The paradox of coaching in a non-native language

SCHOLARONE™
Manuscripts

Abstract

Purpose – Language plays a complex role in coaching, facilitating communication, comprehension, and meaning construction. Yet, the implications of coaching in a non-native language are uncertain and under-researched. This study explores the role of non-native language (NNL) in dyadic workplace coaching practice. Specifically, it explores how working in a NNL influences the coaching experience from the coach's perspective.

Design/methodology/approach – A qualitative approach was chosen to explore the way coaches view coaching in a NNL. Twenty-three semi-structured interviews were conducted with coaches experienced in coaching in NNL. Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) was applied for data analysis.

Findings – NNL coaching presents a paradoxical mix of negative and positive tensions for the coach and coachee in communication, relationship, and insight. NNL coaching is nuanced and may be accommodated using coaching competencies to mitigate the potential for misunderstanding and relationship rupture. It offers alternative perspectives to existing worldviews, eliciting deeper insights. Coaches' confidence in coaching in a NNL varies from a challenging struggle that perceptually hinders performance, through ambivalence, to a sense of greater resourcefulness.

Originality/value – The study contributes to the stream of literature on language in international business, sociolinguistic research, and how meaning is constructed in a coaching process. First, the work develops a distinction between coaching in a native language (NL) and a NNL. Second, study results indicate that the context of NNL creates challenges as well as opportunities in a dyadic coaching process, particularly regarding aspects of the coach–coachee relationship and insight elicitation via alternative perspectives. Moreover, several practical implications of the study for the coaching practice are discussed.

Keywords – Coaching; Language; Non-native language; culture in coaching

Paper type – Research paper

Introduction

Language performs numerous functions: in addition to facilitating external communication, it shapes abstract thought and structures how people think (Boroditsky, 2001), and is socially constructed with power connotations (Wilson, 1992). Additionally, it is considered a powerful mechanism of cultural transmission (Gelman and Roberts, 2017). Language is a system of meanings central to the process of constructing individual, social, and global realities (Tieze *et al.*, 2003) and the primary mechanism to connect different individual, institutional, and socio-cultural worlds (Piekkari and Tieze, 2011). Dyadic coaching involves clear dialogical communication between two individuals, with coaches closely attending to the language coachees use to understand them fully and empathetically to elicit insights. Therefore, language itself may be considered a 'tool within the coaching process' (Jones, 2021, p. 89). Workplace coaching is understood here as a customised learning and development intervention delivered by coaching practitioners (coaches) to employees (coachees) to achieve valuable professional outcomes (Bozer and Delegach, 2019; Bozer and Jones, 2018).

Our study responds to an under-researched area in coaching studies posed in Boyatzis *et al.* (2022), asking for novel insights about conditions under which coaching works with distinct groups of clients. More specifically, we explore how coaching functions when a coach or coachee participate in a workplace coaching session held in a non-native language (NNL). Coaching in a NNL provides an opportunity for the enhancement of the coaching experience and outcome. It helps coaches to address cultural assumptions and promote cultural understanding (Salomaa, 2015; Kanelidou, 2017). Despite the increase in cross-cultural coaching literature (Rosinski, 2003; Plaister-Ten, 2009; Shoukry and Cox, 2018; Bozer and Delegach, 2019), little emphasis has been placed upon the role of language, particularly NNL, in coaching. Hence, a qualitative approach was adopted to answer the following research question: *how does the use of a NNL influence the coaching experience from the coach's perspective?*

In the study, coachees' perspectives are captured indirectly, through the perceptions of coaches. Further research is required to investigate the coachees' experiences of being coached in a NNL.

The following section discusses the role of language in the coaching practice. Thereafter, the scope and methodology of the empirical work are outlined, followed by the presentation of

the study findings. A critical discussion of the study results follows and concludes with contributions of the work to theory and practice, as well as avenues for further research.

The role of language in coaching practice

Coaching is an approach to professional or personal development that supports change through construction of meaning (Schröder and Prytula, 2022). Marshak (2013) argued that, in a coaching context, change within the individual is affected by changing how people talk about things, because we construct our world(s) through language. Language enables creation, communication, and attribution of meaning and plays a key role in the perception of emotions. It is acquired within cultural and emotional contexts (Dylman *et al.*, 2020) and whilst some emotions and words are shared across cultures and languages, their meaning may differ in distinct contexts. Emotions help access insight and may be experienced less intensely in a NNL than in a native language (NL)—the impact being accentuated by the feelings certain words evoke, rather than the meaning itself (Ferré *et al.*, 2022). This *foreign language effect* (Keysar *et al.*, 2012) has benefits in therapy where levels of distress about negative experiences might be reduced when discussed in a NNL. Additionally, it is considered a consequence of the context in which languages were acquired. Our study explores how language influences emotions when coaching is conducted in a NNL.

Two empirical studies (Salomaa, 2015; Kanelidou, 2017) indicate that language usage is influential in the coaching process and indicative outcomes. Moreover, whilst coaching in a NNL could present challenges for both the coach and coachee, it may also provide an opportunity to enhance the coaching practice. Salomaa (2015) identified 16 impacting factors for expatriate coaching, including coaching language. She concluded that multilingualism helps coaches work with various cultural assumptions and promotes cultural learning and understanding. Kanelidou (2017) conducted a survey to test and confirm a hypothesis that NNL coaching offers opportunities not available in NL, further observing that coaches tend to focus on the challenges.

Exploration of metaphors represents one such challenge. Metaphors can be considered a part of the learned language of an individual, as different cultures utilise specific idioms, and metaphoric insight is limited to the individual's previous experiences (Emson, 2016). NNL speakers might experience difficulty in comprehending the meaning of metaphors (Ikuta and Miwa, 2021). A *clean* coaching approach, using coachee-generated metaphors expressed in

the coachee's exact words and non-verbal expressions uncontaminated by the coach's language may minimise this challenge (Madsen, 2016). However, this may also limit the depth of the transformational insight in the coaching process to the coachee's prior experiences.

The importance of the working relationship between a coach and coachee in the coaching process is widely discussed in the existing literature, with multiple factors influencing this relationship; however, their relative contributions remain unresolved (Bozer and Jones, 2018). The contribution of language in building the coaching relationship remains unclear. Research into the similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1971) in mentoring relationships indicates nuanced links to positive outcomes in the mentoring relationship itself, as well as organisational benefits (Mitchell *et al.*, 2015). Mentees in their study reported greater professional and organisational commitment when they considered themselves to be similar to their mentors. The distinction between workplace coaching and mentoring seems inconsistent in literature and practice (Salter and Gannon, 2015). However, an obvious difference is that coaching endeavours to achieve a partnership of equality, whilst the mentoring relationship is between a more experienced mentor and less experienced mentee (Kram, 1985 in Mitchell *et al.*, 2015). To gain a deeper understanding of influence of language on coaching experiences, our study concerns the influence of coaching in NNL on the coach–coachee working relationship.

