"Moet ik blijven or should I go?":

The Influence of Dutch Language on International Students' Decision to Stay in the

Netherlands after Graduating



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Abstract

As the number of international students in the Netherlands is growing every year, it is important to know whether they plan on staying after university. This study will be mapping out if international students have the intention to stay in the Netherlands after finishing their studies, and it will look at the influence that learning Dutch has on their decision to stay or not.

For this quantitative research, 101 international students and alumni who currently live in the Netherlands filled out a survey about their motivation to learn Dutch, their selfreported Dutch skills, and whether they are planning on staying after finishing their degree. They were also given the opportunity to discuss the way in which their university stimulated them to learn Dutch, and what their university could improve in the future.

In this research, statistical analyses were used, including the Pearson correlation, and independent samples t-test. This research has found that an international student's selfreported level of Dutch speaking and interaction skills are significantly higher when they are planning on staying in the Netherlands after graduating. These findings could imply that learning Dutch does have an influence on international students' motivation to stay after their studies, or that students decide to learn Dutch because they plan on staying in the Netherlands.

Furthermore, students were generally unsatisfied with the way their schools offered Dutch classes, and would like to see more affordable classes, would like their schools to provide more information, and would like to see various levels of Dutch classes. Index

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Introduction

According to the Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture (OCW), the Netherlands is a leading country when it comes to higher education in English, even though we have less international students than most countries in Europe (Tweede Kamer [Letter of government], 2014, 22 452, nr. 41). Currently, about 60,000 international students are enrolled in the Netherlands, which is nine percent of all students. The Netherlands benefits from talent from abroad, and recruiting international students is important to the development of the Dutch economy. Research has shown that at least 70% of international students would like to stay after graduating, but in reality only 27% stays (Tweede Kamer [Letter of Government], 2014, 22 452, nr. 41).

One of the motivating factors for international students that might influence them to in the Netherlands after graduating, is learning the Dutch language. Many students who study in the Netherlands do not necessarily need to learn or improve their Dutch during their studies, because all programs that accept international students are fully in English (Ministerie van OCW, 2015). Most schools in the Netherlands do not offer free Dutch courses, which creates a hurdle for students who have the intention to learn the language but are unwilling to spend money on it. Not all schools offer courses at the moment, but the ones that do charge about 600 euros on average, depending on the length of the course, sometimes with a discount for international students (Ep-Nuffic, 2018).

When international students do not speak Dutch, it is not a problem in itself. It does, however, become more complicated when international students find a job after graduation and decide to stay. These complications arise due to the fact that communication within companies will go more smoothly when all participants in a meeting can communicate easily with one another. One of the solutions to this language dilemma is the 'parallel language' idea, conceived by KNAW (2017). Both Dutch and English can be spoken in a

meeting, provided all attendees understand one another and are capable of comprehending texts in the other language. This is also the case with *lingua receptiva* (Rehbein et al, 2014, p.248). This is a mode to communicate multilingually where the speakers do not have to use a mutual lingua franca, as they understand one another well enough to both speak in their mother tongues. "Their mutual understanding is established while both recipients use their 'passive' knowledge of the language and/or variety of their interlocutor(s)" (Rehbein et al, 2014, p. 248). Granted, this would mean that international students who study in the Netherlands should at least have passive knowledge of the Dutch language to increase their chances of finding a job after graduation, in order to be able to communicate with *lingua receptiva*.

In this study, I will try to map the self-reported Dutch language skills of international students across the Netherlands to see whether these skills encourage them to stay in the Netherlands after graduating. Considering the fact that currently around 60,000 international students are enrolled in a higher education institution in the Netherlands (Ep-Nuffic, 2015), it is necessary to know whether learning Dutch influences international students to stay, and whether enhancing Dutch programs is useful.

In this research paper, I will first be looking at the current research that has been done on motivation to learn a language, and motivation for migration. Then I will be explaining my methodology for this research, followed by the results, conclusion, and revision of my hypotheses. Finally, I will discuss the results, make suggestions for institutions for higher education, and critically reflect on this research.

