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Abstract

This thesis explores the perspectives on the French language of secondary school students who receive instruction in the Trinidadian capital of Port of Spain. It concentrates on the attitudes toward, and popular conceptions of, the French language, focusing on the common romanticization of French by young Trinidadians. This work specifically examines views on French as a European language inherently tied to success, art, and civilization. Moreover, it examines how historical and linguistic factors combine with popular media depictions which portray the French language as a language of romance and success among students with diverse academic specialties in the most populous and culturally diverse city in Trinidad and Tobago. French is synonymous with intellectualism and artistic inspiration in popular culture, which may speak to the long-term cultural imperialism of the French Empire in a postcolonial Trinidadian context, with depictions of French as an “elevated” language, especially compared to its counterpart of Spanish. In examining the cultural forms tied to the French language, this study also reviews sociolinguistic theory to explain the distinction given to the French language, emphasizing both the myths surrounding it from a cultural perspective. Contemporary cultural convictions, typically drawn from the media and Eurocentric outlooks in the place of academically supported research, perpetuate a view of French among students in Port of Spain as an aesthetically pleasing language and as one of love, elegance, and beauty.

Keywords: French, Colonization, Linguistics, Romanticization, Adolescents, Imperialism, Media, Preconception, Eurocentrism, Trinidad and Tobago, Fetishization

Table of Contents

Introduction	5
Rationale	5
Thesis statement	5
Objectives	5
Parameters	6
Methodology	7
Chapter Outline	8
Chapter 1: Literature Review.....	9
Chapter 2: Presentation of Results	15
Chapter 3: Synthesis of Findings	26
Chapter 4: Discussion of Findings.....	28
Chapter 5: Limitations and Recommendations.....	36
Conclusion	38
Works Cited.....	39
Appendix A.....	41
Appendix B.....	49

List of Figures and Tables

Figure 1	16
Figure 2	16
Figure 3	17
Figure 4	18
Table 1	18
Table 2	19
Table 3	20
Table 4	21
Table 5	22
Table 6	23

List of Appendices

Appendix A: Questionnaire distributed to students in secondary schools in Port of Spain.... 41

Appendix B: Excerpt from “Are They Dying? The Case of Some French-lexifier Creoles”. 49

Introduction

Rationale

This work aims to contribute to scholarship in the field of francophone studies with a focus on enhancing documentation on the role of the French language in the West Indies and revising the predominant misconceptions surrounding French from a sociocultural perspective.

Thesis statement

Secondary school students in Port of Spain perceive the French language as a quintessentially beautiful and elegant language due to the prevalent romanticization of Western European culture and the depiction of French culture in popular Western media.

Objectives

This work is intended to identify the main attitudes towards the French language, a foreign language with major historical and cultural relevance in the West Indies, among secondary school students in Port of Spain. By extension, this work aims to identify the predominant myths and preconceptions of the French language among adolescents in the capital. This study also seeks to interrogate the various cultural, historical, and sociolinguistic factors that are responsible for prevailing or inherited ideas about the French language among Trinidadians. It also will evaluate the role of cultural stereotypes, colonial history, pop culture, and Western media in the formation and propagation of these ideas. The results this study will produce will facilitate an understanding of the fetishization and the romanticization of the

French language, and, by extension, of French culture, among Trinidadian youth. It will fill a gap in the studies surrounding French as a foreign language in Trinidad and Tobago which are often neglected for investigations on its counterpart of Spanish.

Parameters

This work will study the popular attitudes towards the French language among secondary school students in Port of Spain, Trinidad. The study will involve the views of students sampled from September 2022 to December 2022. The students sampled will have, however, studied French for at least one academic year prior to September 2022, to ensure that they have had rudimentary academic exposure to the French language. The study is limited to secondary schools, as it ensures that the demographic group sampled will have studied the French language, which the vast majority of primary school students have not, and that the students' views on the French language will not necessarily be supported by advanced academic studies or linguistic research. This work aims to investigate the preconceptions of the students on the French language, which include potential stereotypes or ingrained misconceptions, and not any knowledge of French from a linguistic perspective that academia could provide. The Trinidadian capital of Port of Spain constitutes the geographical parameter of the study, as it is the most populous and linguistically diverse city in Trinidad and Tobago, and it houses the most foreign residents. It is the most cosmopolitan and culturally diverse city in Trinidad and Tobago which should ensure a diverse sample of students in terms of ethnic composition. This thesis aims to study the cultural and social factors responsible for the various notions of the French language and French culture as it will be investigating the opinion on French in popular culture and as a foreign language within the context of contemporary Trinidadian society.

Methodology

Data Collection

This study employs both primary and secondary sources. Seventy-five students that attend secondary schools in Port of Spain and who have studied French for at least one year have completed an extensive online survey to obtain their opinions and attitudes toward the French language. The students were from a range of schools in the municipality of Port of Spain and the study utilizes a sample of a mixed racial and gender composition with varying academic specialties. The anonymous survey functions as a primary material that allows for the production of original quantitative and qualitative data from the sample. This thesis also reviews secondary documentary sources, in the form of peer-reviewed journals and essays, retrieved online and in person through databases and libraries. These sources allow for the synthesis of previously established conclusions that pertain to notions surrounding the French language among foreigners.

Data Utilization

This thesis is a cultural study that aims to examine the significance given to the French language by Trinidadian adolescents within the specific social landscape of Trinidad and Tobago and which primarily draws on sociolinguistic theory. It serves as an investigation into the social phenomena of cultural fetishization and romanticization, building on media portrayals and historical foundations. It likewise analyzes the phenomenon of cultural stereotyping at the intersection of language and culture in modern Trinidad. The research of this study utilizes an approach that is both qualitative and quantitative. Given that this study

will investigate the opinions, attitudes, and preconceived notions of students toward the French language, their individual comments will be examined in addition to numerical data.

Chapter Outline

This study consists of five chapters, inclusive of the Literature Review. The first chapter of this thesis consists of a review of the scholarly literature concerning attitudes toward French and an assessment of the conceptual framework that governs the various myths and preconceptions about the French language. The second chapter of this study consists of the tabular and graphic presentation of the quantitative and qualitative data collected directly from the respondents of the survey (see Appendix 1). The third chapter of this study will include a summary and synthesis of all the findings. The fourth chapter of this study consists of the discussion which analyzes the data and determines its implications. The fifth chapter explores the limitations of the study and makes suggestions for further research on the topic.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

French people, by virtue of sharing and partaking in French culture, are often the victim of stereotyping by foreigners due to various warped perceptions of the reality and complexity of contemporary French culture. Cultural assumptions and outdated instructional content, the latter of which is often supplied to young French language students, are responsible for the formation of these stereotypes and myths about the French. Mendel¹ asserts that there is a "complex interrelationship" between language and social identity that is particularly pronounced as it pertains to the French, functioning as a marker of national identity and as an expression of the Republican values of the French people (65). Hence, there exists a direct link between the French language, French culture and the ideals that both are thought to represent on an international scale. In her study on cultural interplay, researcher Isabelle Drewelow finds that the stereotypes surrounding the French in the United States tend to fall between one of two extremes: the French are either viewed as "stuck up, snobby, arrogant and prideful" or as "chic, classy, sophisticated, good-looking and fashionable" (754-55). Moreover, while it is unclear as to what officially constitutes true "Frenchness" in the general American collective consciousness, this apparent Frenchness still exists as a distinct cultural notion that allows for the formation and maintenance of stereotypes about the French and their language (Knox 98-99). There is very little indifference or neutrality toward the French and their culture in the current global cultural landscape, a phenomenon that also naturally applies to the French language.