In such relationships, language is a type of social interaction allowing individuals to communicate their knowledge of the world, together with their cultural and social identities expressed via assumptions, views, and opinions they share with others (Kramsch, 1998; Wilczewski and Alon, 2023). It plays a key role in communication during the coaching practice. It is a means of internally constructing our worlds and realities, eliciting insights into beliefs and behaviours, as well as building working relationships.

Yet, little emphasis has been placed upon coaching in a NNL in extant literature. We recognise that evaluation of coaching outcome is complex and difficult (Jones, 2021). However, in response to the above-mentioned gap in the literature, our study aimed to explore participating coaches' subjective experiences of coaching in a NNL (coach using NNL, coachee using NNL, or both using a NNL). Additionally, it examined their perceptions of how this might influence the coaching practice, based on our research question: *how does the use of a NNL influence the coaching experience from the coach's perspective?*

Method

Coaches with experience of dyadic workplace coaching in a NNL were invited to participate in the study. No further boundary conditions were imposed as the aim was to explore a broad range of relevant experiences. A total of 23 participants were purposively sampled from the researchers' network and snowballed from second- or third-degree connections. Figure 1 presents our sampled coaches' coaching language experience. It includes four types of language combination usages: coaches who use a NNL whilst their coachees use their NL (*Quadrant 2*, n = 18); coaches using a NNL with coachees also using a NNL (*Quadrant* 4, n = 17). Some participating coaches appear in more than one quadrant, offering their experiential comparison of both coaches and coachees working in their NL (*Quadrant 1*, n = 14). Only four coaches coached in their NL whilst coachees used a NNL (*Quadrant 3*), offering scope for further research into the experiences of coachees.

Figure 1 about here

Mostly Europe-based coaches of 15 different nationalities coached in five different languages and the majority coached mainly in English—their NNL. Their coaching experience ranged 1–17 years (average five years), and most participating coaches were female (n = 19). Table 1 outlines more details about the sample along with basic demographics.

Table 1 about here

Primary data were collected using in-depth open-ended semi-structured interviews to answer the exploratory questions. Semi-structured interviews were chosen as they offer a balanced structure to encompass the initial areas of enquiry, with flexibility to enable participants to describe and explain their relevant experiences in their own words (see the full interview schedule in Online Appendix 1). One-to-one interviews lasting between 45 and 100 minutes were conducted by the first author via videoconference. This was deemed necessary to capture the diversity of experiences. At the time of the interview, the interviewed coaches (study participants) were based in nine different countries, namely: Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, Japan, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and the UK. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. As the participants' meanings and perceptions are of greater interest to the enquiry than speech mechanics, a denaturalised transcription process was adopted (Oliver *et al.*, 2005), which is also recommended for respectful transcription of geo-ethnic accents.

Interview transcripts were analysed using Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA)—a qualitative method to develop, analyse, and interpret patterns across a dataset (Braun and Clarke,

2022)—to explore participants' subjective experiences and how they make sense of them. RTA follows six sequential, but non-linear, recursive phases to explore and interpret the data by identifying and developing patterns of meaning (themes) across the dataset (detailed description of those phases in the present project can be found in the Online Appendix 2).

Codes were developed inductively, organically, and iteratively, interpreting participants' responses through the researchers' own lenses influenced by working and living in multicultural, multilingual environments, as RTA emphasises the subjective and reflexive roles of researchers. Reflective Journaling (Gerstl-Pepin and Patrizio, 2009) was applied during all the phases of analysis to capture ideas, preconceptions, meaning-making, issues, and decisions. This reflexive process helped to critically engage with the data to avoid missing key elements.

The first two interviews were coded manually. Thereafter, the complete dataset was uploaded to the qualitative data analysis software package, NVivo and coded—transcript by transcript. Initial codes were iteratively and recursively compared across the entire dataset using extracted data segments, and then rearranged.

The resulting 30 codes were clustered around potential themes and subthemes, iterating the process several times. The process involved in-depth discussions between the two authors to reconcile any differences in possible meaning and its understanding. Writing up the findings and discussion was also iterative, reflecting on meaning, representation, and relevance of the data. This often prompted a return to earlier phases of RTA to refine codes or themes until both authors independently judged the analysis to be coherent and credible to stop. The coding structure with number of occurrences is presented in Table 2.

Table 2 about here

Findings

Responses offer a range of coaches' perspectives on the impact of coaching in a NNL. Presentation of findings from the study have been structured around three main themes emanating from the data analysis: (1) a paradoxical relationship between language and coaching; (2) a nuanced trusting working relationship between coach and coachee; and (3) opportunities for deeper insight. Each main theme includes a range of findings which are presented below and illustrated with quotations. Additional illustrative quotations can be found in Online Appendix 3. The section ends with a compilation of challenges and opportunities of coaching in a NNL presented in Table 3.

The paradoxical relationship between language and coaching

Language plays a complex role in coaching. Coaches perceive that working in a NNL presents a paradoxical mix of challenges to coaching performance and opportunities for enhanced coaching experience, as illustrated in the following quotation:

> *'It's more difficult and more interesting … coaching in a NNL has more disadvantages than advantages. But the advantage is significant.'* (B4)

Perceptions of the potential impact of a NNL in coaching varied across the participants. While one participant observed that '*language has a huge impact'* (O6), another mentioned that '*language is not that important at all'* (K7). Yet another concluded: *'…it can be a minor irritant'* (Z7). Interestingly, in a few cases, the same participant presented differing views during the interview as a result of their reflection during the conversation. For example, Participant K1 started with:

> *'I don't know if it's been particularly to do with language' (K1)*

But then continued near the end of the interview that:

> *'language is actually an opportunity' (K1)*

Coaches commented on both positive and negative implications of coaching in NNL. Perceptual barriers to coaching in a NNL identified in the study include coaches over-focussing on the coachee's language at the cost of content, feelings, and attending to the relationship; for example:

> *'more subtle communication is not so easy and we may … be more literal … and may not feel as natural … to create rapport'* (I2)

Whereas, when coaching in their NL, a few participating coaches felt more flexible and easier to establish connections, as expressed by one of the participating coaches:

> *'It's much more easy for me to bring more of myself to the session.'* (I2)

