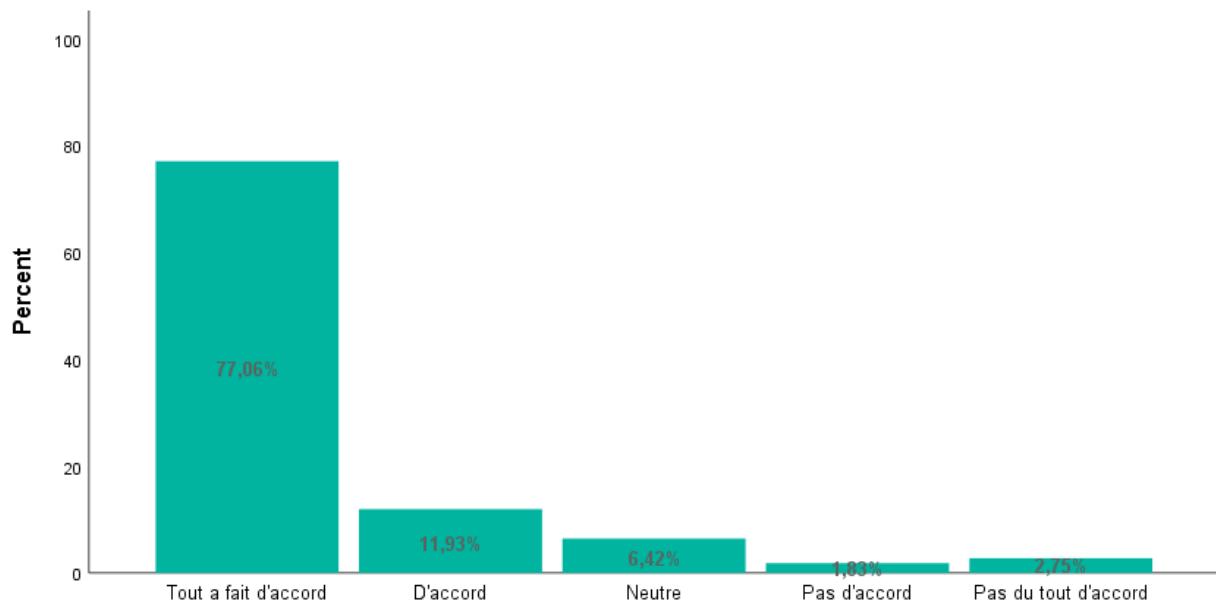
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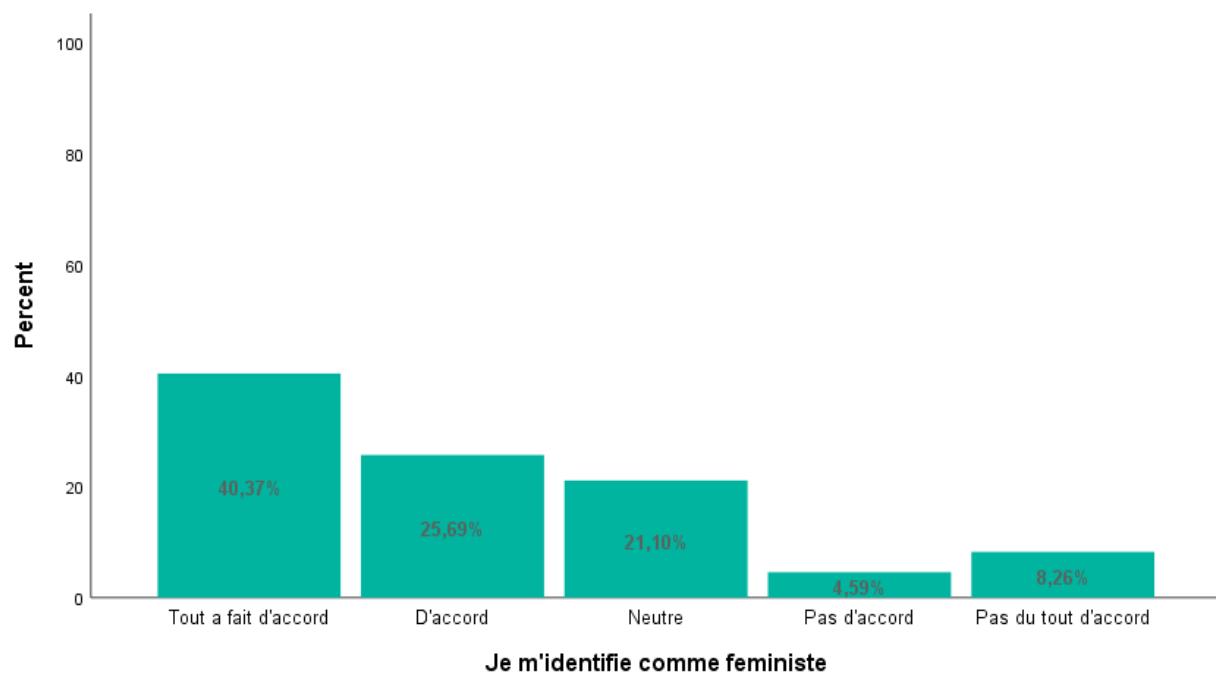
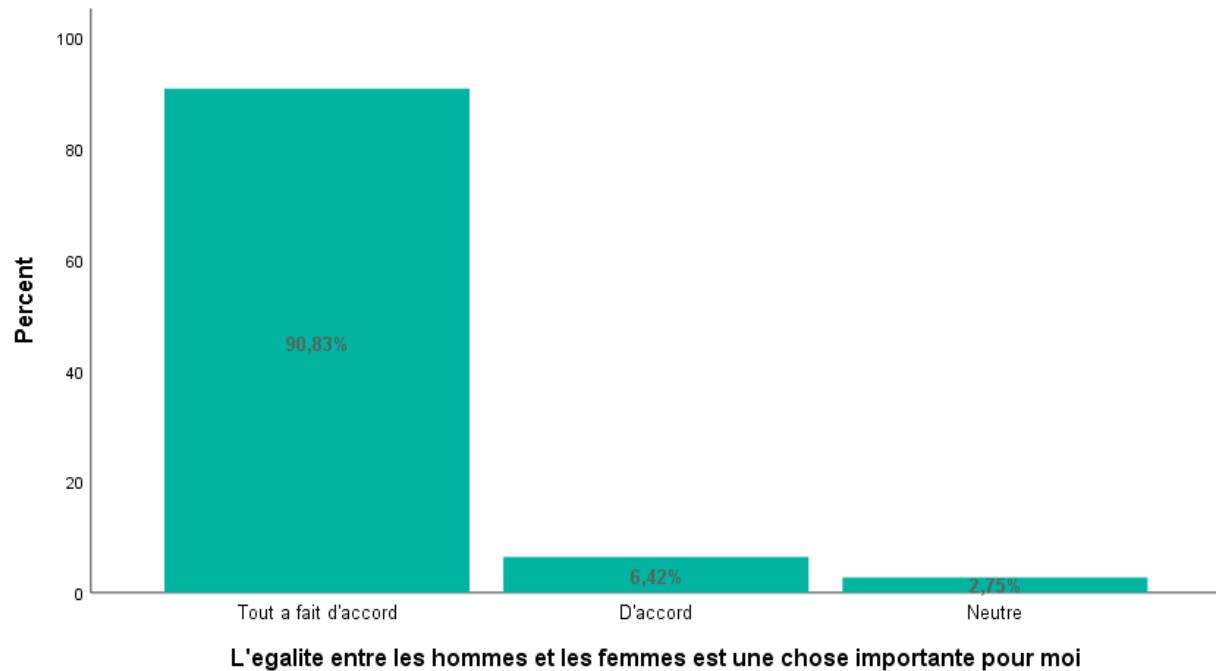
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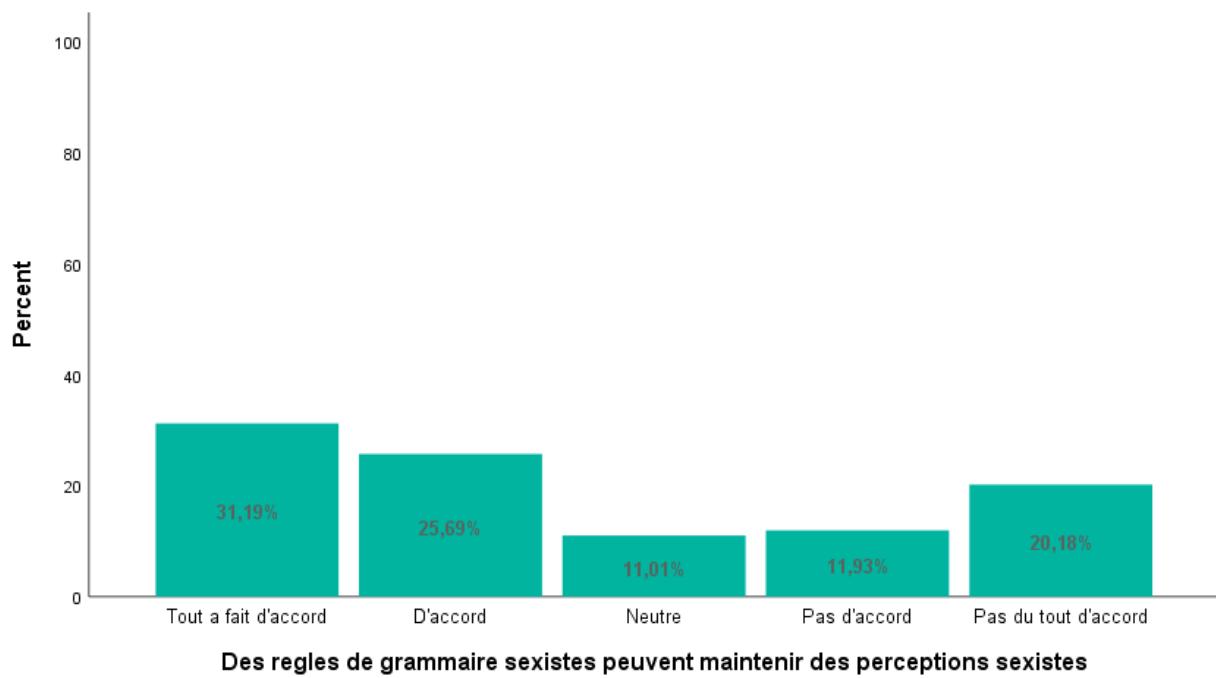
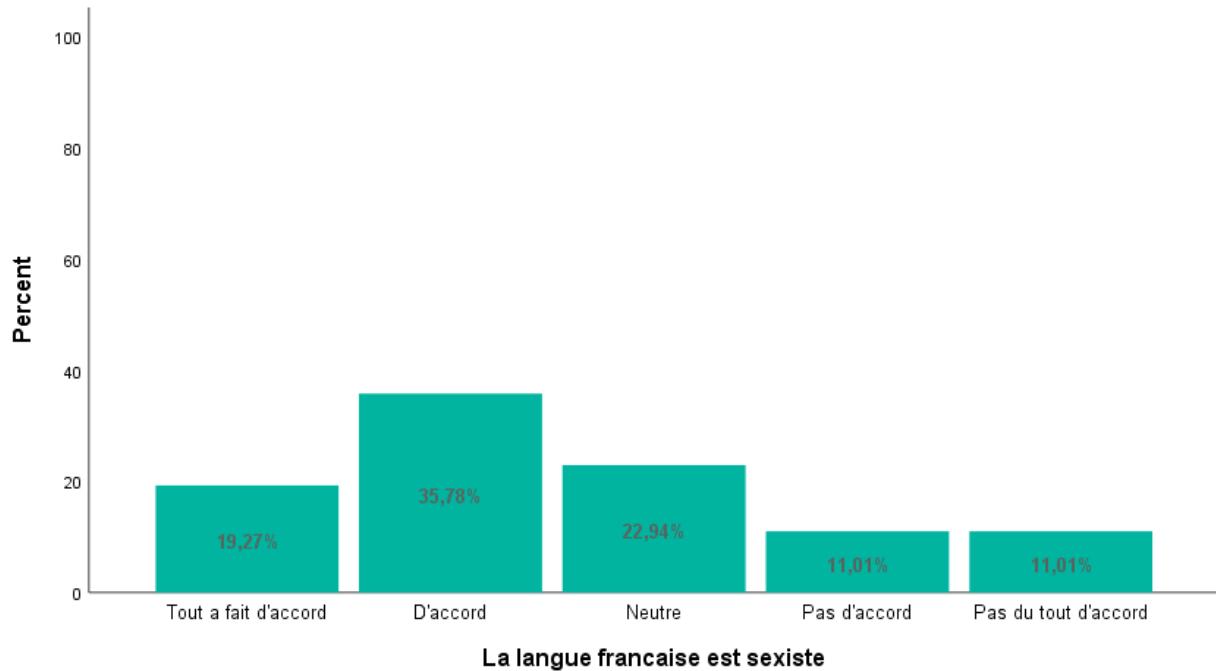