¹ In Mendel's reputed 1970 study, *Regional Languages in France: The Case of Breton*, the unique significance of French as a key marker of French national identity is examined in comparison to the dwindling indigenous regional languages of France. The French language is a unifying force among citizens and a tool that fundamentally insists on internal linguistic homogenisation.

Generally speaking, French is thought to be an elitist language, one that is difficult to learn or to pronounce and one which is spoken correctly, in the French opinion, by only the French themselves, linked to the motif of the French as snobbish or elitist and yet is one which upholds the language to an elevated and distinct status (Drewelow 753-54). Moreover, in cross-Atlantic comparisons, France is usually presented as a homogenous nation, one “fundamentally allergic” to any expression of cultural or racial difference. This idea thereby contributes to the propagation of the romantic idea of France as a place that is immune to the effects of cultural globalization or ethnic pluralism, phenomena which are all rather evident in the Americas (Murphy 99). In the Americas, the French appear as a culturally homogenous collection of Western Europeans with a distinct national identity and society, a concept that is often alien to the American ideal of cosmopolitan multiculturalism.

Several researchers such as Kramsch have stressed the influence of prior experiences and established beliefs or preconceptions in the classroom, particularly where foreign cultures and foreign languages are concerned. Kramsch notes that “myth and reality both contradict and reinforce each other” in the classroom and they influence how students understand the foreign language and by extension, the target culture (207). Drewelow similarly finds that young people’s “essentialization” of the French language, which includes their images and impressions of French people and French culture, is evoked through various American autobiographical and journalistic writings which may incorporate stereotypes and cultural assumptions (758). Drewelow² likewise attributes the formation and maintenance of cultural stereotypes to having come from the following sources: the collective history of a given society, past experiences, peers, past and present instructors, family and friends, instructional materials

² Drewelow is the reputed writer of the two leading studies on the perception of French by American high school students in the 21st century, *American Learners of French and Their Stereotypes of the French Language and People* and *Learners’ Selective Perceptions of Information During Instructed Learning in French: Consequences*.

disseminated in the classroom, and the media (751). The recurring essentialization of French people by North Americans is that the French are “frivolous, impractical, unrestrained, and too concerned with food, drink, fashion, art, and love” (Costigliola 4). French culture is typically associated with romantic love, cultural forms, and the arts in popular essentializations and, by extension, in stereotypes that continue to be propagated by the collective culture due to the predominance of their sources. The assignment of traits, roles, and characterizations to members of a foreign culture, rooted in stereotypes, can thus lead to a fixed preconceived notion of the foreign culture, following the “bipolar” Us versus Them sociocultural construct (Drewelow 752). This dichotomy consequently allows for prolonged cultural fetishization³ or the predominance of cultural stigmas.

In one of Drewelow’s extensive studies of notable stereotypes of the French language, she finds that French is primarily associated with the following preconceptions or ideas: beauty, grace, romantic connotations, difficulty in learning, difficulty pronouncing, snobbishness, and elitism. As for French people themselves, they were associated with the following attributes: arrogance, snobbishness, sophistication, fashionableness, rudeness, impoliteness, cultural richness, education, weakness, and cowardice. These essentializations and stereotypes of the French only pertain to images of Paris and Parisians; they do not usually apply to the rural French provinces or cities in the south of the country which are seldom acknowledged as being culturally distinct from Paris⁴. French was also thought by the sample to be a “sissy” or “effeminate” language in the collective American consciousness or as a language of prestige

³ Fetishization is the reduction of a person to aspects of their body, identity, or relationship structure. Usually, fetishization reduces persons or ethnic groups to their most appealing or most attractive elements, thereby idealizing or dehumanizing them.

⁴ The American-French romantic comedy series that premiered in 2020, *Emily in Paris*, is seen as epitomizing the romanticization of Paris among North Americans, portraying an unrealistic image of the French capital that is not only inaccurate but also fails to consider the daily realities of the dozens of millions of Frenchmen who do not live in the capital. In this way, stereotypes associated with Paris are often applied to the entirety of France.

and elitism (Carnahan). Several participants in Drewelow's study indicated that French people gave foreigners the impression that only they could speak the language correctly, turning French into an "exclusionary device", adding to the sentiment that French is a language of elitism (754). The study also showed that French was very rarely associated with any country in the world except for France, despite only a fraction of global native French speakers being from France. This speaks to the apparent correlation between language and metropolitan or colonial power that may even be sometimes embraced by native Frenchmen. Drewelow makes the following note of a respondent who primarily associated French with the capital of Paris, instead of France as a country:

The association of the French language with France's capital city and one of its most recognizable landmarks might be the result of an essentialization shared by the French people themselves. The sale of miniature Eiffel Towers on key chains or ensconced in snow globes suggests that it is the French people themselves who control the images representing their country. (754)

Moreover, the French language has been deemed in European consciousness as "the language of love" since the Middle Ages in Medieval Europe, as known as the language of courtly love or *amour courtois*, rendering French the language of courtship or romantic affairs. The French language and Medieval French writings promoted the French language as a vector of romantic love despite little evidence of its semantic suitability for courtly romance at the time, a notion that was proliferated by the English as French trickled over into the anglophone world through Arthurian literature. This notion of French as a language of romance was then perpetuated by the films by Jean-Luc Godard, Francois Truffaut, and Jacques Rivette of the

Nouvelle Vague film movement in France in the post-War period⁵. In addition to ideals of romance and romantic love, French also has a connotation of free, non-committal sex, sexual openness, and sexual freedom. In this, extramarital affairs and abrupt one-night liaisons, all tied to a sense of newfound individual liberty and adventure, are also connotations associated with the French in the eyes of North Americans.

An Anglo-Saxon myth about the French involves the perception of them as chic, classy, sophisticated, good-looking, exclusionary, and fashionable. According to Kinginger, France is viewed among young foreigners as a monolingual and uniformed state where everyone is “cultured and refined” and where people only speak standard Parisian French (227). Many young people in the Americas imagine a quintessential experience of an afternoon in France as one of “the French whispering conversations over cappuccinos in outdoor cafes discussing literature” (Drewelow 765). Whispered conversations, outdoor cafes, coffee, and intellectual discussion are therefore romanticized images associated with French culture and thus, the French language. Others associate French culture with the following images and characteristics: constant artistic inspiration, a good physique, mopeds, driving near the Eiffel Tower, candle-lit dinners, intimate late nights, extramarital affairs, and smoking cigarettes (Drewelow 757).