Theoretical background

Motivations to learn a foreign language

Dörnyei and Czisér (2005) explain that the main reason to learn a second language is to establish meaningful contacts with different cultures. Therefore, it creates a "medium of communication" that promotes learning behavior (Dörnyei & Czisér, 2005, p. 332). One of the most important factors in learning a new language is motivation (Oxford & Shearin, 1994, p. 13). There are around twenty different categories that provide motivation to learn a new language. In this study, the two main groups that cover most categories will be discussed: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. According to Williams and Burden (2002, p. 512), there are certain factors that influence a student's motivation to learn a new language. In their framework, they have divided students into the two abovementioned groups. Some students have extrinsic motivations to learn a new language, which means that they learn a new language as a means to an end, for example to have more job opportunities or to communicate with friends. The other motivational factor is intrinsic motivation: learning a language for one's own personal growth (Dörnyei, 1998, p. 121).

Dörnyei adds that a student's attitude towards a language will influence how well they will learn that language (1998). As reported by Oxford and Shearin (1994, p. 13), intrinsic rewards are a bigger motivation to learn a language than extrinsic rewards. Therefore, it should be expected that students who are intrinsically motivated will learn Dutch quicker.

However, in order to learn Dutch in a way that will help them find a job after graduating, international students should be extrinsically motivated. It is useful to know whether students are intrinsically or extrinsically motivated to learn a language, because language is one of the factors that might influence students to stay in the Netherlands. Possibly, intrinsic or extrinsic motivation to learn a language could influence the students to stay. If intrinsic motivation plays a bigger role in a student's decision to learn Dutch, then universities and the government can do relatively little to stimulate international students to learn the language. If extrinsic motivation drives students to learn Dutch, however, universities and the Dutch government can try to motivate students extrinsically in order to get them to stay.

Motivations for student migration

The same intrinsic and extrinsic motivation applies to students who migrate to another country. According to Chirkov et al. (2007), motivational factors influence the decision to study abroad greatly. "In addition to push and pull factors, students take into consideration their network of friends and family in the host countries" (Chirkov et al., 2007, p. 202). When students are intrinsically motivated to study abroad, it might be because they can develop themselves as a person by moving away, and surrounding themselves with a completely different environment and different people. If students are extrinsically motivated, they might feel pushed by their institution, parents or friends to study abroad. Students might also be pulled by culture, economic, or political climate in the country they wish to migrate to.

Social and cultural factors are important for the integration process that a student goes through when adapting to a different culture (Baruch et al., 2007, p. 100). As stated in Chirkov et al. (2007, p. 204), "a more self-determined motivation to study abroad would positively predict various indicators of the students' academic, social, and cultural adaptation". It is important to know the extrinsic and intrinsic motivation that students have to come to the Netherlands, because it ensures that we are aware of the push and pull factors that our country has that attract foreign students.

Language experience and proficiency

In Freed (1995, p. 6), it is explained that the experience of studying abroad often results in learning the language of that country. The extent to which international students learn the language depends on variables from the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA). "Context of learning has been identified as one of the crucial variables in SLA" (Freed, 1995, p. 6). Freed explains the differences between learners who acquire a language while "limited to the formal language classroom in their home country", and international students who acquire a second language while in an immersion setting (Freed, 1995, p. 7).

Therefore, there is a popular belief that the combination of learning a language in a classroom while simultaneously immersed in the language in a student's daily life, is the best method for SLA. Research shows that, for intermediate and upper-level students of a language, interaction with native speakers in daily situations is the best way to improve their L2 skills (Freed, 1995, p. 7). Thus, international students will benefit the most from having experience with the Dutch language, which could be developed from both taking Dutch classes during their stay, and having a network of Dutch people, such as housemates, friends, and peers. If they are immersed in the Dutch language, even though people do not speak Dutch to them directly, students will learn the language quicker. However, learners in several studies expressed disappointment at the end of their programs that they had not met more people and established friendships within the host community (DuFon & Churchill, 2006, p. 21). This lack of contact with native speakers results in less immersion and therefore less experience with Dutch culture and language.