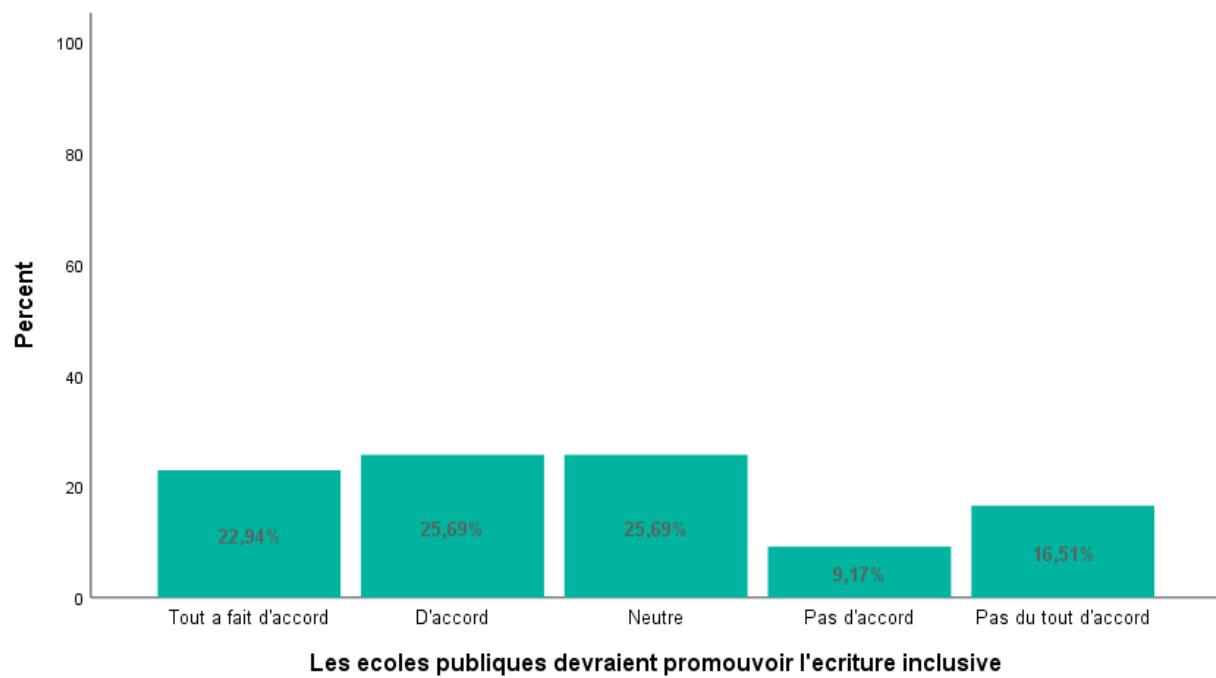
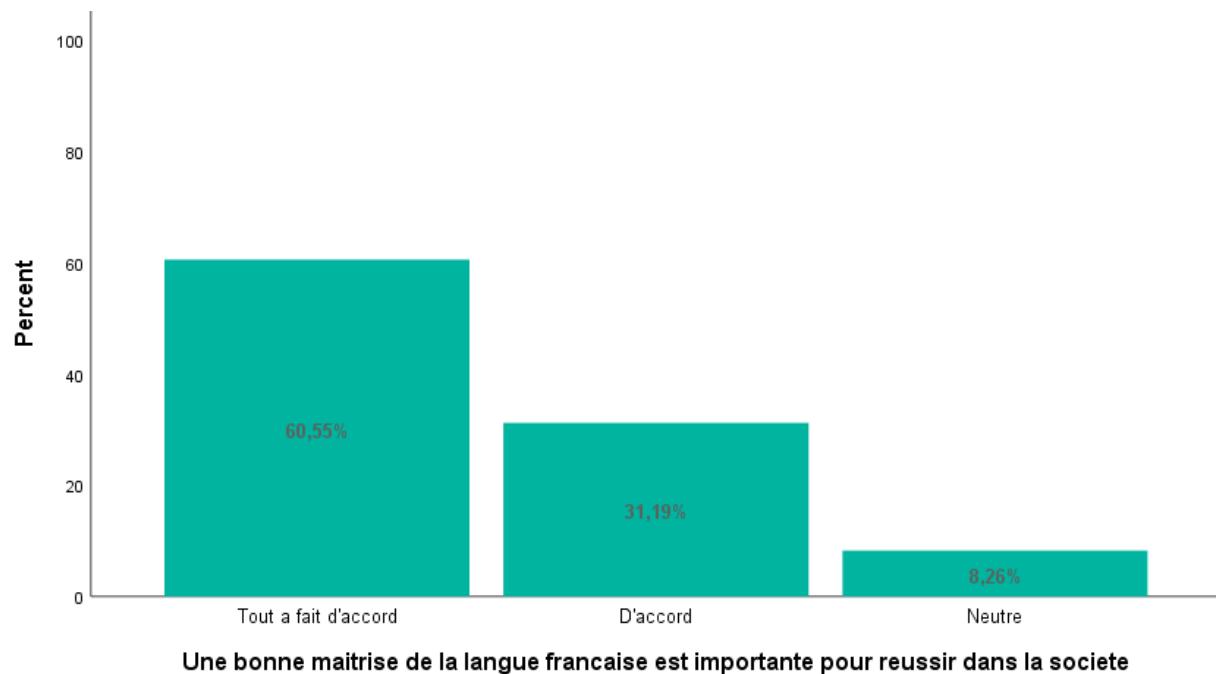
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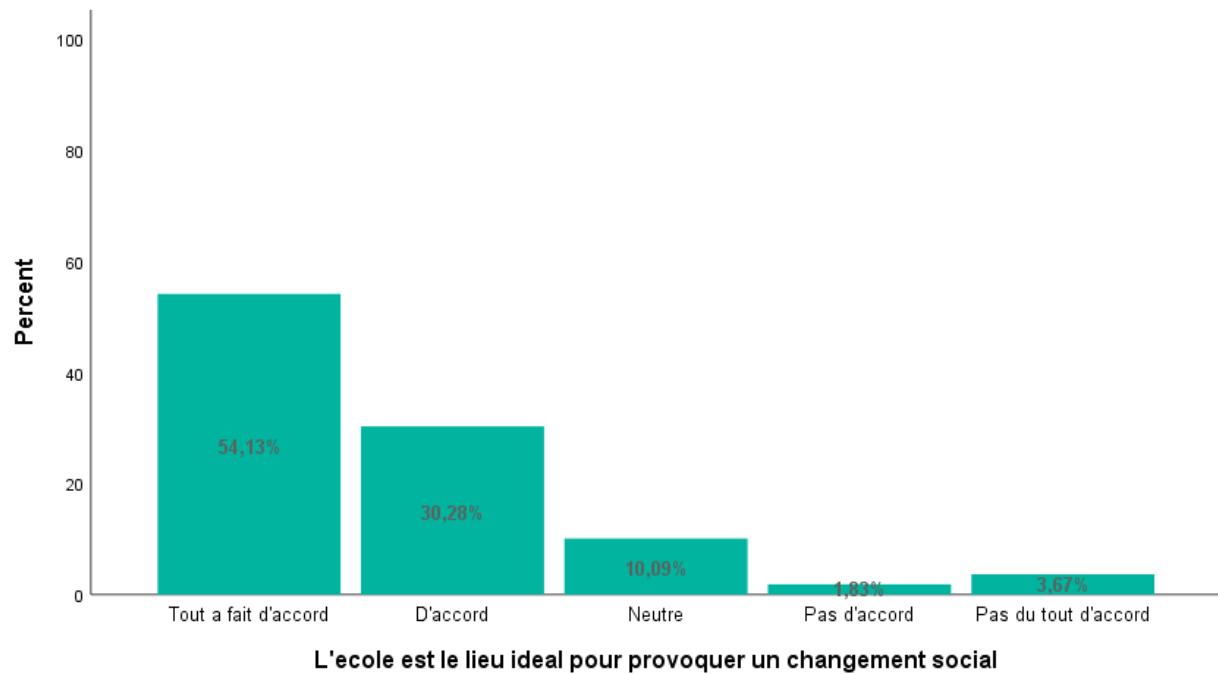


Je suis favorable a la feminisation des noms de fonctions, grades ou titres. Par exemple: l'ambassadrice, madame la ministre, madame la prefete