To compensate, NNL coaches work with '*increased cognitive load*' (P8), but still potentially fear missing content or crucial information from their coachees or becoming mentally stuck and losing momentum. A dilemma faced by coaches working in their NNL, whilst the coachee is using their NL, is whether to risk interrupting the coachee's flow to ascertain meaning or to continue and risk missing significant content. They worry that miscommunication, such as not understanding their coachee or not being understood themselves, or the coachee feeling

unheard or misunderstood, may adversely impact the confidence of both parties in the efficaciousness of the coaching process; for example:

'When the client is very judgemental and believes the way you speak a language shows your competence.' (Q8)

Countertransference moments (feelings evoked in the coach by their coachee) could be even more complex in a NNL compared to a NL, as one of the coaches explained:

'The space could become a little more contaminated with my own assumptions if there's no awareness of what goes on, how we feel about the language, the culture.' (V4)

However, coaching in a NNL offers practical opportunities if coaches could *'feel comfortable to be vulnerable … and [open to] make mistakes in NNL'* (M9). One of the participants concluded:

'If you remove the thinking of "I need to speak perfect language", then you're thinking in a different way.' (R8)

We identified that a few coaches find it, paradoxically, easier to communicate and make themselves understood by using simpler, more precise language when the coachee is working in their NNL, avoiding colloquialisms and cultural references, whilst more frequently verifying for understanding. A coach explained:

'If I can't explain it to her then I'm obviously not being clear … and I think it's an opportunity.' (K1)

Coaches also reported paying greater attention to non-verbal communications (such as intonation or body language) and emotional signals, exploring context and meaning more deeply than they might in their NL, with fewer assumptions. Different words could prompt different thinking, as suggested by a participant:

'If I used a reference that they didn't understand, that might trigger them to think in a different way.' (L5)

Paradoxically, a potential benefit of being coached in a NNL is that the coachee may feel emotionally distanced from the words that trigger psychological defensive mechanisms from memories of painful emotional experiences:

> *'They might actually be more objective about certain experiences, rather than if we were to speak the same language … [that] might contaminate the space if we were coming from the same culture.'* (V4)

The working relationship between coach and coachee is nuanced in a NNL

Participants noted that establishing a trusting working relationship between coach and coachee is fundamental for efficacious coaching (as in any type of coaching). Additionally, language might play a specific—even if nuanced—and beneficial role. One coach noted that when working in a NNL this apparent barrier could be overcome to rebalance the power in the relationship if the coach has the humility and confidence to acknowledge it:

> *'People are different when they are speaking their own language or a foreign language. And sometimes, not being perfect can relax your coachee, maybe makes you more accessible.'* (Z7)

Our study also supports a commonly held view that language expresses culture and might be reflected in culturally influenced communication patterns. For example, owing to different levels of directness:

> *'I believe that Polish culture is more direct than British culture … I particularly struggle with doing circles in English about the issue but not going to the point of it.'* (H6)

Polarised views were expressed regarding the relationship between language use and the coachee's cultural background and context. A few coaches felt they were selected for the coaching assignment because their coachee preferred a coach from the same cultural background who better understands cultural nuances and their expression in a NL. Conversely, others felt that an empathic coach from a different cultural and linguistic background could offer more by respectfully exploring meaning behind these nuances and offering alternative perspective worldviews. In this context, worldviews are understood here as 'a set of assumptions about physical and social reality that may have powerful effects on cognition and behaviour' (Koltko-Rivera, 2004, p. 3).

Coaching in a NNL offers opportunities for deeper insight

Potential differentiating opportunities are offered by coaching in a NNL, enabling a coachee deeper—or alternative—insight through consideration of themselves and their goals or challenges from alternative perspectives to their current worldviews. When coachees struggle to express themselves in a NNL, coaches employ creative approaches such as

images, metaphors, drawing, or sculpture to overcome differences in understanding and elicit insights by engaging different thinking modalities.

Creative approaches may also help both the coach and coachee avoid assumptions about the meaning of words when either or both are working in a NNL, exploring deeper—perhaps, more subtle—meanings. Coaches acknowledged the importance of the awareness of not fully appreciating or understanding the deep cultural meaning or significance of metaphors, idioms, and symbols. They chose to explore this space with their coachees with respect, curiosity, and awareness of their own orientations and biases.

> *'Language is just the expression of it, but the metaphor is really deeply cultural … it's a great opportunity to connect to the other culture and language as well and people.'* (K1)

An opportunity offered by coaching in the coachee's NNL is to explore meaning for the coachee; using different words could trigger a different thought in a coachee, exploring different ways of thinking to elicit insights. The *obvious questions* might be less obvious:

> *'It may allow me to make less assumptions, what is behind those words, which is much easier to make when we are in the same culture, and we assume a lot of meanings behind words that we may not make when we are coaching in a different language.'* (I2)

Additionally, access to emotions might vary depending on the language being used: coaching in English (considered by some as the coaching *lingua franca*) as a NNL *professional language* might reveal fewer emotions, whilst emotions are held in deeper layers accessed and expressed in the NL. Words might not be directly translated from a meaning perspective and carry a different emotional charge in a NNL compared to the NL, offering greater objective insight opportunity:

> *'Sometimes it's almost easier to go into the deeper layers and maybe even get into a slightly trickier emotional part of experience and express yourself in a NNL.'* (V4)

Discussion

Our findings present a mixed picture of consequences of coaching in NNL from the coach's perspective. NNL coaching offers alternative perspectives to existing worldviews, thus eliciting deeper insights. Coaches' confidence in coaching in a NNL varies from a challenging struggle that perceptually hinders performance, through ambivalence, to a sense of greater

resourcefulness. Challenges and opportunities identified in the study are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3 about here

We consolidate the study results by adapting Lewis's (2000) paradox framework, where socially constructed system contradictions (language is important/not important, helpful/hindersome) generate positive and negative tensions that can invoke reinforcing cycles of defences. These perceptions can influence how a coach might practice coaching in a NNL, their confidence, and the approaches they offer. By exploring these tensions, as we do in this study, NNL coaches tap into the 'potential energy, insights, and power of paradox that enable dramatic change' (Lewis, 2000, p. 762).

Our study builds on Salomaa's (2015) work that investigated factors impacting successful expatriate coaching, which indicated that language was a significant factor in the coaching relationship, amongst several other factors. We focussed on the contribution of the coaching language, and elicited insights into its impact on other facets of coaching in addition to the relationship. We identified a perception from a few coaches that whilst several individuals prefer to be coached in their NL, others prefer a NNL. Similarly, several coaches prefer coaching in their NL while others are comfortable and perceive practical benefits in coaching in a NNL. This reflects an individual's tolerance for discomfort in the pursuit of greater insight. Beyond linguistic proficiency, one reason for the discomfort felt by a coach and/or coachee when coaching in a NNL appears related to the internal conflict of constructing their worldview in one language whilst describing it in another (Burt, 2021). The understanding–communication process between a coach and coachee is more complex than when both work in a shared NL. However, our findings show that competent coaching practice requires certain adaptations, such as a systemic view of the broader coaching context and an understanding as well as appreciation of its potential benefits.