Thus, experience with the Dutch culture and language also means that a student's Dutch proficiency should be higher when they are immersed in Dutch culture. Even learners who only go abroad for a few weeks have been found to improve their oral proficiency slightly (DuFon & Churchill, 2006, p. 9). Studies show that students who made sure to make contact with native speakers and participated in interactions "were the ones most likely to demonstrate gains in language proficiency" (2006, p. 10). A student's language proficiency improves greatly when they work on their reading skills, as well as their oral skills. This shows that experience and daily use of a language will improve proficiency. According to DuFon and Churchill, when a learner uses a language often and therefore feels that their skills are improving, it results in behaviors that "invite native speakers to interact more extensively with them, thereby facilitating the acquisition process" (2006, p. 22). This will lead to a more positive interaction with native speakers, and therefore the student will feel more comfortable in the environment.

This theoretical background about experience and proficiency shows that experience with a language is highly important in order to improve proficiency. Aside from proficiency, students will be more motivated to learn a language when their perception of the host culture is positive, and if that is the case, they will make an effort to come into contact with the people from that host culture. This leads to a more positive experience in the Netherlands, and therefore students might be more motivated to stay after their studies.

Research questions, hypotheses & predictions

This theoretical background about motivation to learn a language, motivation to migrate, Dutch proficiency, and experience with the Dutch language has resulted in the following research questions:

Main research question: How does the Dutch language affect international students in their decision to stay in the Netherlands after graduating?

RQ1: Do international students have a greater intention to stay in the Netherlands if they have more experience with the Dutch language?

RQ2: Does Dutch language proficiency affect international students in their decision to stay after finishing university?

RQ3: In what ways are international students intrinsically and extrinsically motivated to learn Dutch?

RQ4: In what ways are international students intrinsically and extrinsically motivated to migrate to the Netherlands?

RQ5: Additionally, I have added another RQ to my research to see in which ways higher education institutions stimulate international students to learn Dutch. This information cannot be used to answer my main research question, but I thought it would be interesting to see the students' views on this topic. If this research shows that extrinsic motivational factors play a large role in the decision for international students to learn Dutch, and to stay in the Netherlands, universities will be able to influence this by stimulating students to take Dutch classes.

These research questions lead to the following hypotheses and predictions:

H1: Having more experience with the Dutch language makes students more likely to want to stay.

Prediction: If more experience with Dutch language makes international students more likely to want to stay, and I ask students about the amount of experience and their willingness to stay, then students with more experience will be more willing to stay.

H2: Higher proficiency in Dutch makes students more likely to want to stay. *Prediction*: If higher proficiency in Dutch makes students more likely to want to stay, and self-reported skills are a good reflection of proficiency, then students with high self-reported skills will be more often willing to stay. *H3*: Students who are extrinsically motivated to learn Dutch have a higher intention to stay in the Netherlands.

Prediction: If extrinsic motivation to learn Dutch makes students have a larger intention to stay in the Netherlands, and I ask students about their motivation to learn Dutch, then students who are mostly extrinsically motivated to learn Dutch are more likely to stay.

H4: Students who are extrinsically motivated to migrate to the Netherlands are more likely to stay.

Prediction: If a student is extrinsically motivated to migrate to the Netherlands, and I will measure this by looking at their motivation, then the students with extrinsic motivation will be more likely to stay.

Method

This small-scaled quantitative research consisted of a survey that has been filled out by 101 international students and alumni across 15 different higher education institutions in the Netherlands. The survey can be found in Appendix I. The number of questions differed per participant, as I was more interested in students who are doing a Bachelor or Master degree in the Netherlands, as opposed to exchange students who are only here for six months.