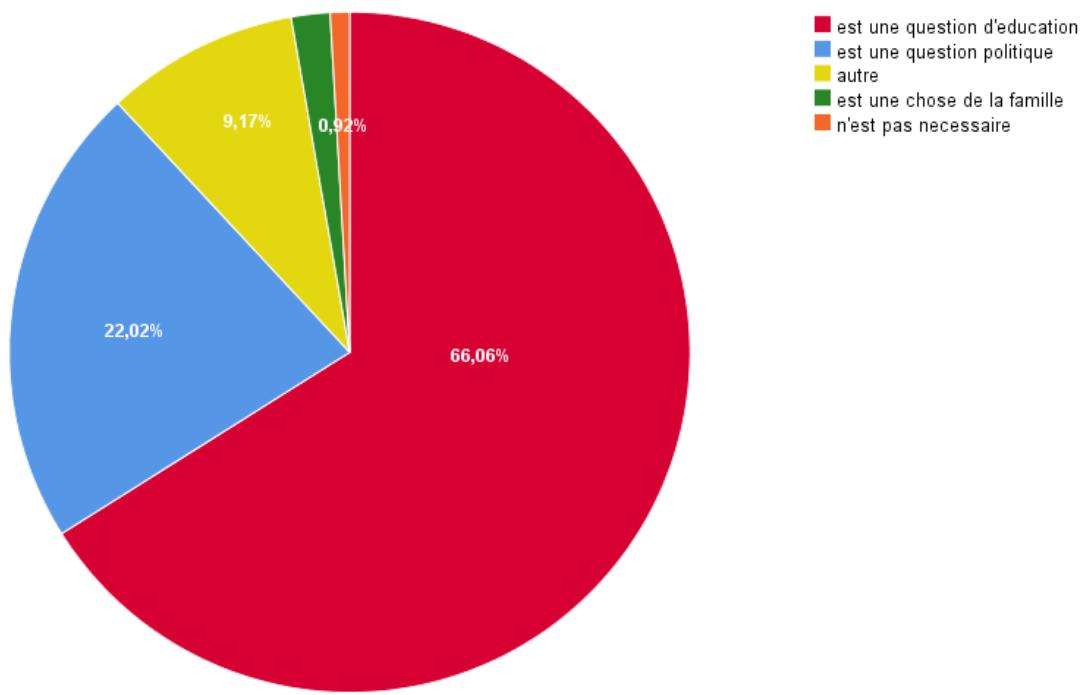


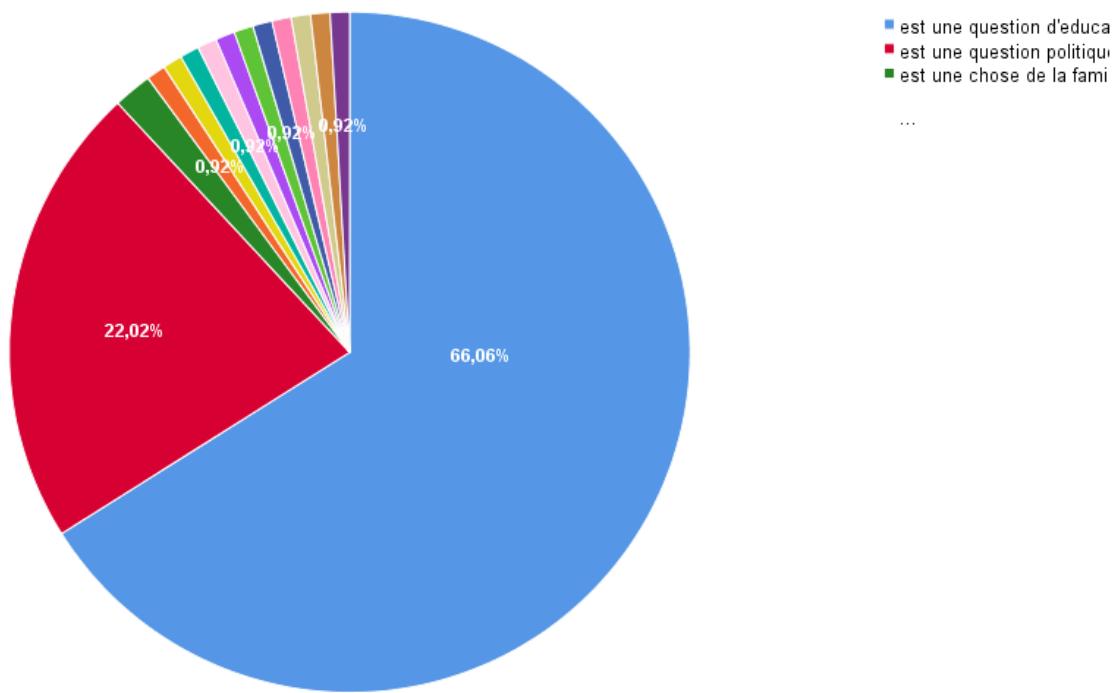






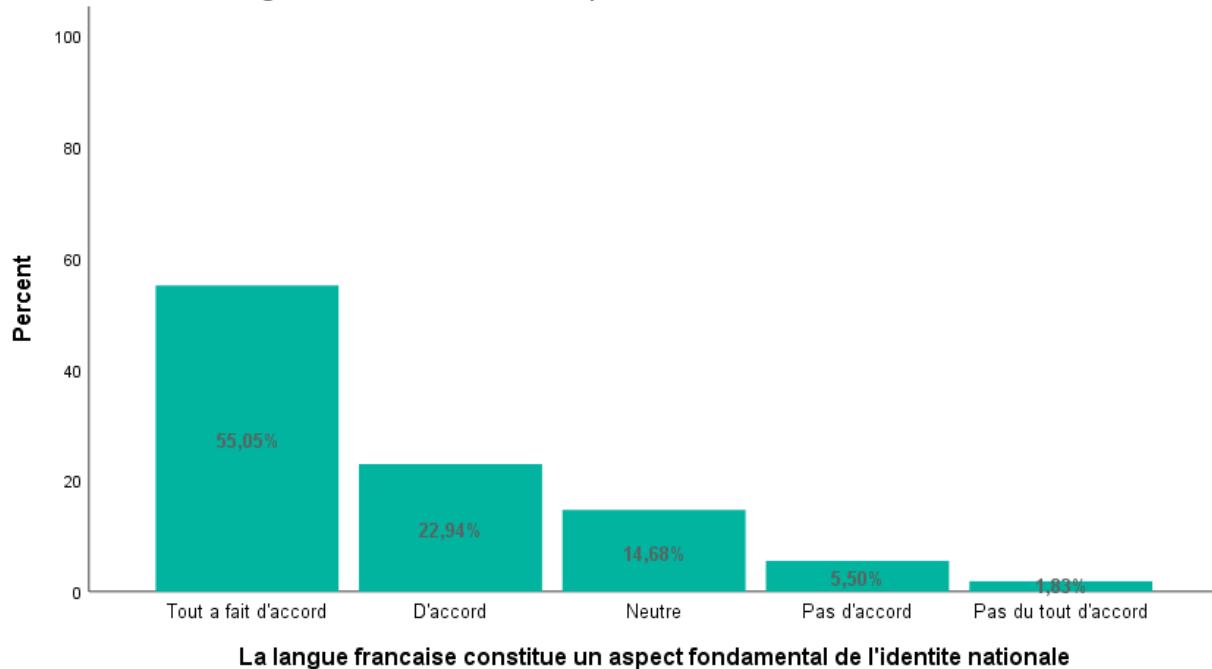
La promotion de l'égalité entre les hommes et les femmes ...



La promotion de l'égalité entre les hommes et les femmes ...