The study indicates that coaches adjust their approaches to help create a trusting relationship. They often reflect the coachee's communication patterns whilst remaining true to their own cultural identity, respectful of their coachees, and avoiding *force-fitting* cultural distance paradigms. Coaches notice all forms of coachee communication, including those more subtle non-verbal clues that indicate client dynamics and relationship dynamics. A failure to attend to what the coachee is communicating could have deleterious effects on trust, rapport, and the coachee's confidence in the coach's ability. Additionally, it could

adversely impact the coach's perception of their own competence, which could hamper their performance (Carden *et al.*, 2022).

Establishing equality and partnership between the coach and coachee is considered important in building a productive coaching relationship, empowering the coachee to assume responsibility for themselves, reflecting the importance of agency to enable change (Nathan, 2015). These power dynamics manifest themselves particularly strongly if the coach is working in their NL and the coachee is using a NNL, as this might accentuate the latter's perception of the coach's expertise, which could be present in their view of the coach–coachee relationship. The significance of power dynamics in a coaching relationship is intimated by Passmore and Yi-Ling (2019). The notion that English is the coaching *lingua franca* follows the concept of *linguascape* (Steyaert *et al.*, 2011). It explains why one particular language is chosen over another in multilingual communication as the *special language of practice* (Michalski and Śliwa, 2021) of coaching.

The study findings about the connections between relationship building and coaching in a NNL might be linked to one of Rogers's (1957) necessary and sufficient conditions for constructive change: the practitioner's authentic congruence in the relationship. Adopting a social constructionist systemic stance, Lawrence and Moore (2019) argue that authenticity implies knowing our different selves and how they mutually interact via internal dialogue. Trusting connections might be created using non-linguistic ways of communicating empathy to either mitigate the impact of the absence of a shared language or to add dimensions to it, irrespective of language.

We identified potential opportunities offered by coaching in a NNL, enabling coachees to obtain deeper or alternative insights through consideration of themselves and their goals or challenges from different perspectives to their existing worldviews. Central to this theme is the observation from the study that when we perceive we are from similar cultural backgrounds, including, but not exclusively, nationality, and work in a shared NL, we tend to make more assumptions regarding a shared meaning of words than we do when one party is working in a NNL. Conversely, NNL coaches tend to take less for granted, asking more questions for clarification and, consequently, support their coachees to consider their meaning more reflectively and deeply. This builds on Boroditsky's (2001) argument that language expresses thoughts and influences the way we think. This phenomenon offers coaches additional range in eliciting insights in coachees when either is working in a NNL, indicating that coaches of a *varied orientation* (Boyatzis *et al.*, 2022) might achieve better

outcomes, in contradiction to the similarity–attraction paradigm observed in mentoring (Mitchell *et al.*, 2015).

Psychodynamic coaching approaches offer insights into behaviours that are unconsciously shaped by past experiences. Countertransference (the coach's unconscious notions about the coachee) could be triggered by expressions in a NNL used by a coachee and induce the coach's unconscious—and possibly, incorrect—assumptions about the coachee (Abbott, 2018). Several coaches in our study reported that their coachees may prefer a coach from a different cultural background as this could enable them to work more objectively and fluidly on deeper emotional issues, free(er) of psychological defence mechanisms. This suggests an experience of the *foreign language effect* (Keysar *et al.*, 2012), where coachees can emotionally distance themselves from painful triggering memories from which they are subconsciously protected by using a NNL.

Several coaches in our study incorporate creative coaching approaches into their practice to ameliorate the impact of potential linguistic misunderstanding when their coachee is working in a NNL. Creative approaches which use figurative language, such as metaphor and idioms, might cause misunderstanding, particularly if these are culturally specific. Perhaps paradoxically, NNL coaches could offer an alternative approach to explore the coachee's meaning using figurative language if both coach and coachee challenge their assumptions based on the lack of shared reference points and adopt a curious and respectfully light-hearted attitude (as the literal translations of certain metaphors and idioms might seem rather bizarre). Idioms appear to decipher culture and, whilst often difficult for NNL speakers, offer access to conceptual understanding (Yağiz and Izadpanah, 2013), thereby eliciting insights. Whilst creatively co-exploring to reveal the coachee's meaning, using language or symbols to consider cultural assumptions, it is important for coaches to maintain a sense of psychological safety during a coaching session. Language is crucial in creating safety to support a productive coaching relationship (Sandler, 2011).

The influence of multiple layers of cultural backgrounds, identities, worldviews, and language usages of coaches and coachees is revealed in different ways—psychologically foregrounded and backgrounded, providing the context in which the coaching is practiced. Communication patterns express culture—often explicitly; on other occasions, implicitly. This aspect has particular importance in relationship building, as, for example, directness might be misconstrued as rudeness.

Implications and application

13

Recommendations for coaching practice derived from our study are outlined in Table 4. We suggest that coaching in a NNL offers coaches greater range and options because of alternative perspectives. We also propose that coaching competencies may be accentuated, and that creative coaching approaches could ameliorate potential misunderstanding whilst offering alternative perspectives to elicit insights. As these recommendations impact the coach–coachee dyad, coaches may wish to invite their coachees to reflect upon how they might incorporate them into their sessions during contracting discussions.

Table 4 about here

Limitations and further work

The study results cannot be generalised owing to the inductive approach and sampling. A complementary study based on a sample of coachees could investigate their perspectives of being coached in a NNL. In our study, coachees' views were only presented from the coaches' perspectives. Groups of coaches or coachees working in a specific NNL could be studied further to test whether findings from this study could be generalised for a specific population. Evaluating coaching outcomes is problematic, as there are many factors that influence outcomes that may not result from coaching. Further studies might consider experimenting within a research setting to better control for environmental characteristics.

The reasons why some coaches find the positive side of NNL, and others find the negative, opens another potential line of enquiry. This language paradox could be further investigated based on sampling of groups with specific NNL proficiencies, coaching experiences, personality traits, and skills to ascertain whether there are possible relationships between these characteristics and coaching in a NNL. For example, beyond a level of NNL competence, it would be useful to investigate what impact might the age of acquisition of a NNL have, as this may influence individual's worldviews and their tolerance of uncertainty or challenge. How many NNLs do individuals acquire and how does their competence and confidence in different NNLs influence coaching? What is the impact of the coach's experience (training, accreditation, coaching hours, etc.) on their confidence to coach well in a NNL? What might be the influence of a coach's coaching skills recommended by professional coaching bodies?