Participants

For this research, I have found my participants by using the probability sampling method (Baxter & Babbie, 2003, p. 134). This survey reached 101 participants (N=101) by using my own Facebook network, and by posting the survey in Facebook groups containing international students in various cities in the Netherlands. There is a wide variety of nationalities and study programs in the results of my survey. The participants were unevenly distributed over 15 institutions in the Netherlands. A complete breakdown of the institutions they attended can be seen in Appendix II. The division of students who are currently studying in the Netherlands and alumni who live in the Netherlands can be seen in table 1.

This research also included international students who were on exchange in the Netherlands for a few months (N=7). When distributing the survey, it was made clear that I was not looking for exchange students. However, I did decide to include them in some parts of the research. Even though these students will be returning to their home country to finish their degree, it was still interesting to see if they learned Dutch, and what their motivations were for doing so.

University	University	University of	Alumni	Exchange
	College	Applied		
		Sciences		

Number of	59	4	19	12	7
students	(N=59)	(N=4)	(N=19)	(N=12)	(N=7)
Total		101 (N	I=101)		

Table 1 Distribution of participants in higher education

As anticipated, most participants were born in between 1985 and 2002. I did not ask for age specifically, because it was not relevant to this study. It was, however, important that participants did not start university before the year 2003, hence the age limit of 1985. This was to make sure that all participants started studying after the Bologna Process (1999) that was implemented in 2003. In the Bologna Process, the Bachelor Master Model was introduced to converge universities across the European Union. This change to the higher education system was desirable at the time to provide more mobility for students and teachers within the participating countries in order to use Erasmus programs, to transfer ECTS from one university to another, and to promote collaborations between different universities in the EU (Declaration of Bologna, 1999). There was one participant (N=1) that was born before 1985, but as this participant was a student at the time of the research, the Bologna Declaration did apply to them, and their data was used in this study.

The participants were born and received their high school education in all five continents. Europe was represented most in this survey, as Germans made up a large portion of the participants (N=27). This is in line with the average demographics of international students in the Netherlands according to Ep-Nuffic (2015), where 37 percent of international students is German, compared to 28 percent in this research. The overview of the countries of birth and countries where students obtained their high school education can be found in Appendix III.

Materials

For this study, I have used Google Forms to create the survey. The survey has been made in a way that a specific answer jumps to a different question. The survey consisted of open questions, multiple choice questions^{*}, and questions using a Likert five-point scale (Likert, 1974, p. 235). I wanted to incorporate a middle value into the questions with a Likert scale in order to provide participants with a neutral response option. I have used a five-point scale, because this type of scale is a compromise between the conflicting goals of offering enough choice and making the survey more manageable for respondents.

How well did your s	chool	facil	litate	you i	in tak	ting Dutch classes?
Not well at all	0	0	0	0	0	Extremely well

Question 1 *Example of a question using a Likert five-point scale*

This survey included some open questions. These questions were used in the results and the discussion to encourage for more truthful answers, and they provided the opportunity for clear feedback (Singer & Couper, 2017, p. 117). According to Singer and Couper (2017, p. 124), the use of open questions is not especially time-consuming, and participants are usually willing to answer them. In the case of this research, some open questions clarified the participants' responses and helped answer RQ5, which is about how universities stimulate international students to learn Dutch.

^{*} For some multiple choice questions, the participants had the option to give their own personalized answer. When this was the case for a certain question, I evaluated all 'other' answers that participants gave, and grouped them into categories with answers that already existed in the survey if they fit there. This was done in order to simplify statistical analyses. Although this was done often for questions where participants filled out their own answer, it was only done when the answer they gave fit perfectly into one of the other multiple choice options. For example, when a students was asked if they had more international or Dutch housemates, and they answered by using the 'other' option that they had 2 international housemates and 1 Dutch housemate, they were put in the category "mostly international housemates", instead of creating a new category for their specific answer.