There is currently little to no research that effectively shows if young people in Trinidad and Tobago share the same views on the French language or French culture as North Americans do. Moreover, no research shows if the myth-making Anglo-Saxon essentializations that allow for the romanticization or fetishization of the French language exist in classrooms among

⁵ The *Nouvelle Vague*, translated as the New Wave, was a French film movement that rose to prominence in the late 1950s. The movement was characterized by the use of amateurism in filmmaking, existential and absurdist themes, ambiguous plotlines, and emphasis on the capital of Paris as a setting in the lives of the various films’ characters.

young people in Trinidad and Tobago. While Trinidadian youth are quite likely to consume similar media that North Americans do and by extension, share their preconceptions as they share their sources, it is left to be proven if Trinidadians also view French as a “language of love” or as a marker of prestige, elitism, cultural richness, and romance.

Chapter 2: Presentation of Results

In terms of gender, the survey results were skewed female with 92% of the 75 respondents being female. Conversely, male respondents comprised 6.7% of respondents. Respondents who chose not to specify their gender constituted 1.3% of the sample (only 1 respondent). Respondents fell in the age category of 12-19 years old. The respondents were spread from Form 2 to Upper 6, with 38.7% of all respondents being in Sixth Form. Students sampled were attending one of the following schools in Port of Spain that offers French: St. Joseph's Convent Port of Spain, Fatima College, Bishop Anstey High School, and St. Mary's College. Of all 75 respondents, 73.4% are currently in the process of pursuing French as a subject to sit the upcoming CSEC or CAPE examinations for French in 2023, and the remaining 26.7% of respondents are not pursuing French for any standardized assessment at all.

According to the responses acquired through the questionnaire, 46.7% of respondents strongly agreed that it is aesthetically pleasing to hear French spoken by a native or fluent speaker. In comparison, 41.3% of respondents simply agreed with the fact. 4% of respondents disagreed with the given statement, and none of the 75 respondents strongly disagreed.

State to what extent you agree with the following statement: "I find it aesthetically pleasing to hear the French language spoken by a native or fluent speaker."

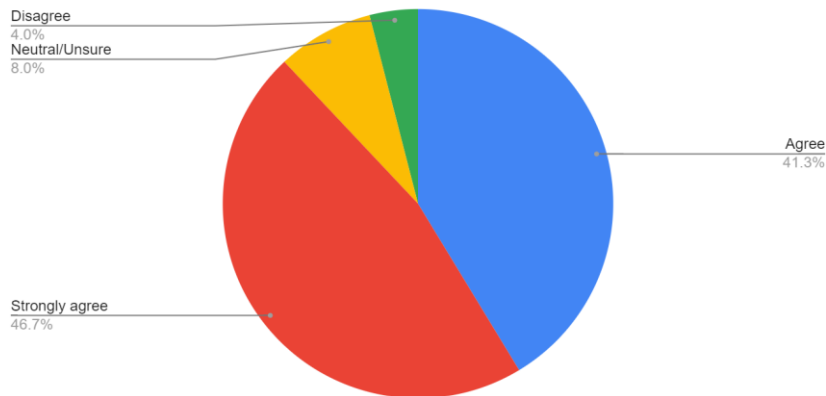


Figure 1. Pie chart of students' agreement with the statement that French is aesthetically pleasing to be heard spoken by a native or fluent speaker.

In terms of the supposed difficulty of the French language, 34.7% of respondents disagreed that French is difficult to speak, write or understand, and 8% of respondents strongly disagreed with the statement. Approximately 32% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, and a quarter of respondents were neutral or unsure.

State to what extent you agree with the following statement: "I consider the French language to be a very difficult language to speak, write, or understand."

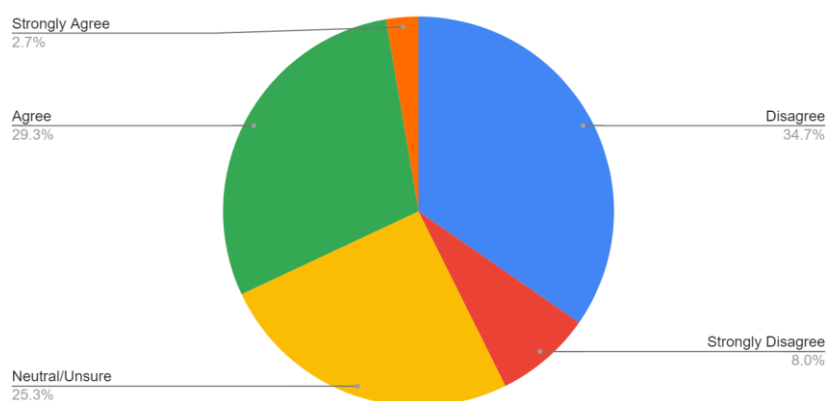


Figure 2. Pie chart of students' agreement with the statement that French is a difficult language to speak, write, or understand.

As for the supposed elegance of the French language, 58.7% of respondents agreed that French sounds particularly elegant when spoken by a native or fluent speaker and 28% of respondents strongly agreed with this notion. Only 12% of respondents showed any disagreement at all with the statement, and only 1 respondent out of 75 strongly disagreed.

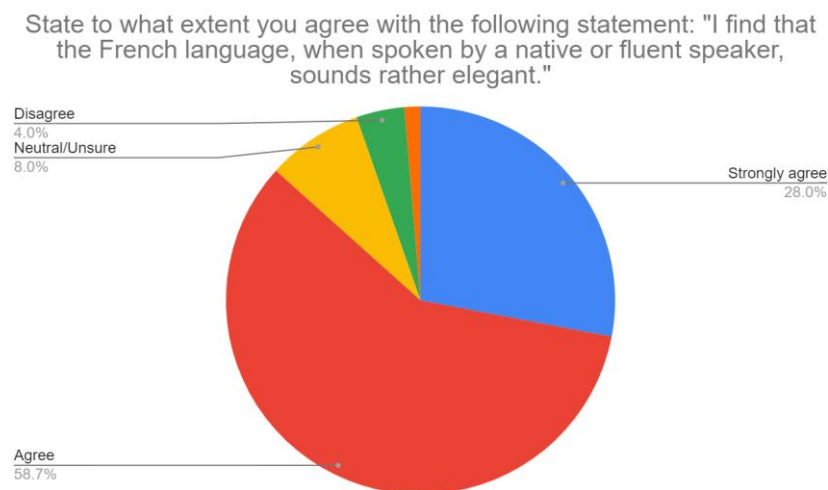


Figure 3. Pie chart of students' agreement with the statement that French sounds elegant when spoken by a native or fluent speaker.

Connotations with romantic love, on the other hand, were less frequent among the sample. While many students agreed (41.3%) or strongly agreed (10.7%) that French sounded particularly romantic when spoken by a native or fluent speaker, another third of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that they associated French with romantic love or seduction. A final third of respondents were unsure or neutral about this connotation.