The 'Big Five' personality traits (Digman, 1990) are associated with performance (Zell and Lesick, 2021). These traits describe personality in five dimensions: conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism, and openness. According to Jones (2021), successful coaches exhibit a high level of openness, have curiosity towards human nature, listen to people's stories and learn about them; It would be valuable to further investigate

to what extent this—and other traits—might influence coaching in a NNL? The inter-relationships, interactions, and relative importance of contributory elements identified in this exploratory study could be tested to determine whether NNL practice efficacy would be best served by focussing on specific elements individually or in combination.

Conclusion

We addressed the research aim of exploring the role of NNL in dyadic workplace coaching practice through an inductive study of practising coaches. The key results pertain to three interconnected themes: (1) the paradoxical effects of language in coaching; (2) the nuanced and multifaceted aspects of relationship building; and (3) opportunities to elicit insights when coaching in a NNL.

Our study contributes to the academic discourse on the use of language in coaching by considering hitherto under-researched perspectives of coaching in a NNL, and also by expanding theories of language use in deciphering experiences and shaping worldviews. The work focusses on the specific roles of language in NNL coaching contexts with implications for coach–coachee relationships.

Coaching is practised through language, both for communication and construction of meaning and understanding. Coaching in a NNL presents a paradoxical mix of negative and positive tensions for coach and coachee. Aspects of communication and relationship could invoke negative tension as coaches fear misunderstanding and relationship rupture. This tension could, perceptually, hinder coaching performance; however, it could also encourage coaches to accentuate certain coaching competencies to mitigate these issues, paradoxically offering greater diligence to the coaching practice. Positive tensions are experienced when coaches are aware that NNL offers alternative perspectives that could afford greater opportunity to deeply explore meaning and elicit coachee insights, leading to several NNL coaches feeling a sense of greater resourcefulness. Exploration of these positive and negative tensions, using a paradox framework of socially constructed system contradictions of the role of language in coaching, offers NNL coaches greater opportunity than they might have previously considered.

References

Abbott, G.N. (2018), "Cross-cultural coaching: a paradoxical perspective", Cox, E.,

Bachkirova, T. and Clutterbuck, D. (Eds.), *The Complete Handbook of Coaching* (3rd edition),

Sage, London, pp.378-396.

Boroditsky, L. (2001), "Does language shape thought? Mandarin and English speakers'

conceptions of time", *Cognitive Psychology,* Vol. 43 No. 1, pp.1-22.

Boyatzis, R.E., Hullinger, A., Ehasz, S.F., Harvey, J., Tassarotti, S., Gallotti, A. and Penafort,

F. (2022), "The grand challenge for research on the future of coaching", *The Journal of Applied*

Behavioural Science, Vol. 58 No. 2, pp.202-222.

Bozer, G. and Jones, R.J. (2018), "Understanding the factors that determine workplace

coaching effectiveness: a systematic literature review", *European Journal of Work and*

Organizational Psychology, Vol. 27 No. 3, pp.342-361.

Bozer, G. and Delegach, M. (2019), "Bringing context to workplace coaching: a theoretical

framework based on uncertainty avoidance and regulatory focus", *Human Resource*

Development Review, Vol. 18 No. 3, pp.376-402.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2022), *Thematic Analysis: A Practical Guide,* Sage, London.

Burt, S. (2021), "Listening in coaching", Passmore, J. (Ed.), *The Coaches' Handbook: The*

Complete Practitioner Guide for Professional Coaches. Abingdon: Routledge. pp 104-113.

Byrne, D. E. (1971), *The Attraction Paradigm*, Academic Press, San Diego, CA.

Carden, J., Passmore, J. and Jones, R.J. (2022), "Exploring the role of self-awareness in coach

development: a grounded theory study", *International Journal of Training and*

Development, Vol. 26 No. 2, pp.343-363.

Digman, J.M. (1990), "Personality structure: emergence of the five-factor model", *Annual*

Review of Psychology, Vol. 41 No. 1, pp.417-440.

Dylman, A. S., Champoux-Larsson, M. and Zakrisson, I. (2020), "Culture, language and

emotion", *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture,* Vol. 4 No. 2. [23 Oct 2021]

Emson, N. (2016), "Exploring metaphor use and its insight into sense making with executive coaching clients", *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching & Mentoring,* Vol. 10, pp.59-75.

Ferré, P., Guasch, M., Stadthagen-Gonzalez, H. and Comesaña, M. (2022), "Love me in L1, but

hate me in L2: how native speakers and bilinguals rate the affectivity of words when feeling or thinking about them", *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition,* Vol. 25 No. 5, pp.786-800.

Gelman, S.A. and Roberts, S.O. (2017), "How language shapes the cultural inheritance of

Categories", *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences,* Vol. 114 No. 30, pp.7900-7907.

Gerstl-Pepin, C. and Patrizio, K. (2009), "Learning from Dumbledore's pensieve: metaphor as an aid in teaching reflexivity in qualitative research", *Qualitative Research,* Vol. 9 No. 3, pp.299-308.

Ikuta, M. and Miwa, K. (2021), "Structure mapping in second-language metaphor processing", *Metaphor and Symbol,* Vol. 36 No. 4, pp.288-310.

Jones, R.J. (2021), *Coaching with Research in Mind*, Routledge, Abingdon.

Kanelidou, K. (2017), "Coaching in another language: opportunities for coaches and coachees", *International Coach Federation research portal.* [1 Oct 2021]

Keysar, B., Hayakawa, S.L. and An, S.G. (2012), "The foreign-language effect: thinking in a

foreign tongue reduces decision biases" *Psychological Science,* Vol. 23 No. 6, pp.661-668.

Koltko-Rivera, M.E. (2004), "The psychology of worldviews", *Review of General Psychology,*

Vol. 8 No. 1, pp.3–58.

Kram, K.E. (1985), *Mentoring at Work,* Scott Foresman, Glenview, IL.

Kramsch, C. (1998), *Language and Culture,* Oxford University Press.

Lawrence, P. and Moore, A. (2019), *Coaching in Three Dimensions: Meeting the Challenges of*

a Complex World, Routledge, Abingdon.

Lewis, M.W. (2000), "Exploring paradox: toward a more comprehensive guide", *Academy of*

Management Review, Vol. 25 No. 4, pp.760-776.

Madsen, M.W. (2016), "Cognitive metaphor theory and the metaphysics of immediacy", *Cognitive Science,* Vol. 40 No. 4, pp.881-908.

Marshak, R.J. (2013), "Leveraging language for change", *OD Practitioner,* Vol. 45 No. 2, pp.49-55.