Throughout the survey, the word 'Dutch' has been used in many different contexts. It can refer to culture, language, nationality, and identity. As Cole and Meadows explain, it is important to realize that culture and language is different everywhere throughout a country (2013, p. 31). In this research, the word 'Dutch' refers to language, and culture. The international students probably consider the culture of the city they live in to be Dutch, so therefore it is a term that has a personal connotation to each participant. It was important not to generalize the participants' answers in the survey when it came to the term 'Dutch', and to be aware of the fact that all participants experience Dutch culture in a different way.

Procedure

The survey used in this research has been spread via Facebook. The participants filled out the survey without any supervision. The number of questions they filled out, varied per participant, as these were based on the answers they gave in the survey. The survey took about five minutes to complete, and was completely anonymous.

Description of the survey

In the survey, students and alumni were first asked demographic questions that were useful for the research, such as country of birth, and which school they attended in the Netherlands. The demographics part of the survey was also used to measure experience with the Dutch language. In order to answer my research questions, I have incorporated these into my survey in the following ways:

RQ1: *Experience with Dutch language*

To answer RQ1 about experience with the Dutch language, participants were asked two questions about their surroundings in the Netherlands. In order to test the hypothesis and

prediction of this research question, I have asked students about the amount of Dutch experience they have and their willingness to stay. They were asked whether they mostly had Dutch or international students as house mates, and they were asked whether they mostly had Dutch or international friends. This information will be used to answer *H1* and the prediction for this hypothesis, as Dutch friends or housemates might improve the Dutch knowledge of an international student. This could be due to the more experience students have with the Dutch language and culture during their stay, and because the students are more immersed in the Dutch language.

RQ2: Proficiency in Dutch

RQ2 was questioned by asking about the Dutch proficiency of the participants. In order to check the prediction of H2, participants were asked about their self-reported Dutch skills, as the willingness to stay could be affected by the Dutch proficiency that international students have. All participants were asked to self-report their Dutch speaking, reading, listening, writing, and interaction skills on a Likert five-point scale. The language skills that they were asked to self-report were based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, n.d.). Furthermore, they were asked how often they use Dutch in their daily lives. These questions in the survey will be used to test H2 and the prediction that a higher proficiency in Dutch will lead to the decision to stay in the Netherlands.

Moreover, the participants were asked to rate how often they use Dutch in their daily lives on a five-point scale, where one represented 'never', and five 'daily use'.

The five self-reported questions in RQ2 about Dutch language skills were also used to measure the same construct. Therefore, a reliability analysis has been carried out on the perceived task values scale comprising these five items. Cronbach's alpha showed the construct to reach excellent reliability, $\alpha = 0.952$. All items appeared to be worthy of retention, resulting in a decrease in the alpha if deleted. These items will additionally be measured separately by an independent samples *t*-test.

RQ3: Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to learn Dutch

In order to check the prediction for *H3* and see if participants were intrinsically or extrinsically motivated to learn Dutch, participants were asked about their motivation to learn the language. They were asked whether they took these classes voluntarily or because they were mandatory, if they received ECTS for the classes, and if they would not have taken the classes if they had not received ECTS. They were also asked whether they regretted not taking classes and why.

Additionally, I have asked the participants what their main motivation to learn Dutch was, for which they had a list of 12 motivational factors to choose from. As mentioned in the theoretical background, there are two main factors to learn a new language: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. In this survey, participants were asked to choose their main reasons for learning Dutch. The participants had 9 options to choose from, based on Williams and Burden's motivations to learn a foreign language (2002, p. 512), and they were also given the option to provide their own reason to learn Dutch. These 9 options have been divided in extrinsic and intrinsic motivations to learn Dutch. The participants were allowed to choose up to three options. The extra options that the participants added themselves were placed in either the intrinsic or extrinsic category.