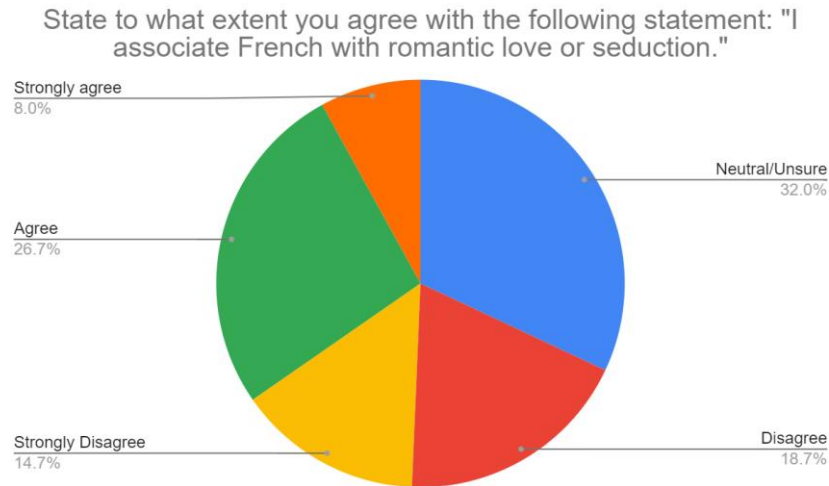


Figure 4. Pie chart of students' agreement with the association between French and romantic love or seduction.

When asked to choose between any of the following words to describe French, that is, between poetic, refined, seductive, musical, or none of the above, 66.7% of respondents selected the word “poetic”, 45.3% of respondents selected “refined”, 24% selected “musical” and 20% selected “seductive”. A total of 12 respondents, or 16% of the sample, selected “none of the above”.

Response	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Poetic	50	66.7%
Refined	34	45.3%
Seductive	15	20%
Musical	18	24%
None of the above	12	16%

Table 1. Table of words that students would use to describe the French language.

When asked to choose between any of the following words to describe French-speaking persons, that is, intelligent, cultured, artistic, romantic, or none of the above, 42.7% of respondents selected the word “cultured”. 38.7% of respondents selected “artistic”, 34.7%

selected “intelligent”, and 22.7% selected “romantic”. A total of 23 respondents, or 30.7% of the sample, selected “none of the above”.

Response	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Intelligent	26	34.7%
Cultured	32	42.7%
Artistic	29	38.7%
Romantic	17	22.7%
None of the above	23	30.7%

Table 2. Table of words students would use to describe fluent or native French speakers.

The two francophone or French-speaking cities which are not located in France that students most associated with French were Montreal in Canada (44% of respondents) and Port-au-Prince in Haiti (30.7%). The third most selected answer among respondents was “none of the above” (14.7%), with Brussels, Geneva, Dakar, and Beirut having a negligible number of respondents each. In relation to their perspectives on the Francophone world, 57.3% of respondents were not aware that the highest percentage of French speakers in the world are from the continent of Africa. In comparison, 42.7% of respondents stated that they were aware of this. When asked to name any countries in the world that used French, an overwhelming majority of students of course named France, and many others named Canada, Belgium, Martinique, Haiti, Guadeloupe, and Senegal. Two students named Paris, one student named Quebec, and less than 5 students out of 75 named at least one of the following countries: Algeria, Tunisia, Niger, Congo, Rwanda, Switzerland, Chad, Cameroon, French Guiana, Monaco, Morocco, Ivory Coast, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Curacao, and Saint- Martin.

The students were asked to select which, if any, of the following languages they considered French to be more beautiful than: Spanish, Hindi, French Creole, English, and Trinidadian Creole. 23 of the 75 respondents, or 30.7% of respondents, selected Hindi, which

was the most selected language. However, numerous respondents also selected Spanish, English, and Trinidadian Creole. 40% of respondents selected “None of the above/Unsure”.

Response	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Spanish	21	28%
Hindi	23	30.7%
French Creole	15	20%
English	21	28%
Trinidadian Creole	22	29.3%
None of the above/Unsure	30	40%

Table 3. Table of languages in Trinidad that students consider less beautiful than French.

The respondents were then asked for which reasons, if any, would they learn French. They were presented with the following options: For ease of travel or for tourism in French-speaking countries or regions, to have an advantage in the job market, to enter into the field of diplomacy or international relations, to easily consume French media or French cultural forms (music, films, etc), to easily communicate with French-speaking friends or family, to appear more interesting, appealing or educated, because my family has French heritage or French Creole heritage, to enter into the field of foreign language education, to immigrate to a French-speaking country or region, and I am not interested in pursuing French. The results of this question are, as follows:

Response	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
For ease in travel or for tourism in French-speaking countries or regions	51	68%
To have an advantage in the job market	39	52%
To enter into the field of diplomacy or international relations	12	16%

To easily consume French media or French cultural forms (music, films, etc)	34	45.3%
To easily communicate with French-speaking friends or family	33	44%
To appear more interesting, appealing or educated	32	42.7%
Because my family has French heritage or French Creole heritage	8	10.7%
To enter into the field of foreign language education	19	25.3%
To immigrate to a French-speaking country or region	26	34.7%
I am not interested in pursuing French	8	10.7%

Table 4. Table showing the reasons for which students would learn French.

Of the 75 students, 71 of them, or 94.7% of respondents, have never visited France before while 4 students, or 5.3% of respondents, have visited France before. The respondents were asked what activities they would like to do if they were to visit France, and the most common answer by an enormous margin was “visit the Eiffel Tower”. Several others stated that they would visit the Louvre, see the catacombs of Paris, explore the French countryside, or visit an array of given museums, restaurants, and historical sites. On a similar note, respondents were asked if they would be impressed if they met someone and found out they were fluent in French. This question did not specify whether the speaker had to be a native or fluent French speaker. 82.7% of students answered in the affirmative while 9.3% of students said “no”. The remaining 8% of respondents selected “Unsure” as their answer.

Respondents were then asked to select whichever subject areas or cultural forms they associate with France or the French. Cuisine and fashion were the most selected responses, but not necessarily by an enormous margin in relation to art, film, history, and music. The responses to this question were as follows:

Response	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Cuisine	58	77.3%
Fashion	58	77.3%
Film	30	40%
Music	32	42.7%
Space Exploration	1	1.3%
Art	49	65.3%
Diplomacy	7	9.3%
Literature	41	54.7%
Military Prowess	4	5.3%
Philosophy	14	18.7%
Politics	18	24%
History	46	61.3%
None of the above/Unsure	2	2.7%

Table 5. Table showing the subject areas or cultural forms students associate with French.

Respondents were also asked to select any given stereotypes or notions of French people or their culture that they consider to be true. 56% of respondents, a majority, said that they agreed the French have an elevated or refined culture. The results of this question are as follows:

Response	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
The French are impolite and rude	20	26.7%
The French are a romantic and passionate people	33	44%
The French have an elevated or refined culture	42	56%
The French are quite intellectual and witty	30	40%

None of the above	8	10.7%
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Table 6. Table showing students' agreements with stereotypes or preconceptions about the French.