Michalski, M.P. and Śliwa, M. (2021), " 'If you use the right Arabic…': Responses to special language standardization within the BBC Arabic Service's linguascape", *Journal of World Business,* Vol. 56 No. 5, pp.101198.

Mitchell, M.E., Eby, L.T. and Ragins, B.R. (2015), "My mentor, myself: antecedents and outcomes of perceived similarity in mentoring relationships", *Journal of Vocational Behavior,* Vol. 89, pp.1-9.

Nathan, G. (2015), "A non-essentialist model of culture: Implications of identity, agency and structure within multinational/multicultural organizations", *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management,* Vol. 15 No. 1, pp.101-124.

Oliver, D., Serovich, J. and Mason, T. (2005), "Constraints and opportunities in interview transcription: towards reflection in quantitative research", *Social Forces,* Vol. 84 No. 2, pp.1273-1289.

Passmore, J. and Lai, Y.-L. (2019), "Coaching psychology: exploring definitions and research contribution to practice?", *International Coaching Psychology Review,* Vol. 14 No. 2, pp.69-83.

Piekkari, R. and Tietze, S. (2011), "A world of languages: implications for international management research and practice", *Journal of World Business,* Vol. 46 No. 3, pp.267-269.

Plaister-Ten, J. (2009), "Towards greater cultural understanding in coaching", *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching & Mentoring,* Vol. 3, pp.64-81.

Rogers, C.R. (1957), "The necessary and sufficient conditions of therapeutic personality Change", *Journal of Consulting Psychology,* Vol. 21 No. 2, pp.95-103.

Rosinski, P. (2003), *Coaching Across Cultures: New Tools for Leveraging National, Corporate and Professional Differences,* Nicholas Brealey Publishing, London.

Salomaa, R. (2015), "Expatriate coaching: Factors impacting coaching success", *Journal of Global Mobility,* Vol. 3 No. 3, pp.216-243.

Salter, T. and Gannon, J.M. (2015), "Exploring shared and distinctive aspects of coaching and mentoring approaches through six disciplines", *European Journal of Training and Development,* Vol. 39 No. 5, pp.373-392.

Sandler, C. (2011), *Executive Coaching: A Psychodynamic Approach*, McGraw-Hill, Maidenhead.

Schröder, T. and Prytula, M. (2022), "Language and meaning as basic topics in coaching", Greif, S., Möller, H., Scholl, W., Passmore, J. and Müller, F. (Eds.), *International Handbook of Evidence-Based Coaching,* Springer, Cham, pp 509-520.

Shoukry, H. and Cox, E. (2018), "Coaching as a social process", *Management Learning,* Vol. 49, pp.413-428.

Steyaert, C., Ostendorp, A. and Gaibrois, C. (2011), "'Multilingual organizations as 'linguascapes': negotiating the position of English through discursive practices", *Journal of World Business,* Vol. 46 No. 3, pp.270-278.

Wilczewski, M. and Alon, I. (2023), "Language and communication in international students' adaptation: a bibliometric and content analysis review", *Higher Education*, Vol. 85, pp.1235-1256.

Wilson, F. (1992), "Language, technology, gender, and power", *Human Relations,* Vol. 45 No. 9, pp.883-904.

Yağiz, O. and Izadpanah, S. (2013), "Language, culture, idioms, and their relationship with the foreign language", *Journal of Language Teaching & Research,* Vol. 4 No. 5, pp.953-957.

Zell, E. and Lesick, T. L. (2021), "Big five personality traits and performance: a quantitative synthesis of 50+ meta-analyses", *Journal of Personality,* Vol. 90 No. 4, pp.559-573.

Figure 1. NNL coaching experience of the study participants

<table>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td colspan="2" align="center">Coach</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>Native language</td><td>Non-native language</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Coachee</td><td>Native language</td><td>Y3, K7, M9, G2, Q8, P2, V2, L5, Z7, B1, U6, P8, S9, I2

Quadrant 1</td><td>H6, Q8, M9, G2, K7, P2, V2, K1, Z7, R8, J1, B1, S9, U6, V4, T3, P8, O6

Quadrant 2</td></tr>
<tr><td>Non-native language</td><td>Y3, L5, Z7, P8

Quadrant 3</td><td>H6, Q8, M9, G2, K7, P2, V2, K1, R8, J1, D4, S9, V4, T3, A6, O6, I2

Quadrant 4</td></tr>
</table>

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
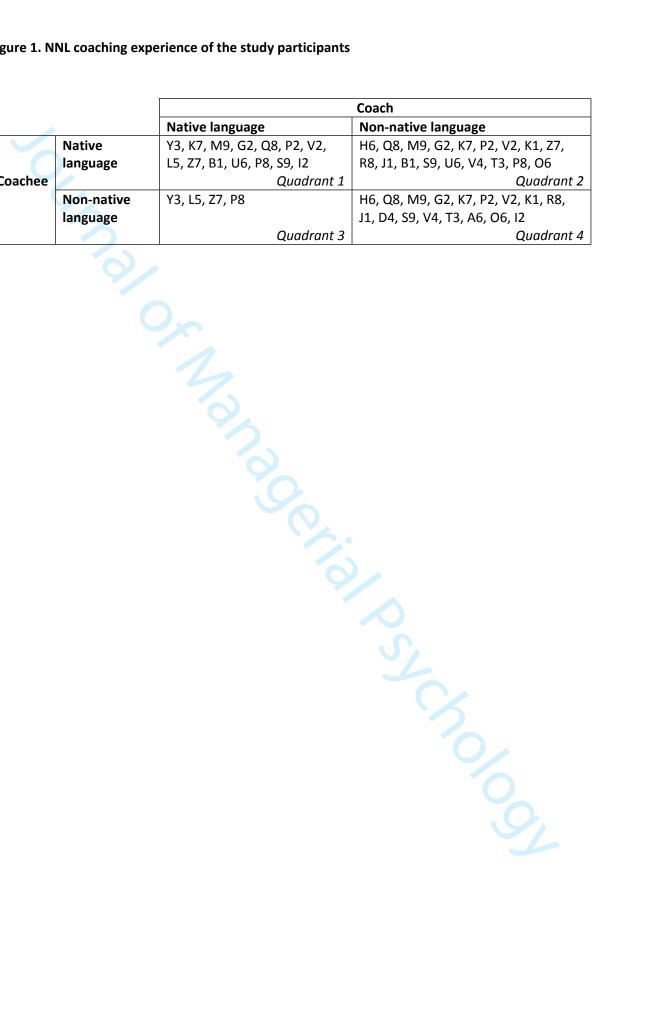51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Table 1. Participants' NNL coaching experience and demographics