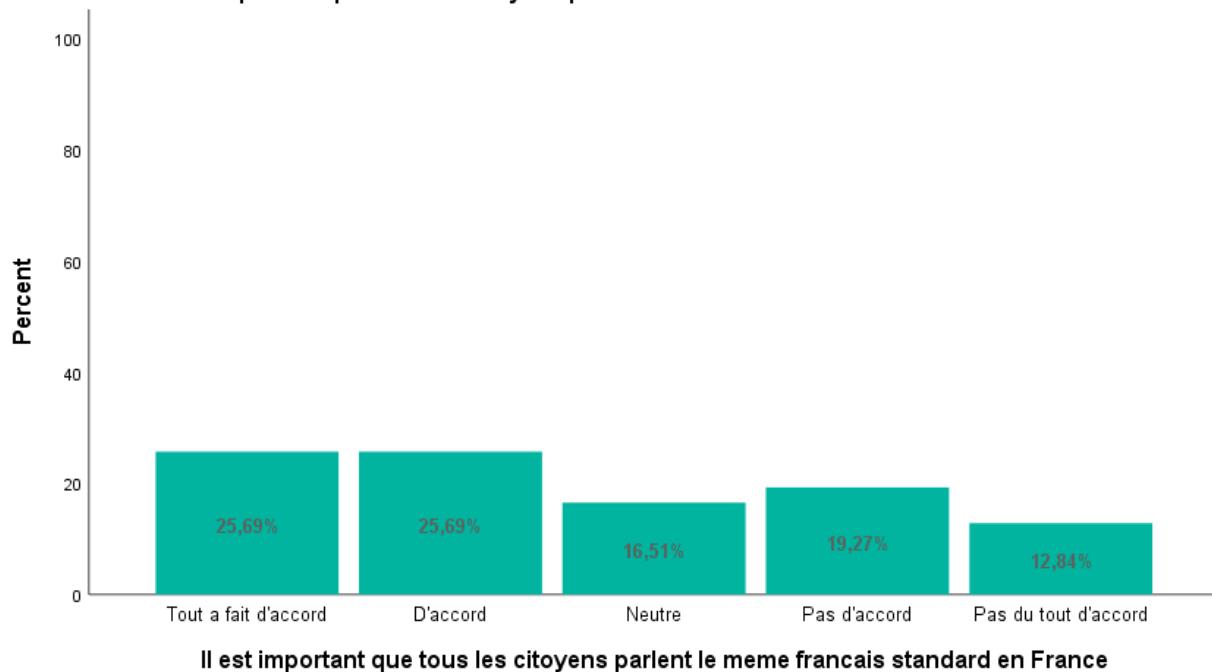
Part III

La langue française constitue un aspect fondamental de l'identité nationale



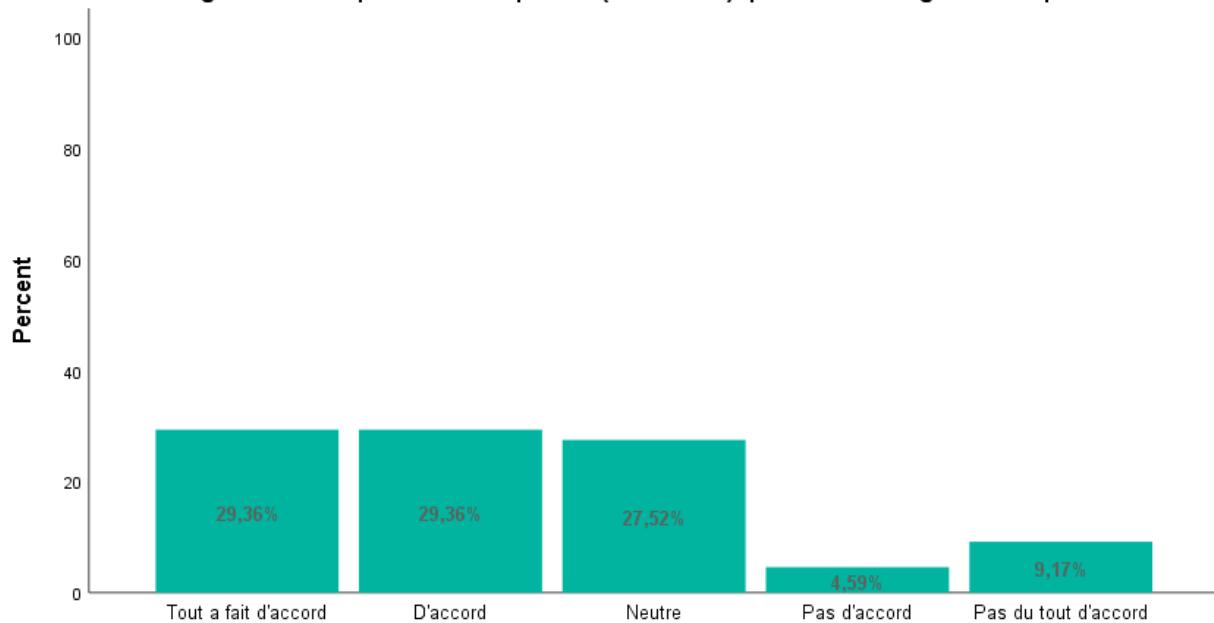
La langue française constitue un aspect fondamental de l'identité nationale

Il est important que tous les citoyens parlent le même français standard en France



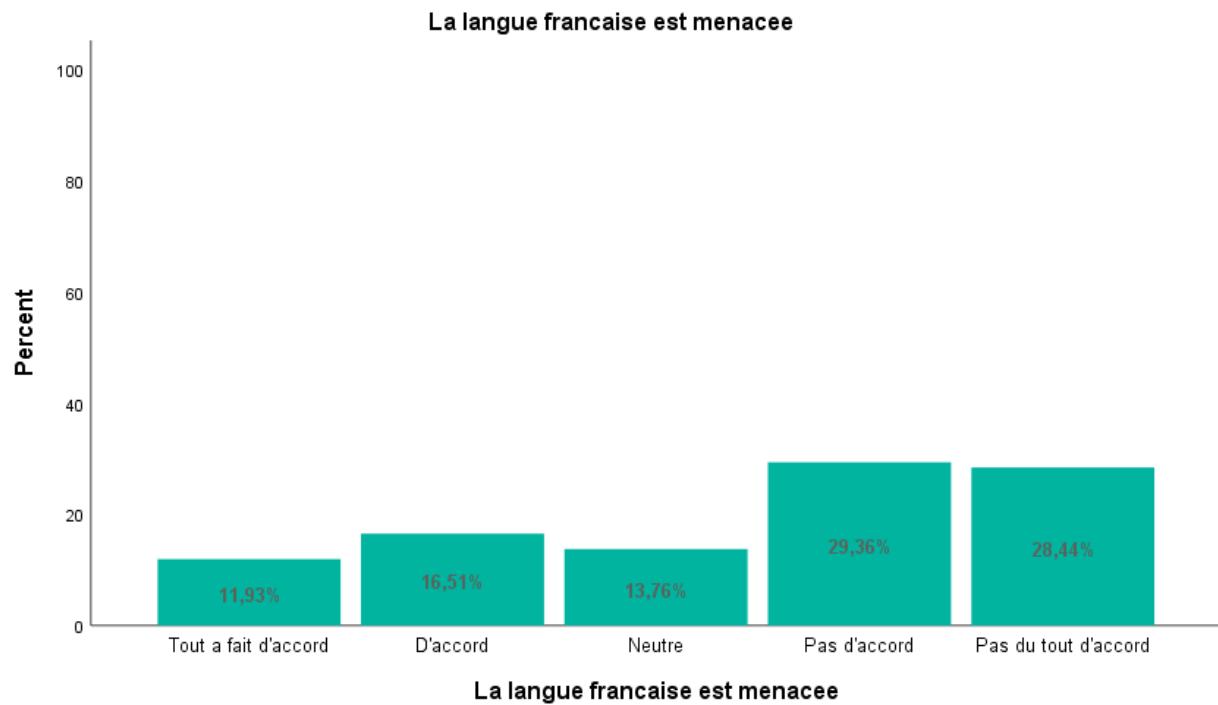
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La langue française possède des qualités (inherentes) que d'autres langues n'ont pas

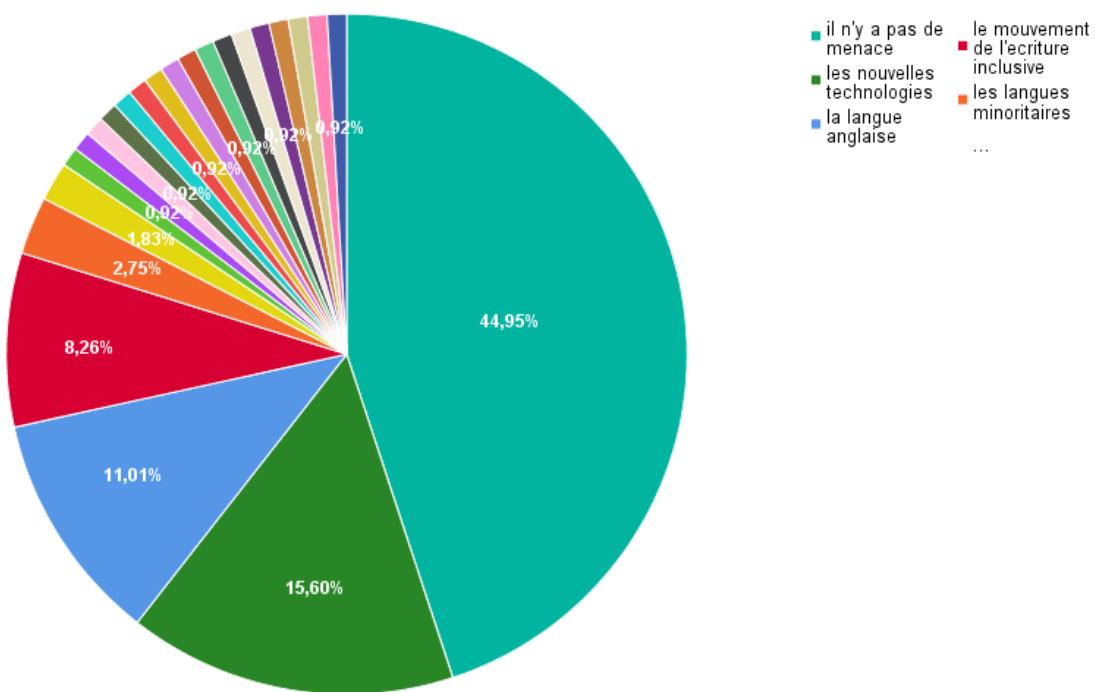


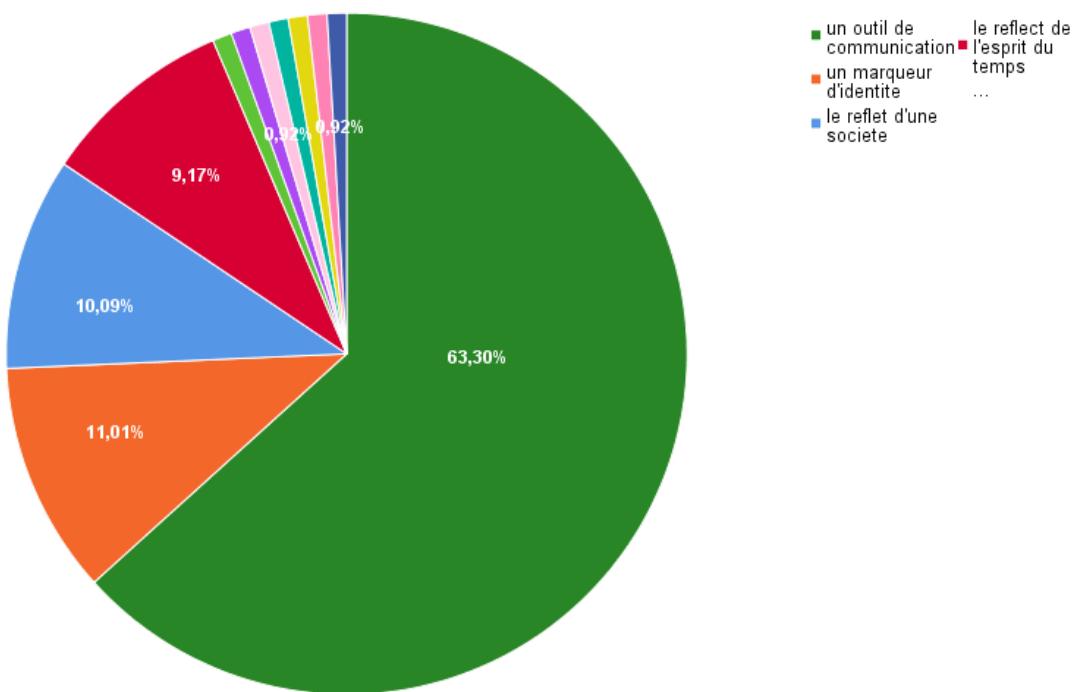
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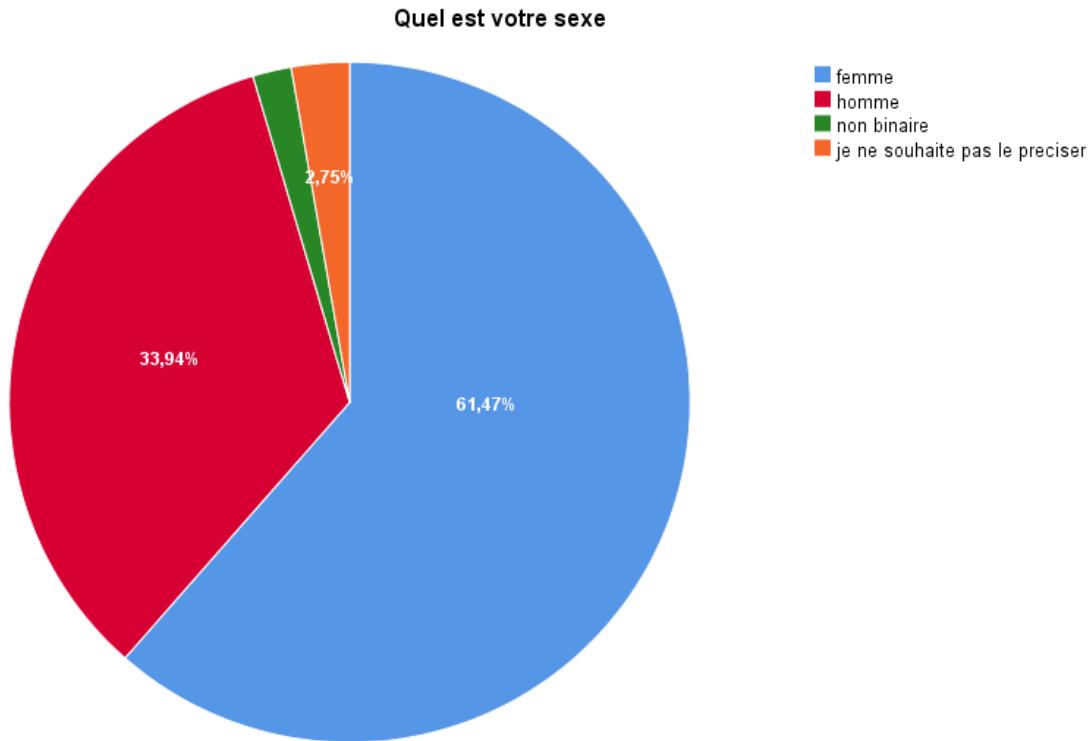


Si vous êtes d'accord, quelle serait la plus grande menace pour la langue française?