In a series of open-ended questions, respondents were allowed to express their opinions on the role of French in Trinidad and their general perception of French culture. They were asked the following question: “Do you think that French is a culturally significant language in Trinidad and Tobago? Briefly explain.” There were two main categories of answers to this question which included the students who thought French was not significant in Trinidad and Tobago, especially in comparison to Spanish, and then students who found French was especially important in the Trinidadian cultural, historical, and linguistic landscape. Students who chose the former line of argument stated that French is rarely spoken in Trinidad and that native French speakers are scarce in the country. The students mentioned that due to migratory patterns, Spanish was more significant in Trinidad and had a more significant or obvious impact on Trinidadian culture. Several others found that French culture was also less influential than the contribution of West African and East Indian peoples in Trinidad. Less than 5 students mentioned that the language of Patois, which has its roots in French, is “dying” in the country (see Appendix B). However, the majority of students agreed to a greater extent that French was in fact culturally significant in Trinidad. While many of these students stated that this was because the French “colonized” Trinidad, which is an entirely inaccurate notion, they also cited some accurate examples of the impact of the French language on Trinidadian culture: the history of Carnival, countless place names and landmarks, the language of Patois, and the Cedula of the Population of 1783. One student effectively summarized all the major supporting arguments to show the influence of French in Trinidadian culture:

Of course. There is no doubt that the Caribbean is blessed with an incredibly vibrant, unique culture. It is with a great understanding and

appreciation of my island's history that I dare to (sic) say that Trinidad showcases its diversified heritage the most when compared to her sister islands. Our music, our cuisine, our fashion, our dialects - it is simply impossible to examine any part of our lifestyle that doesn't hail from Spanish, French, African or Indian roots, to name a few. When it comes to the French language in particular, we yielded from it Patois, which though endangered, can still be heard in rural places such as Talparo, Blanchisseuse and Paramin. In fact, Patois was even the most spoken language in Trinidad from the late 1700s to the early 1900s. In addition to this, numerous cities in this beautiful country are derived from French. Petit Valley, San Souci, Bon Accord, Grande Riviere, Morne Coco and Blanchisseuse are just some of these places.

Students were then asked to state any words or expressions they would personally use to describe French culture. The words “elegant”, “passionate”, “beautiful”, “interesting”, and “refined” were the most common. Others cited more unique words or expressions: bougie, pretentious, individualistic, classy, rich, vibrant, and proud. There were some responses that can be considered outliers, or which were extremely rare with only one student employing them: racist, xenophobic, baguette, irreligious, European, liberal, and exotic.

Lastly, the students were asked if they believe that the French or French culture is unfairly stereotyped or misrepresented. Most students were in agreement that the French people were unfairly stereotyped. Many stated that being stereotyped as “rude”, “lazy”, “impolite”, and “judgemental” is unfair to the French, as most of the French are “normal people” and only a minority of the French deserve this stereotype. On the other hand, several students also stated that being stereotyped as artistic, romantic, elevated, and wealthy was an example of “idealizing” the French and western European culture and that this was also an unfair representation of the French. One student noted that “not all French people smoke cigarettes

and wear berets and eat croissants all the time” despite this being the popular image disseminated of French culture in the media and pop culture. One student mentioned that stereotypes of the French hold them to a higher standard than other nations and cultures which is unjust. There were also a few responses that can be considered outliers, noting a perceived elitism or racism persistent in French culture. One respondent said that the French were not unfairly stereotyped as “they do not really associate with the outside world to make their stereotypes untrue, meaning they perpetuate the rude stereotypes by keeping to themselves”. Another student quipped that “they are unfairly stereotyped as racist when they should be stereotyped as VERY racist”. Finally, there were exactly 5 respondents who said that the French are indeed stereotyped, but the stereotypes in question are “flattering”, and so they should not be considered a problem for the French at all.

Chapter 3: Synthesis of Findings

The majority of respondents to the survey considered French to be an elegant language and a language that is aesthetically pleasing to be heard spoken. Most of these students also considered French to be poetic. On the contrary, the respondents did not agree to a greater extent that French was a romantic or seductive language or that it had any romantic connotations to them, nor did a majority agree that French was a difficult language to write, speak, understand, or pronounce. The French language was notably associated with elegance, cultural refinement, and aesthetic beauty, but not with romance, seduction, or academic difficulty. Most students would learn French for ease in travel or for tourism in French-speaking countries or regions.

As for French culture, most respondents found that French people are cultured, elegant, passionate, and interesting, and that it is true that the French have an elevated and refined culture. The majority of students also found that the ability to speak French is impressive. The French were mainly associated with their cuisine and fashion, more so than other prominent cultural forms and subject areas. Space exploration is the subject area that the least number of students associated with France. An overwhelming majority of respondents have never visited France, but if given the opportunity, they would visit the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre, or the Paris catacombs before doing any other activity.

The respondents agreed that French was more beautiful or aesthetically pleasing than Trinidadian Creole. Most students agreed that French was culturally significant in Trinidad and Tobago, citing the history of Carnival, countless place names and landmarks, the language of Patois, and the Cedula of Population of 1783 as evidence of this notion. Nonetheless, a notable percentage of respondents were also under the assumption that France colonized Trinidad as well as Tobago. A significant minority found that the influence of French in Trinidad and

Tobago was much less significant than that of Spanish, and that French Patois is becoming an endangered or dying language which speaks to the diminishing influence of the French and their culture in the country.

Many respondents agreed that the French were unfairly stereotyped and that the stereotypes and preconceptions of the French were not only unflattering, but untrue, and did not effectively represent the French masses, but rather, only a minority of French persons from Paris. The students, save a few outliers, agreed that the stereotypes of the French not only held them to an unfairly high standard but barely scratched the surface of the reality of modern French culture, its diversity, or contemporary French values.

Chapter 4: Discussion of Findings

Given that the respondents indicated that the French language appears as an elegant and poetic language to them, it can be inferred that the respondents associate French with elegance, poetry, and a refined culture. However, given that most of these respondents have not studied French at an advanced academic level nor have the majority of them ever visited France before, it can be assumed that an existing preconception of French, which lends to a perceived association between the language and elegance, is responsible for this view among respondents. Moreover, there is no obvious reason why French would be considered poetic on any academic basis by the sample⁶, and thus, the idea that French is poetic can also be considered a preconception rooted in cultural notions. As Drewelow finds in her studies concerning adolescents in the United States, there exists a continual association between French and elegance, which is also rife in the media and pop culture that adolescents consume (103-104). According to Drewelow, this preconception that French is intrinsically “elegant” suggests that pop culture finds something “particularistic” about the French themselves rather than about the language from a phonetic or semantic perspective (104). There is no evidence to suggest that respondents in Port of Spain have an understanding of any of the linguistic factors that may allow French to be deemed “elegant” or “poetic”. As such, the conclusion that French people and metropolitan French culture have “particularistic” qualities that lend to the association between French and elegance can be applied to the sample of students in Port of Spain. The notion among respondents that French is an elegant or poetic language is likely an opinion that is derived from the idea that French culture or French people are elegant, one which is often propagated in the media and in popular culture.

⁶ In Trinidad and Tobago, neither French poetry nor linguistics is introduced to students as part of the curriculum or of the French CXC syllabi, even at the highest secondary level.