Participant	Coach's perspective from sample group (quadrant)	Native language (L1)	NNL2	NNL3+	Main coaching language	Gender	Coaching experience (years)
H6	2, 4	Polish	English	Finnish, French, German	L2	F	0-3
Q8	1, 2, 4	Portuguese (LatAm)	English		L2	F	11-20
M9	1, 2, 4	Kazakh	Russian	English, Arabic	L3	F	4-6
Y3	1, 3	English			L1	F	0-3
S9	1, 2,4	Russian	Italian	English, others	L2	F	7-10
G2	1, 2, 4	Spanish (LatAm)	English	German	L2	F	0-3
B4	1,2	Italian	English	French, Spanish, German	L1	M	7-10
L5	1, 3	English			L1	M	4-5
K7	1, 2,4	Russian	English		L2 & L1	F	0-3
K1	2, 4	Tamil	Hindi	English, Punjabi	L3	F	0-3
P2	2, 4	Hungarian	English	Swedish	L2	F	0-3
R8	2,4	Hebrew	English	Danish	L2	F	0-3
V2	1, 2, 4	Finnish	English	German	L2	F	11-20
U6	1,4	Portuguese	English		L1	F	0-3
Z7	1,2,3	English	German		L1 & L2	F	7-10
A6	4	Portuguese	English		L2	F	0-3
J1	2,4	Romanian	English	Spanish	L2	F	0-3
D4	1, 4	Portuguese	English	Spanish, French	L2	M	0-3
I2	1,4	Portuguese	English		L2	M	11-20
P8	1,2,3	English	Spanish	Italian, Portuguese, Bulgarian, French	L2	F	0-3
V4	2,4	Serbo-Croat	English		L2	F	0-3
T3	2,4	Portuguese	English	Spanish, Japanese	L2	F	0-3
O6	2,4	Finnish	English		L2	F	4-6

Table 2. Coding structure with number of occurrences

Code		Sub-theme		Theme	
Coach finds NNL challenging	6	*Coaching in a NNL perceived as barrier*	16	Language paradox	51
Coach perception of performance impacted hindered	6				
Coachee struggles to express themselves in NNL	2				
Perceived disadvantages of coaching in NNL	2				
Emotions expressed more deeply in NL and culture	6	*Default NL coaching seems easier*	7		
Perceived benefits of coaching in NL	1				
Coach doesnt initially perceive issues in NNL	3	*Coaching in NNL perceived as opportunity*	28		
Coach feels more resourceful with multiple languages available	5				
Easier to coach in English as the coaching *lingua franca*	5				
Perceived benefits of coaching in NNL	15				
Coach more aware of boundaries in certain cultures	2	*Nuances of creating trusting relationship*	24	Nuanced relationship	75
Creating trusting connection is ultimately important in NNL	12				
Important but challenging to create equality	7				
Language very important in creating rapport, safety, contracting	3				
Culture more significant than language	7	*Language is but one element*	35		
Language is less important than other factors	12				
Personality trumps language and culture	5				
Relationship trumps language and culture	8				
Language, culture and personality all important	3				
Adjusting coaching communication approach for NNL coachee	9	*Adapting communication patterns*	16		
importance of adapting coaching approaches in different cultures	7				
Creative approach helps insight in NNL with metaphor	8	*Creative coaching*	17	Deeper insight	50
Using non verbal communication and creative approaches to help coachee	9				
Cultural differences offer fresh perspectives	3	*NNL offers insight through different perspectives*	20		
Emotions expressed differently in NNL, brings insight	7				
Language expresses culture	9				
Using language to offer different perspectives, access unconscious	1				
Expressions and idioms express culture, have different meaning	4	*Perception and expression of self*	10		
Perception and expression of self differs in different languages	6				
Awareness of psychodynamics in NNL important	3	*Practice adaptations*	3		

Table 3. Challenges and opportunities for coaches who coach in a NNL

Challenges	Theme	Opportunities
Over-focussing on coachee's language at the expense of meaning-making, affectation, and relationship.	Language paradox	Reduce perfectionist tendencies by focussing on coachee and coaching process.
Becoming stuck, losing momentum.		Improved communication through simpler, accurate language, and frequent checking for understanding.
Miscommunication and coachees struggle to express themselves - feel misunderstood.		Deeper exploration of coachee's context and meaning, fewer assumptions.
Countertransference may be more complex.		Paying attention to non-verbal communication and emotional signals.
		Emotional distance from psychologically painful experiences offers objective insights.
More difficult to establish connection and present authentic version of themselves.	Nuanced relationship	Help rebalance power in coach-coachee relationship when coach is working in their NNL and coachee in their NL.
		Explore meaning behind cultural nuances.
		Language switching enhances relationship.
	Deeper insight	Deeper, subtle, exploration of meaning.
		Insight elicitation by exploring different ways of thinking expressed in language.
		Offer alternative perspective worldviews.

Table 4. Recommendations for NNL coaching practice

Theme	Recommendation, application, and benefits
Language paradox	Expand resourcefulness by reflecting upon how they might perceive themselves differently depending on the language used, and how this may offer more options when coaching in a NNL according to coachee preferences.
	Consider how professional coaching body competencies might be accentuated to accommodate cultural nuances expressed through language to adapt to their coachee.
	Consider adopting a 'clean' coaching approach to minimise the risk of steering the coachee by introducing the coach's assumptions and meanings.
Nuanced relationship	Develop awareness of their own cultural orientations and biases, their expression in a NNL, and appreciate how they might be projected into coaching and impact the relationship.
	Practice flexing verbal and non-verbal communication styles, mirroring and matching their coachees, to develop an empathic relationship whilst remaining true to their self.
Deeper insight	Develop awareness of psychodynamic processes and coaching/therapy boundaries to create and maintain a safe coaching space.
	Practice managing their own emotional responses to countertransference to maintain objective resourcefulness.
	Consider incorporating creative coaching approaches to ameliorate impacts of potential linguistic misunderstanding whilst offering different perspectives.

Online Appendix 1. Interview schedule

Q 1. Can you tell me about your experiences of coaching in a NNL?

Prompts - What have you learned about the coaching practice from your experiences of
 coaching in a NNL?

 - In which language would you prefer to coach, and why?

Q 2. Can you tell me what you notice about how you and your coachee communicate in these sessions?

Prompts - How do you think you understand each other?

 - If you match your coachee's style, how do you do this?

 - What communication patterns have you noticed and how do you work with them?

Q 3. What have you noticed about the relationship with your coachee when working in a NNL?

Prompts - Reflecting on your cultural orientations from the COF assessment, how might any of these dimensions impact coaching relationship dynamics?

 - What approaches might you use to create psychological safety?