Intrinsic motivation	Extrinsic motivation
Because I was interested in the language	Because it was expected of me

Because learning a new language is good	Because the classes were at a convenient
for my brain development	time and location
To challenge myself	To communicate with friends or peers
To feel more at home in the Netherlands	To communicate with locals
To feel more competent in certain situations	To have more job opportunities
	To integrate into society
	Parents/teachers/peers thought it was
	important for me to learn

Table 2 Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations to learn Dutch

RQ4: Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to migrate to the Netherlands

For *RQ4* about motivation to migrate to the Netherlands, the alumni were asked whether they still live in the Netherlands and why. This was done to see if the prediction for *H4* is correct, which states that extrinsic motivation is the most important factor for migration. All participants were asked with a Likert five-point scale whether they were planning on staying in the Netherlands after their studies before living here. Furthermore, they were asked what their motivation would be to stay in the Netherlands, and whether they want to stay now that they live here for their studies and why. Those who said they were not interested in staying were asked why they wanted to leave the Netherlands after their studies. To include a question for the exchange students, they were asked why they decided to go on exchange to the Netherlands. All participants were asked whether they wanted to stay after graduating with a Likert five-point scale.

RQ5: In which ways do universities stimulate students to learn Dutch?

Finally, RQ5 looked at the way in which students thought universities helped them to learn Dutch. They were asked with Likert five-point scales whether they thought their university informed them about their options to learn Dutch, stimulated them to learn Dutch, and facilitated them to learn Dutch. There were three questions in the survey that measure the same construct, which is 'student's satisfaction about their school's language stimulation'. This construct has been questioned in the following way:

How well were you	How well were you informed about your options to learn Dutch by your school?							
Not well at all	0	0	0	0	0	Extremely well		
How much did your	schoo	ol sti	nulat	e you	ı to ta	ke Dutch classes?		
Not at all	0	0	0	0	0	I had mandatory Dutch classes		
How well did your s	chool	faci	litate	you i	in taki	ng Dutch classes?		
Not well at all	0	0	0	0	0	Extremely well		

Question 2 Measurement of the construct 'student's satisfaction about their school's language stimulation'.

A reliability analysis was carried out on the perceived task values scale comprising these three items. Cronbach's alpha showed the construct to reach acceptable reliability, $\alpha = 0.82$. All items appeared to be worthy of retention, resulting in a decrease in the alpha if deleted.

Additionally, the participants were asked if their university could have done something better during this process with an open question.

Results

The data from the survey was analyzed using IBM's SPSS. For this process I have used an independent samples *t*-test, descriptive statistics, one-way ANOVA, and Pearson correlation.

Descriptive results

First of all, the descriptive results from the survey will be displayed. In table 2 there is an overview of the descriptive statistics from the demographics section of the study.

Characteristics	Cases	Total
	N (%)	N (%)
Age		
Born between		
1985 and 2000	100 (99)	
Born before 1985	1 (1)	101 (100)
Gender		
Male	23 (22.8)	
Female	77 (76.2)	101 (100)
Current level of study	,	
Bachelor	55 (67.1)	
Master	27 (32.9)	82 (100)
Bachelor in NL		
(Master students only	<i>"</i>)	
Yes	3 (11.1)	
No	24 (88.9)	27 (100)

Table 3 Demographic characteristics of participants

Furthermore, I have looked at the results from the questions that asked whether participants were planning on staying in the Netherlands after graduating. The results can be found in the table and figures below.

	Wanted to stay during univers				
Participants	Yes	No			
Alumni (N=12)	4	8			
Students $(N = 82)$	39	43			