The notion that French is an aesthetically beautiful language to be heard spoken by a fluent or native speaker may be considered yet another preconception, but the framework behind such a bias or preconceived notion is unclear. By extension, French was also found to be more aesthetically pleasing than Trinidadian Creole. “Aesthetic pleasure” simply refers to one’s ability to find a sensation or phenomenon pleasurable in a given context, and it is worth noting that what is aesthetically pleasing can vary from individual to individual. Reber et al. note that aesthetic pleasure only refers to a “pleasurable subjective experience that is directed toward an object or stimulus and not mediated by intervening reasoning” (365). The social, cultural, and historical factors that lend to one’s perception of pleasure or beauty are also diverse and abstract⁷. It can be inferred that French sounds “beautiful” to respondents, more so than their native Trinidadian Creole, but the foundation of this aural perception of French is subject to speculation as the definition of what is aesthetically beautiful always varies and is borrowed from a vast combination of physical, linguistic, and environmental factors.

The respondents noted that they do not believe that French is a language that is difficult to speak, write, understand, or pronounce. The notion of the difficulty of the French language has been widespread among North American populations. The reason why Trinidadian students would not consider French to be a “difficult” language is likely linked to the propensity of West Indians to acclimatize well to a plurality or multiplicity of languages, and hence, French as a foreign language is not more “difficult” than the other foreign languages present in Trinidad, such as Spanish, another Romance language which is increasingly prevalent in the country. Moreover, the sample did not treat French any differently to the inherited foreign languages of Trinidad such as French Creole, Bhojpuri, Cantonese, or Hakka which are organically

⁷ It should be reiterated that a language or dialect that is “aesthetically pleasing” to an individual does not imply a necessary connotation with any particular quality or characteristic besides being “pleasing” to the listener. If it is said that French is “aesthetically pleasing” to be heard spoken, for instance, it does not imply in the least that French is also elegant, poetic, or even musical (Reber et al 364-366).

integrated into the lives of speakers who do not depend on formal study to gain proficiency. Trinidadian students are entirely accustomed to code-switching between Trinidadian Creole and Standard English on a daily basis, and so it stands to reason that the learning of foreign languages is not particularly daunting for most Trinidadian students in an academic setting. Likewise, a massive portion of Trinidadian Creole words and expressions are borrowed directly from French or French Creole, and the English lexicon incorporates countless French words as well. It is for these reasons that the French language does not seem insurmountable for the respondents who are more accustomed to language plurality than monolingual anglophone communities in the United States. Ironically, the students nonetheless found the ability to speak French impressive despite not considering French a difficult language to learn. It can be inferred that it is a certain “Frenchness” that is associated with the ability to speak the French language fluently that is impressive to the respondents, and rather, not the mere capacity to speak the language.

Most of the students did not agree that French was a romantic or seductive language, nor did French have a connotation with romantic love or seduction. The reason for this may be due to a general naivety among respondents and a lack of insight into matters related to romance, seduction, and sex. Hence, there exists an inability to find a connection between these concepts and French, or an unwillingness to admit if they *have* found such a connection. Another reason that French may not be seen as a romantic or seductive language is due to students’ lack of exposure to French media or French culture at a more mature or explicit content level. French is, after all, deemed the language of love in English-speaking cultures, and so the reason why Trinidadian adolescents do not agree to a greater extent this is true likely speaks to the age of the respondents rather than specific cultural factors.

The primary reason that students would learn French or consider learning French is for ease in traveling to French-speaking countries or for ease as tourists in francophone regions.

Likewise, an overwhelming majority of respondents have not ever visited France, but if given the opportunity, they would opt to visit the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre, or the Paris catacombs before doing any other activity. France is primarily associated with its capacity to provide recreation, culture, and art, and as being a popular vacation destination. Additionally, France is associated with its internationally lauded tourist destinations which include a notable selection of art museums and historical sites. France is the country that receives the most tourists globally each year⁸, and so its popular and omnipresent tourist destinations are attractive to travellers regardless of nationality. The chance to visit these reputed buildings and sites, such as the Louvre or the Eiffel Tower, was highly coveted by respondents and so they imagine that learning the French language will allow them to maximize their potential visit to France and better engage with the art and culture they encounter on a recreational visit. The responses of the students who are implying engaging in cultural tourism first and foremost if they were to visit France suggest an inherent link between foreign languages and travel, and between language and culture. Learning French suggests a more authentic link with, or a more accurate interpretation of, French art and French cultural forms.

Respondents found that French people are cultured, elegant, passionate, and interesting, and that it is true that the French have an elevated and refined culture. There is no objective way to deem any one culture or nation “elegant”, “passionate” or “interesting”, nor is there any way to prove a particular group of people more “cultured” than another. For this reason, it can be inferred that a combination of stereotypes, inherited cultural notions, and ideas propagated in the media are responsible for the idea that French culture is elevated and refined. The existing literature and research have shown that innumerable biases, historical events, and representations of the French in popular culture and in social discourse have elevated the

⁸ In 2022, France was the most visited country in the world for tourism or for recreational purposes, with approximately 83 million tourists visiting.

French, in an artificial way and through prolonged stereotyping, to a “culturally superior” people. In the American collective consciousness, this idea of the French as elegant or cultured people has been significantly generalized in the media, the same media that many Trinidadian adolescents consume by default. It is for this reason that the French are also seen by respondents as elegant and interesting, on the assumption that they have internalized their earliest ideas about the French through generic North American media. Another reason for the dissemination of the idea that the French are elegant, refined, and cultured may be due to Eurocentric ideas about what qualifies as culture. While every people group possesses its own unique artistic and cultural forms, the general European ideal of what constitutes “real culture” has been borrowed from images of the art and culture of Western Europe in recent world history. If the idea of what is culture is defined as mainly what is *Western European* culture, then metropolitan French culture would indeed qualify as refined, elegant, and interesting by default.

Cuisine and fashion were selected as the main cultural forms or subject areas that are associated with France by the respondents. Exotic ingredients and precise cooking techniques are often associated with French cuisine in the media. From the consumption of snails and frog legs to the cultivation of unique cheeses and expensive wines, the French are highly reputed for their exquisitely crafted food. Paris is also well-known to possess a very high number of Michelin-starred restaurants⁹. As for fashion, *haute couture* and French luxury clothing brands are lauded globally. Paris Fashion Week is the most attended and the most well-respected of the four major global fashion weeks, with luxury brands such as Chanel, Dior, Saint Laurent, Celine, Givenchy, and Hermès being some of the most expensive clothing brands in the world. These brands are not just associated with class, wealth, and poise due to their popularity among public figures, but also because they are viewed as supplying that “chic” French aesthetic

⁹ Indeed, Paris is the city with the second highest number of Michelin-starred restaurants per capita, just after Tokyo.

among buyers. Moreover, for any fashion house that has originated outside of Paris to create an internationally recognized *haute couture* collection, the brand in question would have to seek permission to use the *haute couture* label from the Fédération de la Haute Couture et de la Mode located in Paris¹⁰. It is for these reasons that students would associate French culture with both fashion and cuisine. Space exploration, conversely, was the subject area that was least associated with France. While France has made significant strides in space exploration, the country has been most associated with its art forms and its cultural heritage rather than with any field adjacent to science and technology. Hence, following in line with the existing cultural notions about French culture, and the fact that science is often seen as the antithesis of art, the sample did not make any associations between space exploration and France.