 - What, if any, ethical implications do you consider when coaching in a NNL?

Q 4. How do you elicit self-awareness and insight when coaching in a NNL?

Prompts - What have you noticed?

 - What approaches have you used? (e.g., clean language, metaphors, art, music, etc.)

 - What, if anything, is different from working in NL?

 - How might emotions and the unconscious manifest when coaching in a NNL, and what strategies employed?

 - How might you notice counter-transference, and might it manifest differently in a NNL?

 - What have you noticed in the language being used that might indicate unexpressed emotions?

 - How do you help coachees reflect with curiosity on their emotions?

Q 5. Is there anything else that you would like to comment on that we haven't yet discussed?

Q 6. Do you have any questions for me?

Online Appendix 2. Data analysis process in Reflective Thematic Analysis (RTA) in our study (Braun and Clarke, 2022)

Phase 1 - Familiarisation: *Engagement with data by listening to interview recordings and editing auto-transcriptions, capturing initial ideas on the topic from the semi-structured interviews, and considering how participants made sense of their relevant experiences.*

Phase 2 - Coding: *Development of codes (ideas, meanings, or concepts from the data), inductively, and organically. Initial codes iteratively & recursively compared across whole dataset using extracted data segments then relabelled/split/combined/added/removed taking care to preserve participants' meaning and context, reflexively consider the researchers' perspectives, and answer the RQ.*

Phase 3 - Initial theme generation: *The 30 codes were clustered around potential themes (central organising concepts of shared meaning) and 10 sub-themes (sharing a key concept of a theme), iterating with, and revising, the initial code structure with reference to data extracts.*

Phase 4 - Reviewing and developing themes: *Iterative process, often returning to interview transcripts and coding to confirm interpretation by reflecting upon whether the themes effectively captured the data and dividing/combining/discarding initial themes.*

Phase 5 - Refining, defining, and naming themes: *Checking the themes and sub-themes effectively reflected the research question and objectives, whilst representing participants' reported experiences and perceptions.*

Phase 6 - Writing up: *A further opportunity to reflect upon the meaning and representation of the data and relevance to the research question and objectives, often returning to previous phases of the RTA to refine codes, sub-themes, and themes, until the researchers judged the analysis coherent and credible to stop.*

Online Appendix 3. Additional participant quotations to supplement those in the main text

While the RTA has been performed on all the data, here are some additional quotations from the interviews to better illustrate the three main themes emanating from the data: (1) a paradoxical relationship between language and coaching; (2) a nuanced trusting working relationship between coach and coachee; and (3) opportunities for deeper insight.

The paradoxical relationship between language and coaching

'…communicate meaning and intentions and emotions. And we all do that very flexibly in our native language because we have learned, we have grown with it, so, it's natural, it's automatic. And we have this expertise in using language. But when we are speaking in our non native language, we may not be as experts in using this. So, this this more subtle communication is not so easy. And we may have to use a different communication and be more literal when we want to say something and may and it may not feel as natural when we are in a conversation you know, sometimes to create rapport.' (I2)

'It could even be in the benefit of the client as in, in the sense that I have to inquire more and inquiries good for them as in I need the client explore more in order for me to understand the context as well. So in the end, it just invites to further exploration.' (G2)

'When you coach in a non native language, you're somehow less in control. And you have to take risk. You have to be comfortable. So you have to be confident enough and comfortable enough to sometimes take some risks or risks … something about knowing that at some point there might be some kinds of linguistic breakdown. but I think that that in a way is a really positive.' (P8)

'Sometimes you may think actually it will remove people from the cognitive I need to be perfect … maybe it's also will trigger different thinking … they become less focus on, the less thinking on how to say, and moving to what they say, if it make any sense … it's coming not from the head it's coming more from the inside from the body … it can bring some discomfort but then again, then it's a matter how as a coach to try and kind of break the ice in a way or right or I could jump in with contributing directly. Okay, I mean, take your time to think, or try different words, how would you describe it for example, right and then it's yeah, in a way I think again, it's creating this space where feeling that okay, and when you don't, you don't need to be perfect, but trying to think in a different way.' (R8)

The working relationship between coach and coachee is nuanced in a NNL

'Perhaps there were some personal ingredients because this person was really in need of the reflection so he was really we were able to gain trust at the beginning. And he was really able to reflect on his experiences also on the difficult sides. … I can't remember anymore more what I asked but then he cried and it just showed that it touched something very deeply in and then later on, he said that it was really important.' (V2)

'…because this is not my first language … the person can see that kind of what I'm saying it's not kind of a judging because at the end of the day we are in the same on the same boat … we're looking into each other eyes kind of we're at the same level.' (P2)

'In Asia, East Asia in particular, there is a tendency to see your coach as the expert. and in Japanese, they want to call you Sensei, which means before born, having had a previous life and therefore, having acquired countless aeons of wisdom and so, as the ICF competencies make clear that the at the heart of the coaching relationship is equality, equal respect. And spending time debunking the idea that you

are the expert, enabling them to understand that they have got the resource within them, and that we have different complementary roles, but the combination is a partnership. That does take time.' (Y3)

'It's important that you're building that relationship and the trust and the fact that the language is wrong doesn't really matter … if you're being humility, and curiosity that you know about, in accepting that there'll be a lot of things you don't know. Very curious to find out … what is going on for the other person, perhaps even more in another language because you really don't know how things work.' (Y3)

'… then you move past the language then you're into the relationship … I think language and using a client's own language and using special expressions can help them to relax and feel safe and understood.' (Z7)

'A good coach adapts to the needs of their coachee in whatever dimension … I still think the relationship trumps all.' (L5)

'Being coached in foreign language in a way, and this is what I noticed in me, in a way it gives you a safe space because you don't use those words that sometimes cut deep, and that, because the understanding of the foreign language for me.' (H6)

Coaching in a NNL offers opportunities for deeper insight

'… may give them a better perspective in terms of what they are communicating, more impartial view of what they are sharing and it may actually allow me to ask better questions. Sometimes the obvious questions that nobody asks, that people take for granted. And so it may actually be helpful in helping them to question what they have been taking for granted.' (I2)

'I think coaching in another language can bring a lot of advantages … I picked up a lot of things at different places and I think that really gives you a possibility to have a really global view about things and not be so biased about like oh, it's only my culture … I think you want to be challenged and sometimes challenge comes from a totally different direction.' (P2)

'… when we're coaching in a different language, we need to be much more aware of the language, but of the cultural context that is associated … this is the main the main strengths because I try to go beyond what is the pure communication tool and try to understand what they really want to say.' (J1)

'You do have a different personality depending on the language that you're speaking … think about how language is actually affecting the way they're seeing the world.' (D4)