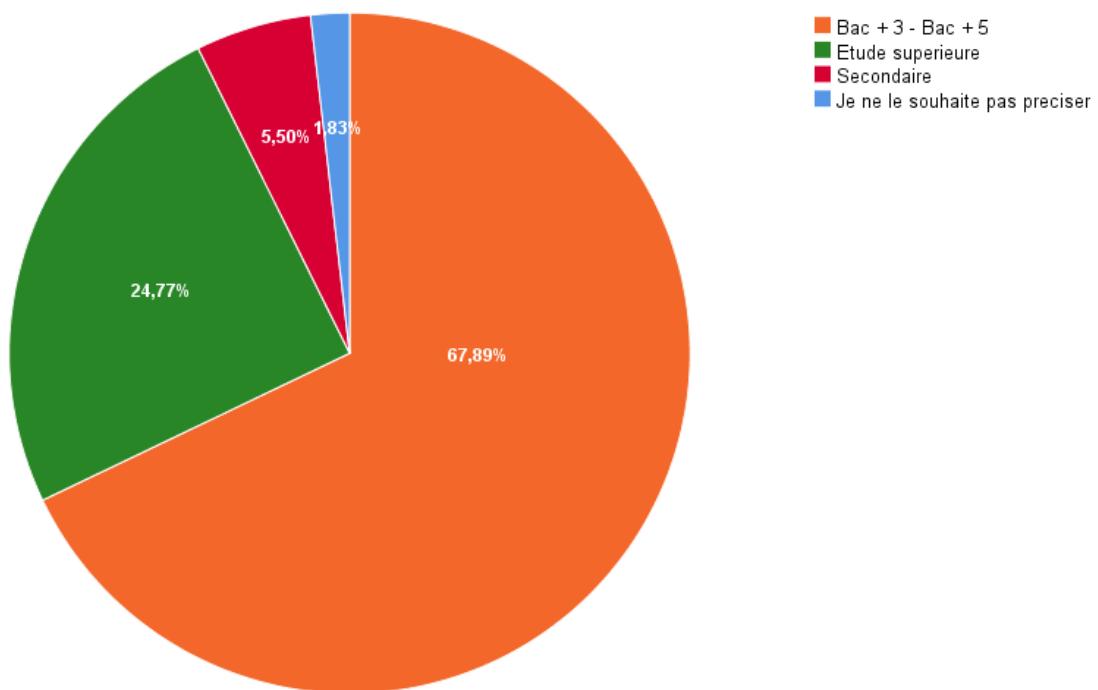


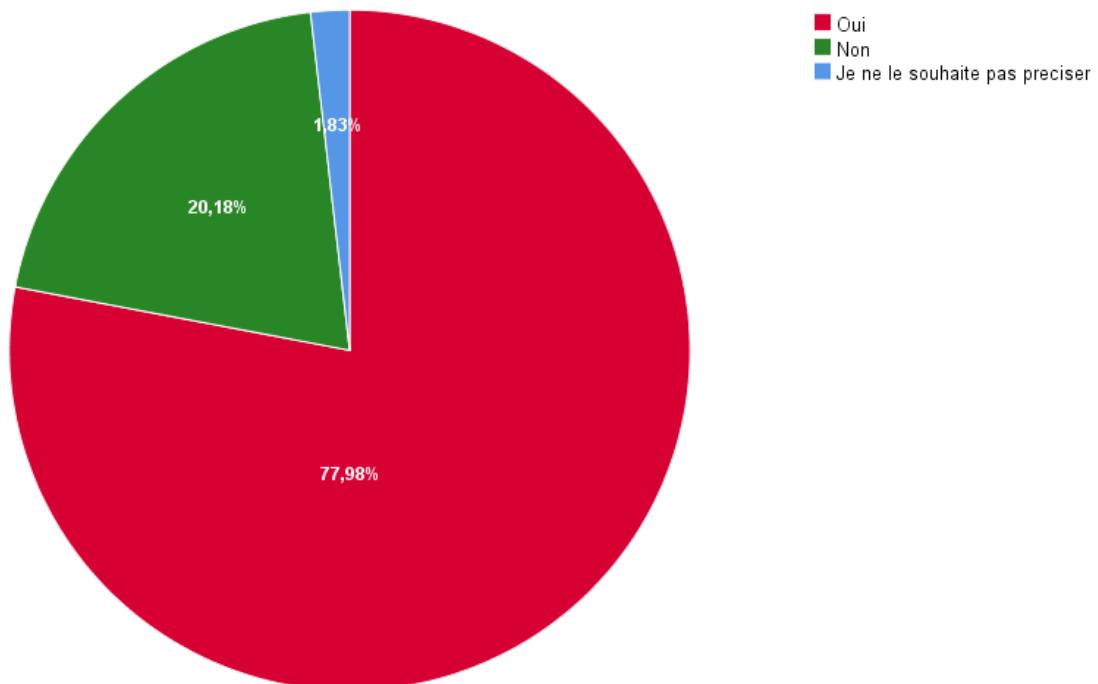
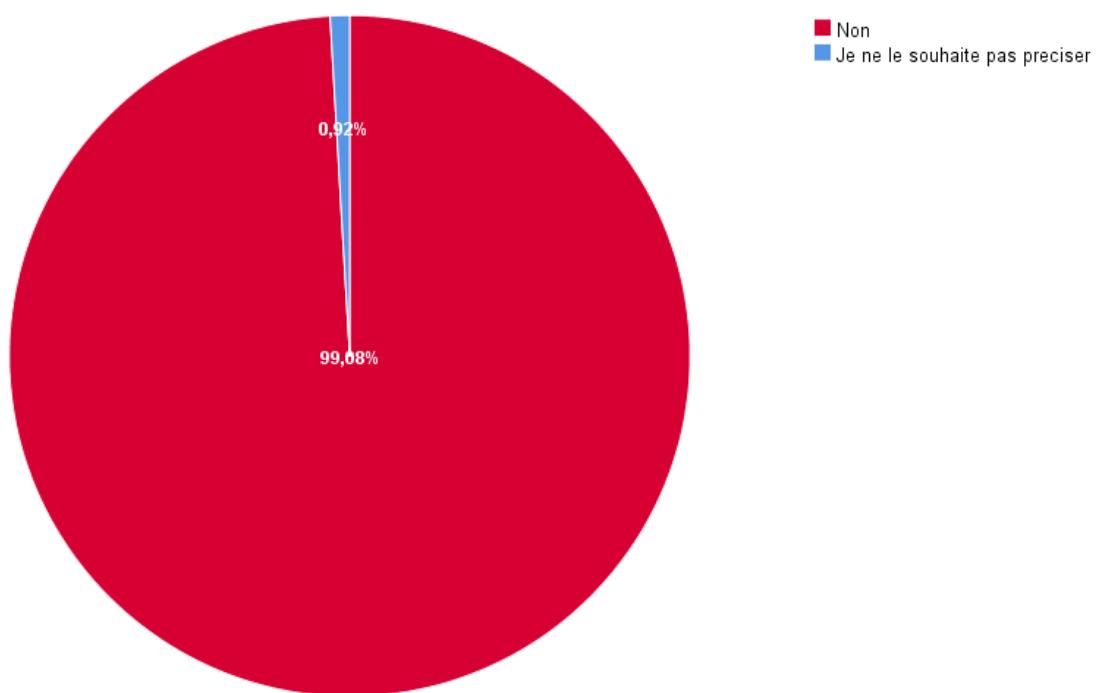
La fonction principale de la langue c'est d'etre:

Part IV



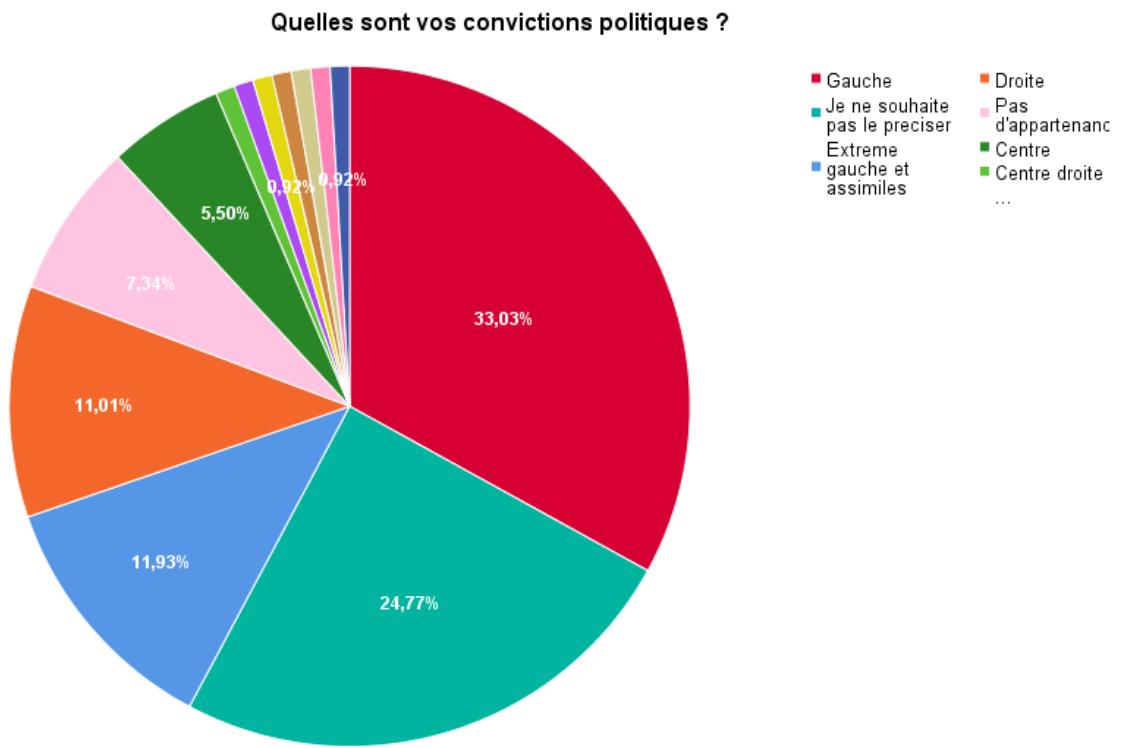
Quel est le plus haut niveau de scolarité que vous avez obtenu ou que vous êtes en train d'obtenir ?