The students agreed that French was culturally significant in Trinidad and Tobago. They cited the history of Carnival, place names and landmarks, the language of Patois, and the Cedula of Population of 1783 as evidence of this. It is true that the French have played a significant part in the history and culture of Trinidad and Tobago with the vestiges of this legacy especially present in the Trinidadian linguistic landscape. However, a significant number of respondents were under the impression that the French had colonized *both* Trinidad and Tobago, which is entirely incorrect. The reason for this may be due to inconsistencies in how the history of Trinidad and Tobago is taught in Trinidadian schools. Moreover, a close association of England with France, the former indeed having colonized Trinidad and Tobago, may be responsible for this confusion. Likewise, a significant number of respondents disagreed that French was significant in Trinidad and Tobago, citing Spanish as a “more important”

¹⁰ The phrase “haute couture” directly translates to “high fashion” in English. *Haute couture* refers to personalized or one-of-a-kind luxury clothing articles and collections that are not available for retail purchasing. If a non-French fashion house, like Gucci, for example, wanted to produce and promote an *haute couture* collection, then the House of Gucci would have to seek permission from the Fédération de la Haute Couture et de la Mode to produce the collection. The label of *haute couture* requires routine licensing and certification from the French fashion authorities. An *haute couture* show can only take place in Paris.

foreign language in the context of Trinidadian society. The first reason why Spanish is often considered a more significant foreign language in Trinidad than French is because of the relative geographical proximity of Trinidad and Tobago to Hispanophone countries such as Venezuela and Colombia. These students likewise contrasted the increasing importance of Spanish in Trinidad with the evident decline of French Patois speakers, noting that the language is dying (see Appendix B). The endangerment of Patois in Trinidad was noted as a sign of the diminishing impact of French culture in the contemporary Trinidadian cultural landscape¹¹. Several students noted that Spanish was significant given that Trinidad was actively colonized by Spain and hence, the country possesses many Spanish place names. Additionally, shifting migratory patterns in the last decade have increased the value of Spanish fluency in Trinidad. Almost 100,000 Venezuelan migrants have entered Trinidad and Tobago in the last five years due to the Venezuelan political and economic crisis, and as such, the business and retail sectors of Trinidad have seen an increase in Hispanophone workers. Moreover, the need for Spanish interpreters, translators, and bilingual signage has increased. For this reason, it would appear at a first glance that Spanish is more relevant in contemporary Trinidadian society than French.

The respondents agreed that the French were unfairly stereotyped and that the stereotypical preconceptions of the French were unflattering, untrue, and did not effectively represent the French masses, but rather, only a minority of French persons from Paris. While the respondents themselves were responsible for the propagation of some stereotypes surrounding the French language, it would also seem that the sample possessed a nuanced perspective on cultural stereotypes and enough education or first-hand experience to realize that the prevailing stereotypes about the French, flattering or not, do not accurately represent

¹¹ There are multiple reasons why French Creole has continuously declined in its number of speakers in Trinidad which include, but are not limited to, the introduction of English in primary schools in 1851, the obligatory use of English across the education system in later decades, and cultural stigmas surrounding French Creole as the “Negro French” or as a language which was only used by the poor and uneducated. Trinidadian French Creole was, before the 1860s, the most widely used language in Trinidadian cultural domains. (Ferreira 112)

France and its various subcultures. Whether this is due to the zeitgeist of social awareness on progressive platforms like TikTok or sufficient education on cultural stereotypes in school or at home, most students did not think the images of the French propagated in American media are believable or accurate. Likewise, the students seemed to grasp that many widespread stereotypes of the French are incredulous and idealized and should only be evoked in jest, if at all. Several of the respondents also affirmed that the idealized and romanticized images of French culture that are propagated in the media conveniently cloak what they consider to be the less savory aspects of French culture and society such as intense racism, xenophobia, or misogyny. The images of the French as a cultured, educated, and passionate people not only hide the diversity of French culture and are reductive, but also ignore the variety of French values in a globalized and modern France. This would suggest that Trinidadian students are aware of the significance of appreciating diversity and nuance in culture, which is not entirely unanticipated in such a highly creolized and multiracial West Indian society. The importance of cultural nuances, of appreciating the shades of grey in dynamic, modern cultures was obvious to the sample. This speaks to a certain cultural awareness and progressiveness among respondents which may not be present among American samples due to a variety of social, cultural, and historical factors.

Chapter 5: Limitations and Recommendations

There are several areas of the study that, due to physical and temporal constraints, were subject to limitations for the sake of efficiency. Firstly, all 75 students in the sample were from only four schools in Port of Spain. While this does fulfil the requirement of the study's framework, a more varied sample would have produced more diverse opinions which are less likely to be influenced by common experiences or preconceptions exclusive to the respondents' specific schools or backgrounds. Another limitation was that 92% of the sample identified as female, whereas a more balanced male-female ratio would have possibly allowed for a gendered approach to the data analysis. Additionally, for the sake of avoiding repetitiveness in the survey questions, students were not specifically asked about the relationship between the French language and wealth, class, or education, which would have expanded the study to consider a vaster set of issues related to the romanticization of French in Trinidadian society. Moreover, the specific media or cultural movements that have led to stereotyping and cultural fetishization among the sample should have been analyzed to determine exactly how significant a role North American media play in the perceptions of French.

Further studies on the romanticization of the French language in Trinidad should compare French with Spanish to determine whether French is truly romanticized in Trinidad, or if French is merely better liked by the Trinidadian population than Spanish. A consideration of multiple foreign languages is necessary to determine if views on French show an aberration in the trends due to any particularistic qualities of the French language, or if all foreign languages in Trinidad are romanticized by virtue of not being native to Trinidadian society. Additionally, future studies should consider opinions about French Creole and Trinidadian perceptions of the French West Indies, due to relative cultural proximity, to determine if the

romanticization of the French language and of France applies only to the mainland, or if French is seen as a less “elegant” and “beautiful” language based on the demography of speakers.

Conclusion

This study sought to investigate popular perceptions of the French language among secondary school students in Port of Spain, Trinidad. It was found that the students indeed romanticized the French language to a greater extent and French people to a lesser extent, but that students were also conscious of the inaccuracy of many of the prevailing stereotypes surrounding French people. Students agreed that French was elegant, poetic, and refined, but not romantic or seductive. Even in a linguistically plural society where French Creole was once the lingua franca, opinions seemingly derived from North American media were prevalent as it related to the language and its connotations. Likewise, there was a significant overlap between the sample's conclusions about French people, contemporary French culture, and their opinions on the French language. Nonetheless, the sample was able to effectively acknowledge an important incongruity between images of the French in the media and the reality of life in France which includes a diversity of experience and culture. The relative cultural sensitivity of the sample can disprove claims of the universal romanticization of France in the Americas and suggests major socio-cultural distinctions between Trinidadian adolescents and those in North America.

Inherited preconceptions and stereotypes, popular culture, and North American media are the factors likely contributing to the ideas about French among the students, given that the opinions of the students were not supported by an academic foundation or by relative first-hand experience. Moreover, following in line with the prevailing studies on the fetishization and romanticization of the French by teens in the Americas, it can be inferred that "particularistic" qualities of the French people have been projected on to their language. Thus, it can be concluded that adolescents in the Trinidadian capital are not entirely immune to the romanticization or idealization of the French language despite their relative cultural sensitivity.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire distributed to students in secondary schools in Port of Spain

An investigation into the popular perceptions of the French language among secondary school students in Port of Spain, Trinidad

My name is Bilqees Mohammed and I am a final year Humanities student at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine. I am a double major in Spanish and French and I am currently writing my final year thesis for the course HUMN 3099 which concerns perceptions of the French language among young people in Trinidad.

This work is intended to identify the main attitudes toward the French language, a foreign language with major historical and cultural relevance in the West Indies, among secondary school students in Port of Spain. By extension, it aims to identify the predominant myths and preconceptions of the French language among adolescents in the capital.

The following survey is anonymous: students will not be asked to supply their names or addresses. Kindly answer the following questions as honestly as possible. Proficiency in French or knowledge of sociolinguistics are not necessary to complete this survey.

Personal Information

1. What is your age?

2. At school, what form or grade are you currently in?

3. What school do you attend?

4. What is your gender?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Prefer not to say or specify

5. Are you currently pursuing French for a standardized exam certificate, like CSEC or CAPE?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes, for CSEC
- ☐ Yes, for CAPE
- ☐ Yes, for my SATs
- ☐ Yes, for my GCSEs
- ☐ Yes, for the DELF or DALF exam
- ☐ No, I'm not

6. Have you ever taken classes or sat an exam at the Alliance Française in Port of Spain?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Attitudes toward the French language

7. State to what extent you agree with the following statement: "I find it aesthetically pleasing to hear the French language spoken by a native or fluent speaker." *Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neutral/Unsure
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

8. State to what extent you agree with the following statement: "I consider the French language to be a very difficult language to speak, write, or understand." *Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neutral/Unsure
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

9. State to what extent you agree with the following statement: "I find that the French language, especially when spoken by a native or fluent speaker, sounds particularly romantic." *Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neutral/Unsure
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

10. State to what extent you agree with the following statement: "I find that the French language, when spoken by a native or fluent speaker, sounds rather elegant."

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neutral/Unsure
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

11. Select any words that you would personally use to describe the French language, especially when having heard it spoken by a native or fluent speaker.

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Poetic
- ☐ Refined
- ☐ Seductive
- ☐ Musical
- ☐ None of the above

12. Select any words that you would personally use to describe a native or fluent speaker of French.

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Intelligent
- ☐ Cultured
- ☐ Artistic
- ☐ Romantic
- ☐ None of the above

13. Name any countries that you know of that use French as an official language.

14. Which city in the francophone world that is NOT located in France do you MOST associate with the French language?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Montreal, Canada
- ☐ Casablanca, Morocco
- ☐ Geneva, Switzerland
- ☐ Dakar, Senegal
- ☐ Port-Au-Prince, Haiti
- ☐ Brussels, Belgium
- ☐ Beirut, Lebanon
- ☐ I don't particularly associate any of the above with the French language

15. State to what extent you agree with the following statement: "I associate French with romantic love or seduction." *Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neutral/Unsure
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

16. For which of the following reasons, if any, would you learn French?

Check all that apply.

- ☐ For ease in travel or for tourism in French-speaking countries or regions
- ☐ To have an advantage in the job market
- ☐ To enter into the field of diplomacy or international relations
- ☐ To easily consume French media or French cultural forms (music, films, etc)
- ☐ To easily communicate with French-speaking friends or family
- ☐ To appear more interesting, appealing or educated
- ☐ Because my family has French heritage or French Creole heritage
- ☐ To enter into the field of foreign language education
- ☐ To immigrate to a French-speaking country or region
- ☐ I am not interested in pursuing French

17. Are you aware that the highest percentage of native French speakers in the world hail from continental Africa?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes, I was aware of this before now
- ☐ No, I was not aware of this until now

18. Do you find that French is a more beautiful language than one or more of the following languages which are present in Trinidad and Tobago? Select which ones.

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Spanish
- ☐ Hindi
- ☐ French Creole
- ☐ English
- ☐ Trinidadian Creole
- ☐ None of the above/Unsure

19. Do you think that French is a culturally significant language in Trinidad and Tobago? Briefly explain.

Attitudes toward French culture and French people

20. Which of the following subject areas or cultural forms do you associate with France?
Select all that apply.

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Cuisine
- ☐ Fashion
- ☐ Film
- ☐ Music
- ☐ Space exploration
- ☐ Art
- ☐ Diplomacy
- ☐ Literature
- ☐ Military prowess
- ☐ Philosophy
- ☐ Politics
- ☐ History
- ☐ None of the above

21. In the following space, state any words or expressions you would use to describe French culture.

22. Which of the following would you consider to be true of the French? Select all that apply.

Check all that apply.

- ☐ The French are impolite and rude
- ☐ The French are a romantic and passionate people
- ☐ The French have an elevated and refined culture
- ☐ The French are quite intellectual and witty
- ☐ None of the above

23. State if you agree with the following statement: "If I met someone and found out that they are fluent in French, I would be impressed." *Mark only one oval.*

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Unsure

24. Can you name any Trinidadian places or aspects of Trinidadian culture that are "French"?

25. Have you personally visited France before?

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes
☐ No

26. If you were to visit France, what is the most anticipated activity you would like to do?

27. Do you believe that French people or French culture are often unfairly stereotyped? Briefly explain.

Appendix B: Excerpt from “Are They Dying? The Case of Some French-lexifier Creoles” by
Jo-Anne Ferreira and David Holbrook

Although never officially French, Trinidad has been home to French Creole from 1783 to the present, as the language was taken there by settlers from several francophone Caribbean territories. Despite over 120 years, as a living, community-based language, and a relatively long period as an island-wide lingua franca, Trinidadian French Creole (TFC or Patois) has been fully displaced by both English and Trinidadian English Creole, both as a mother tongue and as a lingua franca. In spite of the ongoing claim by speakers that the language is still very much alive, and that “Patois People are Alive,” the language has all but disappeared as a living community language, and is now found only in a few difficult-access rural areas... Factors such as enforced language policies and negative intra- and extra-community language attitudes are the principal causes of the social devaluation of TFC and of its continued erosion in a country where English was aggressively promoted as the language of power, prestige, and possibilities for social advancement beginning in the mid-19th century. However, despite the current, apparent lack of vitality of this Creole, and although a permanent revival or resurrection remains unlikely, a new wave of interest in the language, and culture, may be responsible for its possible resurgence in certain sectors of the national community. (Ferreira and Holbrook)