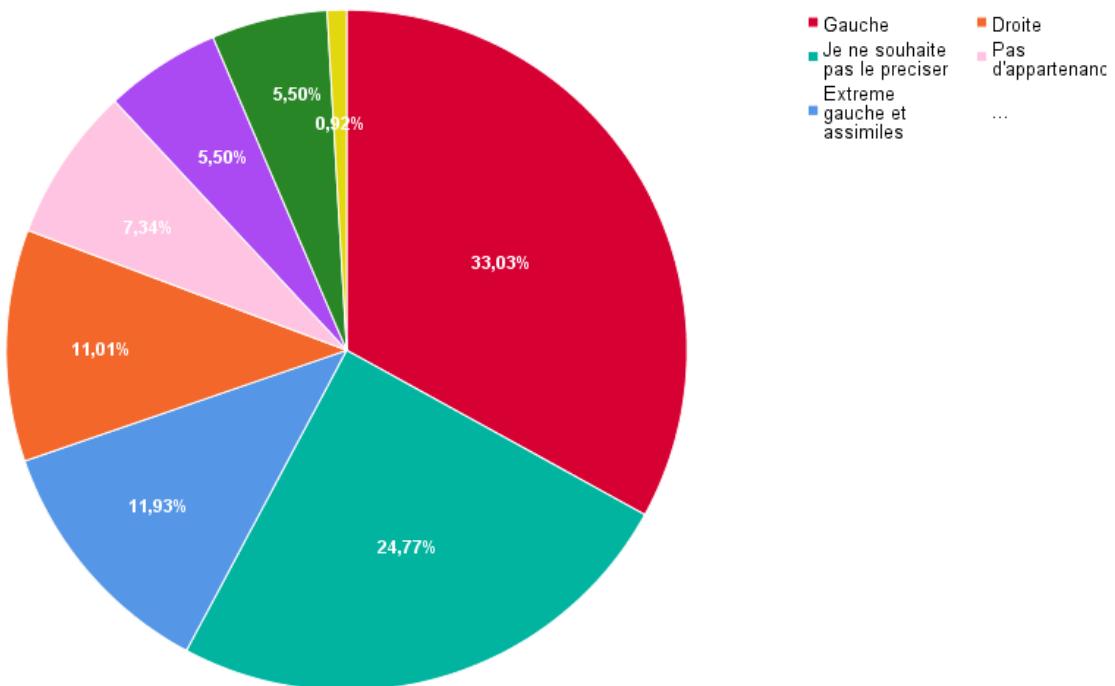
Habitez-vous actuellement en France?**Avez-vous des enfants?**

Quel est votre code postal en France? (Si vous n'habitez pas en France, quel etait votre dernier code postal en France).

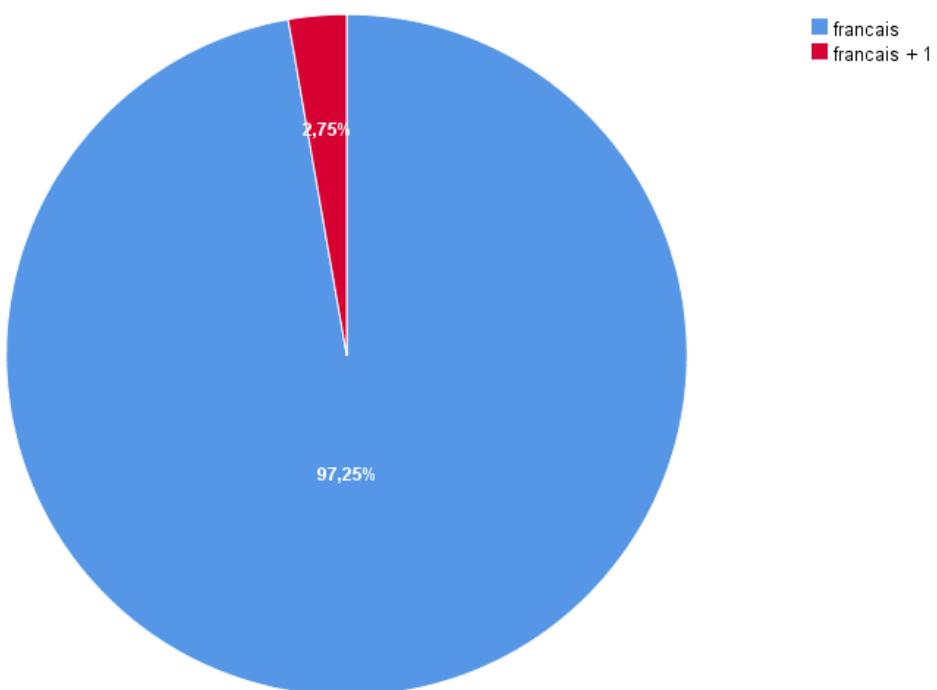
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
00	3	2,8	2,8	2,8
06	4	3,7	3,7	6,4
14	1	,9	,9	7,3
17	1	,9	,9	8,3
22	1	,9	,9	9,2
31	7	6,4	6,4	15,6
33	16	14,7	14,7	30,3
34	2	1,8	1,8	32,1
35	3	2,8	2,8	34,9
38	1	,9	,9	35,8
40	1	,9	,9	36,7
42	2	1,8	1,8	38,5
44	2	1,8	1,8	40,4
57	1	,9	,9	41,3
59	2	1,8	1,8	43,1
61	1	,9	,9	44,0
63	2	1,8	1,8	45,9
64	2	1,8	1,8	47,7
67	1	,9	,9	48,6
69	5	4,6	4,6	53,2
75	27	24,8	24,8	78,0
76	2	1,8	1,8	79,8
77	2	1,8	1,8	81,7
78	3	2,8	2,8	84,4
91	2	1,8	1,8	86,2
92	7	6,4	6,4	92,7
93	1	,9	,9	93,6
94	4	3,7	3,7	97,2
95	3	2,8	2,8	100,0
Total	109	100,0	100,0	



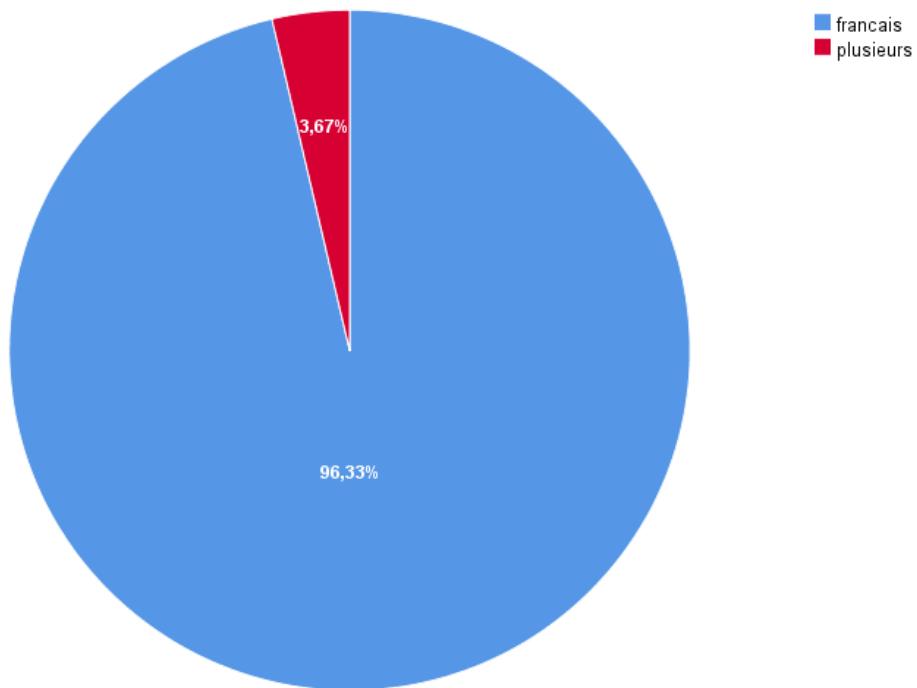
Quelles sont vos convictions politiques ?



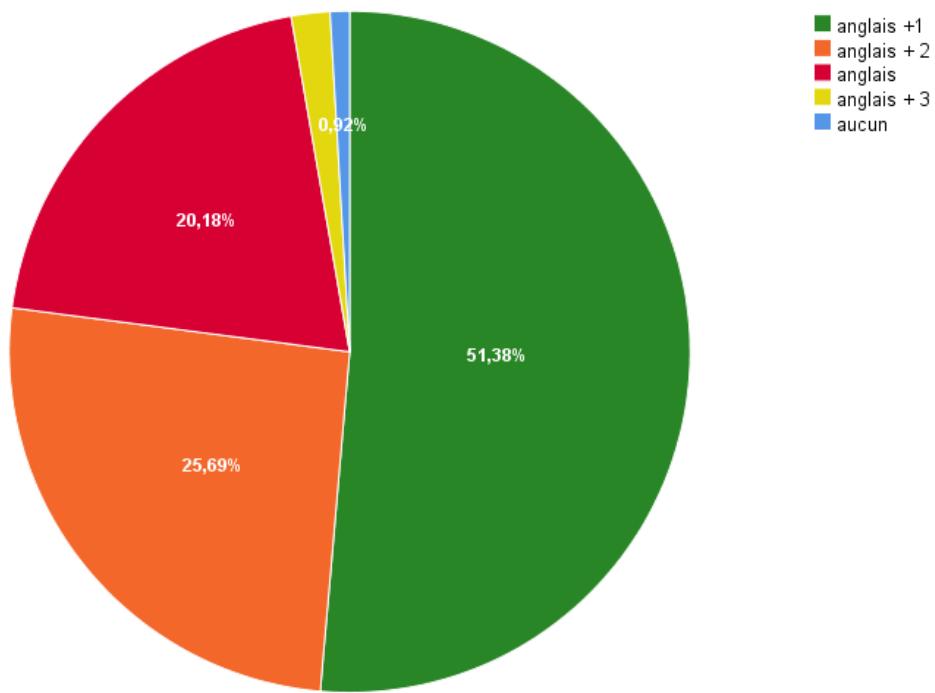
Quelle est votre nationalité?



Quelle est votre langue maternelle? (Si vous êtes bilingue, veuillez indiquer les deux langues)



Quelles sont les langues secondaires ou étrangères que vous parlez?



10.4 –Answers to question 1

The following responses are categorized by nature of the response, not by their stance on inclusive writing (see question 6). Therefore, certain responses in which multiple emotions or associations are mentioned, appear more than once. In this case, only the argument relevant to the category is shown in black, with the rest of the response in grey, to not take the answer out of its original context.

Quel sentiment cette phrase évoque t'elle pour vous ?

The movement	5
Écriture inclusive	3
C'est l'écriture inclusive, je trouve ça normal	1
Genre, écriture inclusive	1
Positive emotions	6
C'est bien	1
C'est très bien	1
I love it	1
Fierté, confiance, contentement	1
Joie, fierté, Victoire	1
Satisfaction	1
Clear, correct	5
Clair	1
Clair, limpide, utile	1
Concis, ferme, clair	1
Simple efficace clair	1
Correct, sain	1
Inclusive	15
Bienveillant inclusive	1
Bonne evolution inclusivité	1
Elle inclut tous	1
Inclus femmes et hommes	1
Inclusif	1
Inclusif – Féministe – Changement	1
Inclusif Égalitaire rare	1
Inclusion	1
Inclusion, précision	1
Inclusive	1
Inclusivité	1
Intégralité	1
Je me sens intégrée	1
La joie d'inclusion	1
Nouveauté Inclusif	1

Equality	12
Égalité	1
Égalité des sexes	1
Équité	1
Égalité, justice, féminisme	1
Égalitaire, diversité	1
Mixité (diversity)	1
Modernité, égalité	1
Parité femmes-hommes	1
Parité, nouveauté, perplexe	1
Réprésentation égalitaire inutile	1
Superflu mais égalitaire	1
Respect, indépendance, égalité	1
Evolution / modern	9
Évolution, obesqueux, questionnement	1
Modernité, égalité	1
Nouveauté Inclusif	1
Parité, nouveauté, perplexe	1
Questionnement, modernité, tradition	1
Très bonne evolution	1
Compliqué mais adapté	1
Malaise mais évolution	1
Inclusif – Féministe – Changement	1
Normal, custom	6
Ça me paraît normal et pas choquant	1
Normal correct respectueux	1
Normalité	1
Sentiment d'habitude, usager	1
Logique Réflexion Habitude	1
C'est l'écriture inclusive, je trouve ça normal	1
Disconnected	3
Moche saccadé	1
Direct, segmenté	1
Distinction	1
Complicated, heavy	10
Évolution, obesqueux, questionnement	1
Compliqué mais adapté	1
Compliqué pour rien	1
Difficile à lire	2
La phrase devient très chargée	1
Rien de choquant si tel est la question concernant l'écriture inclusive même si ça peut devenir lourd sur un texte entier.	1
Superflu mais égalitaire	1

Trop complexe	1
Lent, haché, scolaire	1
Confused	3
Bizarre, confus, pourquoi?	1
Mon cerveau bug	1
Parité, nouveauté, perplexe	1
Negative emotions	7
Abus	1
Malaise mais évolution	1
Ridicule	1
Agacement (annoyance)	1
Dégout, haine, déprime	1
Désolation	1
Une grande tristesse, une déformation d'une si belle langue	1
Decline	4
Détournement idéologique	1
Déchéance	1
Faux débat	1
Une grande tristesse, une déformation d'une si belle langue	1
Useless	6
Ce n'est pas efficace	1
Futile	1
Inutile ridicule, pas une évolution linguistique	1
Je trouve que c'est une perte de temps	1
Peu pratique	1
Réprésentation égalitaire inutile	1
Nothing	13
Aucun	2
Aucun en particulier	1
Aucun sentiment	1
Indifférence	1
Neutre	1
Rien	2
Rien ??	1
Rien de choquant	1
Rien de choquant si tel est la question concernant l'écriture inclusive même si ça peut devenir lourd sur un texte entier.	1
Rien de particulier	1
Why not	1
Administrative, formal	6

Administrative, directionnel, sans opinion	1
administration	1
Elle évoque un texte ‘administratif’, et non un langage oral	1
Lent, haché, scolaire	1
Formalisme	1
Formel	1
Other	
Politesse	1
Informatif, doux, féminin	1
Gauche	1
Anticipation	1
C'est pratique	1

10.5 Answers to question 6

The following responses are categorized by nature of the response.

Arguments for (of pour, absolument pour, pour certains éléments)

Equality

Egalité (x 7)

Egalité des sexes (x 2)

Egalité des sexes et usage juste de la féminisation

Eviter la discrimination

C'est bien d'inclure

C'est juste le rétablissement de l'égalité entre le féminin et le masculin.

Cette écriture est plus égalitaire. Cependant ce n'est pas facilement lisible à premier abord.

Il permet de mettre sur un pied d'égalité hommes et femmes

L'égalité (x 2)

L'égalité et l'inclusion

L'égalité, parce que le langage est une institution qui façonne notre perception du monde. Le rendre moins sexiste c'est changer nos manières de voir les femmes et la société.

Pour l'égalité des représentations

L'égalité, la féminisation de la société

Pour l'égalité des genres

pour une égale parité dans la langue française, mais difficile à appliquer, peu fluide à la lecture

Réduire les inégalités entre les sexes

Je suis une femme et je pense que ça pourrait faire avancer notre condition (salaires égaux, mêmes possibilités de carrières...) mais je pense qu'il ne faut pas non plus tout transformer et garder une belle littérature, l'essence du français

Ne pas exclure en première lecture la potentielle présence d'une personne de sexe féminin lors de l'utilisation d'un mot masculin par habitude. Et favoriser l'équilibre et l'égalité des deux sexes surtout lorsqu'il s'agit de documents importants ou officiels.

Pour ne discriminer, ne mettre aucun genre au dessus d'un autre

Féminisme

Faire progresser les mentalités et le féminisme en général, en commençant par l'écriture

Je considère que l'écriture inclusive est un bon moyen de rendre la langue française moins sexiste. Cependant son utilisation alourdit les textes. Il faut donc savoir composer entre esthétique de la langue et la volonté d'égalité "à tout prix"

la langue française est sexiste et sexiste. De plus c'est une langue vivante. Je trouve ça bien qu'elle évolue

Permet une représentation plus importante du genre féminin dans la langue française et, à terme, essayer d'englober les deux genres dans des termes nouveaux

Inclusiveness

Consideration du divers au sein d'un lieu commun

la bonne ambiance collective

Réprésentativité et sentiment d'appartenance pour tous

Pas d'exclusion du sexe féminin

Awareness

Je suis pour dans le sens où il est important que la mentalité française puisse se dédouaner de certains clichés via leurs tics de langages. Pour autant, au delà du non esthétisme, l'écriture devient plus complexe

Le langage structure notre façon de penser. Une écriture inclusive, sur le long terme peut donc avoir des effets bénéfiques par rapport aux rapports de genres et stéréotypes que nous avons intériorisés.

Nécessité de prendre conscience du biais sexiste de notre langue et le corriger pour faire évoluer la mentalité associée à ce biais

Pour: sous-entendre que seul les hommes comptent dans la phrase est mal. Contre : trop long, il faudrait créer une alternative plutôt que de combiner les deux existantes.

D'une part c'est important de reconnaître que le langage influence notre manière de voir le monde, et l'écriture inclusive pourrait permettre de changer les états d'esprit quant à la position de la femme. Néanmoins, je ne suis pas certaine que ce changement de langage soit simple, correct etc, et il est peut-être d'autres moyens d'accomplir la même chose. Je ne suis pas encore décidée quant à la façon dont je considère l'écriture inclusive. C'est du moins un mouvement qui à l'honneur et l'audace de prouver que le sexism existe dans toutes les facettes de notre vie, même les plus anodins.

(In)visibility

Cela permet de contrebalancer l'invisibilisation des femmes dans la langue française

Je pense qu'il est absolument primordial que les textes officiels (textes de lois, règlements, documents administratifs...), au moins, n'invisibilisent pas les femmes. Je ne suis pas certaine qu'on doive forcer son utilisation en dehors de ce cadre officiel, en revanche, l'usage l'introduira (ou non) progressivement dans notre langage courant.

Je suis partagée: pour car j'aime la visibilité des femmes mais contre parce que c'est sacrément moche

Je suis pour qu'elle soit adaptée en fonction du contexte, plutôt pour l'accord d'opportunité dans les textes littéraires, si l'écriture inclusive c'est "tous les usages visant à rendre les femmes plus visibles" alors oui évidemment mais en respectant la beauté de la langue dans un cadre littéraire (administratif le .e parfait)

La fin de l'invisibilité des femmes dans les discours/espaces publics

La langue française est comme elle est mais si certaines personnes se sentent mieux avec cette écriture alors ça me va

La question d'inclusion, afin de montrer que non, le masculin ne représente pas le neutre, non, le masculin ne représente pas le monde. La masculinisation du neutre est une manière de rendre invisible (et non écoutée) les autres genres, en particulier le genre féminin.

La visibilité des femmes au quotidien

Plus de visibilité des femmes

Pour, parce que ça donne de la visibilité aux femmes

Visibiliser les femmes par l'inclusivité

Activist tool

l'usage normalisé de l'écriture inclusive est une étape nécessaire dans la lutte contre le patriarcat dans la mesure où la langue participe du fait social

Le patriarcat

En finir avec la prépondérance de la masculinité dans la langue française qui est indubitablement sexiste !

As I said, outil linguistique pour les militant-e-s queer et féministes.

du moment qu'on n'oblige personne à l'employer, si elle peut permettre à certain.e.s d'utiliser l'écriture comme un nouveau moyen d'action efficace je suis pour

Evolve with society

la langue française est sexiste est sexiste. De plus c'est une langue vivante. Je trouve ça bien qu'elle évolue

Permettrait de faire évoluer les mœurs et les états d'esprit

Une langue évolue sans cesse, le changement n'est ni bon ni mauvais, il est ce qu'il est. Et si ça passe par une féminisation pour mieux représenter la diversité de la France, pourquoi pas ?

More neutral/accurate way of addressing

Car c'est plus logique de dire professeurE lorsqu'il s'agit d'une femme par exemple

Englober un maximum d'interlocuteur

Elle permet plus de neutralité dans les propos écrits

Ne pas exclure en première lecture la potentielle présence d'une personne de sexe féminin lors de l'utilisation d'un mot masculin par habitude. Et favoriser l'équilibre et l'égalité des deux sexes surtout lorsqu'il s'agit de documents importants ou officiels.

Other

Ça vaut le coup de tenter, si jamais ça a des effets positifs

Aucune raison d'être contre

Ca ne dérange personne et permet de prendre au sérieux les femmes dans leur poste

Il faut suivre l'usage qui fait que la féminisation des noms de métiers, par exemple, est une réalité quotidienne. Les règles doivent suivre l'usage.

Utile pour les propositions de la vie sociale ou politique. Mais inutile pour tout le reste. Ça ne devrait pas faire tant de débats (ni vouloir être imposé ni vouloir être interdit).

Il m'arrive de passer une journée entière à l'Université en ayant le sentiment que les femmes ont été invisibilisées. Nos professeurs n'emploient que le masculin, dans des amphithéâtres nommés après des hommes, nous lisons des livres ou des mails qui nous sont adressés rédigés entièrement au masculin. Même quand je médite sur une application, toutes les propositions sont au masculin. Je suis attristée de cet état de fait, en particulier quand bien souvent il y a davantage de femmes que d'hommes destinataires du propos. J'apprécie que l'on inclut toutes les personnes, et rendent ainsi visibles l'ensemble d'une communauté. Je trouve que cela est justifié, d'une part parce que le masculin ne l'a pas toujours emporté sur le féminin, d'autre part parce qu'il n'y a pas de raison valable pour qu'il le fasse systématiquement. Selon les mots de ma petite cousine de 6 ans quand je lui ai expliqué qu'elle devait utiliser le masculin au pluriel, c'est "injuste". Lorsque je lui ai expliqué que certaines personnes voulaient modifier cela avec l'écriture inclusive, mais que d'autres s'y opposaient parce qu'ils trouvaient ça trop difficile, elle a trouvé qu'ils "abusaien, même moi je sais faire". Je suis persuadée que l'écriture inclusive contribue à faire changer les mentalités et à permettre une meilleure place pour chacun des genres. C'est pourquoi elle a toute sa place dans les écrits des autorités et des lieux d'apprentissage, car elle combat les stéréotypes. L'écriture inclusive est à mon sens plus accessible à l'écrit qu'une phrase comportant "le candidat ou la candidate" et permet d'aller plus vite. Par ailleurs, la paresse ne peut pas être une excuse valable pour refuser l'inclusion. J'ai en revanche conscience que cette écriture peut présenter des difficultés pour les personnes dyslexiques.

Arguments against

Makes French too complex (to read/write)

C'est moche, ça coupe la lecture, ça se construit sur une dérive du "progrès" lié à de la décadence

Cette écriture est plus égalitaire. Cependant ce n'est pas facilement lisible à premier abord.

illisible, modification de la langue française, apprentissage de la langue plus compliqué pour les enfants
difficulté de lecture et d'écriture

Je considère que l'écriture inclusive est un bon moyen de rendre la langue française moins sexiste.

Cependant son utilisation alourdit les textes. Il faut donc savoir composer entre esthétique de la langue et la volonté d'égalité "à tout prix"

Je suis pour dans le sens où il est important que la mentalité française puisse se dédouaner de certains clichés via leurs tics de langages. Pour autant, au delà du non esthétisme, l'écriture devient plus complexe

ça fait des phrases trop longues, depuis toujours c'était sans et on s'en sortait très bien

La raison est simple, l'orthographe et grammaire française est suffisamment complexe à apprendre et à maîtrisé parfaitement. Trop de Français natif font des fautes avec les règles classiques. Cette loi qui fut voté sans l'approbation des Français et autres gouvernements étrangés francophone est une loi qui rend encore plus difficile l'apprentissage et sa maîtrise car les points remplace les accents qui permettent les accords grammaticaux corrects. Cette "fausse" inclusion n'a aucun sens pour les étrangers et dénature totalement la beauté de cette langue. Imaginer Victor Hugo écrire comme cela ?! Cette modification grave de la langue non votée par les instances académique francophone ne résout en rien l'inclusion et la visibilité des femmes dans la société française et des autres pays francophones. Il existe d'autres méthodes bien plus efficace pour faire changer les mentalités que de modifier la structure même de la langue française.

Les futurs romans avec cette écriture seront difficilement lisibles

pour une égale parité dans la langue française, mais difficile à appliquer, peu fluide à la lecture

Pour: sous-entendre que seul les hommes comptent dans la phrase est mal. Contre : trop long, il faudrait créer une alternative plutôt que de combiner les deux existantes.

It is against the nature of French

C'est un débat stérile qui dénature la langue française. Oui à la féminisation des métiers, non à une écriture agenre.

Ce n'est pas la langue française, on ne met pas de points entre les lettres d'un mot !! On peut écrire candidate, candidat

La raison est simple, l'orthographe et grammaire française est suffisamment complexe à apprendre et à maîtrisé parfaitement. Trop de Français natif font des fautes avec les règles classiques. Cette loi qui fut voté sans l'approbation des Français et autres gouvernements étrangés francophone est une loi qui rend encore plus difficile l'apprentissage et sa maîtrise car les points remplace les accents qui permettent les accords grammaticaux corrects. Cette "fausse" inclusion n'a aucun sens pour les

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Makes learning French more complicated

illisible, mofication de la langue française, apprentissage de la langue plus compliqué pour les enfants

La raison est simple, l'orthographe et grammaire française est suffisamment complexe à apprendre et à maîtrisé parfaitement. Trop de Français natif font des fautes avec les règles classiques. Cette loi qui fut voté sans l'approbation des Français et autres gouvernements étrangés francophone est une loi qui rend encore plus difficile l'apprentissage et sa maîtrise car les points remplace les accents qui permettent les accords grammaticaux corrects. Cette "fausse" inclusion n'a aucun sens pour les étrangers et dénature totalement la beauté de cette langue. Imaginer Victor Hugo écrire comme cela ?! Cette modification grave de la langue non votée par les instances académique francophone ne résout en rien l'inclusion et la visibilité des femmes dans la société française et des autres pays francophones. Il existe d'autres méthodes bien plus efficace pour faire changer les mentalités que de modifier la structure même de la langue française.

Aesthetical objections

C'est moche, ça coupe la lecture, ça se construit sur une dérive du "progrès" lié à de la décadence

Je suis partagée: pour car j'aime la visibilité des femmes mais contre parce que c'est sacrément moche

Je suis pour dans le sens où il est important que la mentalité française puisse se dédouaner de certains clichés via leurs tics de langages. Pour autant, au delà du **non esthétisme**, l'écriture devient plus complexe

C'est disgracieux

It will not change / It is not the best way to change reality

ça ruine la plus belle langue du monde. Plutôt que de se battre pour 2 lettres battons nous pour le salaire

Ce n'est pas en changeant la langue française que les femmes obtiendront des droits vraiment égaux par rapport aux hommes

Cela ne me semble pas nécessairement utile. Le masculin est ancré dans la langue française comme un héritage et non plus comme une conspiration visant à masquer l'image des femmes dans la langue, même si ça a pu l'être à un moment. Ça ne me dérange pas de lire de l'écriture inclusive, même si c'est moins beau et fluide, mais je n'en écrirai pas car je juge ça superficiel. Je trouve que c'est un débat inutile qui ne changera pas notre mode de vie. (neutre)

La raison est simple, l'orthographe et grammaire française est suffisamment complexe à apprendre et à maîtrisé parfaitement. Trop de Français natif font des fautes avec les règles classiques. Cette loi qui fut voté sans l'approbation des Français et autres gouvernements étrangés francophone est une loi qui rend encore plus difficile l'apprentissage et sa maîtrise car les points remplace les accents qui permettent les accords grammaticaux corrects. Cette "fausse" inclusion n'a aucun sens pour les

étrangers et dénature totalement la beauté de cette langue. Imaginer Victor Hugo écrire comme cela ?! Cette modification grave de la langue non votée par les instances académique francophone ne résout en rien l'inclusion et la visibilité des femmes dans la société française et des autres pays francophones. Il existe d'autres méthodes bien plus efficace pour faire changer les mentalités que de modifier la structure même de la langue française.

Je suis neutre. Je considère que l'écriture n'est pas la première chose à changer pour aider l'égalité entre hommes et femmes mais cela finira par arriver.

It is useless

Distinction inutile

Inutilité (x2)

Son inutilité trahi son objectif militant

J'estime que c'est une perte de temps

Les intentions sont louables mais son applications dans tous ses éléments et toutes les formes proposées est à la fois inutilement clivante et inefficace.

il faut recreer les mots pour repartir a zero et ne plus avoir de prejuges sur un fonction qui pourrait etre plus masculin ou feminins.

It is extreme

Ça va trop loin, c'est se compliquer pour rien

Je trouve l'écrire inclusive intéressante pour certains points, mais je pense que cette démarche est parfois poussée à l'extrême au point de rendre des phrases dénuées de sens.

Why change habits

Changement d'habitude

ça fait des phrases trop longues, depuis toujours c'était sans et on s'en sortait très bien

Other

Elle n'apporte rien à la langue, ne permet pas de mieux comprendre ni l'oral ni l'écrit au contraire elle rend difficilement lisible à l'oral ce qui est écrit. Elle n'apporte non plus aucun élément lié au sens puisque le genre est déterminé autrement dans la langue. Elle ne fait que répondre à une extravagance sociétale ridicule qui a l'heure où on se bat pour briser les tabous autour de la binaire des genres trouve essentiel de bien marqué homme ET femme dans chaque détail de la vie courante.

Il est nécessaire de se détacher des origines de la langue française qui paraissent sexistes dans notre contexte actuel. Je suis toutefois septique car il est impossible de contrôler l'utilisation d'une langue par ses utilisateurs.

Ridicule

Je suis une femme et je pense que ça pourrait faire avancer notre condition (salaires égaux, mêmes possibilités de carrières...) mais je pense qu'il ne faut pas non plus tout transformer et garder une belle littérature, l'essence du français

La raison est simple, l'orthographe et grammaire française est suffisamment complexe à apprendre et à maîtrisé parfaitement. Trop de Français natif font des fautes avec les règles classiques. Cette loi qui fut voté sans l'approbation des Français et autres gouvernements étrangés francophone est une loi qui rend encore plus difficile l'apprentissage et sa maîtrise car les points remplace les accents qui permettent les accords grammaticaux corrects. Cette "fausse" inclusion n'a aucun sens pour les étrangers et dénature totalement la beauté de cette langue. Imaginer Victor Hugo écrire comme cela ?! Cette modification grave de la langue non votée par les instances académique francophone ne résout en rien l'inclusion et la visibilité des femmes dans la société française et des autres pays francophones. Il existe d'autres méthodes bien plus efficace pour faire changer les mentalités que de modifier la structure même de la langue française.

Neutral/no arguments

Je me questionne sur l'intérêt même du débat

Je ne sais pas ce que c'est

J'ai dit être neutre

Je ne suis pas assez renseigné pour émettre un avis

Ni pour ni contre

Rien