Table 4 Participants' wish to stay in the Netherlands during university

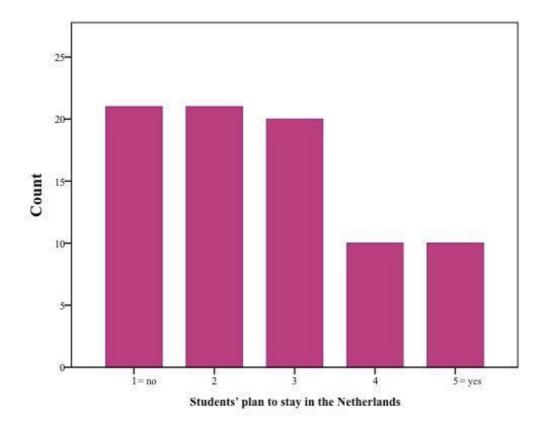


Figure 1 Current students' plan to stay in the Netherlands

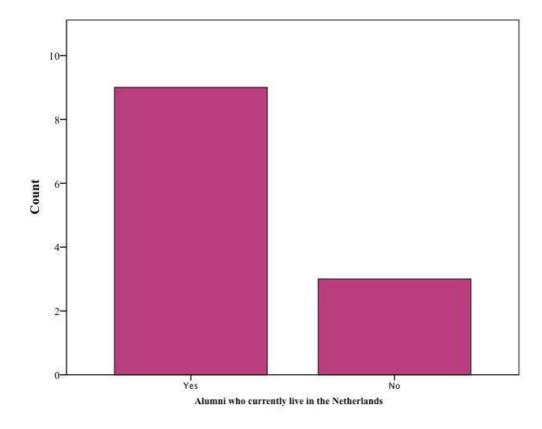


Figure 2 Alumni who currently live in the Netherlands

RQ1: Experience with the Dutch language

RQ1 was whether international students have a greater intention to stay in the Netherlands after finishing their degree if they have more experience with the Dutch language. To answer this research question, I have looked at how often international students use the Dutch language in their daily lives by looking at their group of friends and housemates. Furthermore, I have looked at whether students' intent to stay is greater when they have taken Dutch classes, and when they use Dutch more in their daily lives. This is due to the fact that according to Freed (1995, p. 7), immersion is a good way to learn about a language and culture. In table 5 below you can see the exact number of students who took Dutch classes during their stay in the Netherlands.

	Y	es	No
Dutch classes	4	6	54
	Yes	No	
Classes that were part	8	38	
of the program			
Classes for ECTS	12	34	

Table 5 Dutch classes taken by international students

As mentioned above, 19 participants mentioned they are planning on staying in the Netherlands, while 63 do not plan to stay, excluding exchange students. The reason why exchange students were excluded, is because according to DuFon and Churchill (2006, p. 20), students who go abroad for a shorter period are generally more motivated to learn a foreign language, which was also the case in this study.

An independent samples *t*-test showed there is no statistically significant different result in desire to stay in the Netherlands between the group that took Dutch classes (M = 1.47) and the group that did not (M = 1.47); (t (.76) = .22, p = .076). Additionally, a Pearson correlation test measured the correlation between the frequency of Dutch use by international students and how much they would like to stay after finishing their studies. This correlation was not significant (r = .18, p = .117).

Moreover, an independent samples *t*-test was conducted to compare self-reported use of Dutch for participants who want to stay in the Netherlands and those who do not want to stay. For more use of the Dutch language, scores were lower in the group that does intend to stay in the Netherlands (M = 2.18), as opposed to the group that does not intend to stay in the Netherlands (M = 2.53); (*t* (79) = .90, *p* = .345), even though the scores were not significant.

Finally, an independent samples *t*-test showed there are no significant differences in desire to stay in the group that is living with Dutch students (M = 1.77), and the group who

does not live with Dutch students (M = 1.56); (t (86.71) = 1.38, p = .211). There was also no significant differences in desire to stay in the group that has Dutch friends (M = 2.36), and the group that does not have Dutch friends (M = 2.13); (t (87.99) = 1.56, p = .131).

RQ 2: Dutch language proficiency

The second research question looked at how Dutch language proficiency in international students influences their decision to stay in the Netherlands. For this research question I looked specifically at self-reported Dutch skills. I studied whether the students' skills have an influence on their intent to stay in the Netherlands after graduation. This was done by performing an independent samples *t*-test to see whether international student's self-reported Dutch skills are better when they plan to stay in the Netherlands.

An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare self-reported speaking and interaction skills for participants who want to stay in the Netherlands and those who do not want to stay. Both for speaking skills and interaction skills, scores were higher in the group that does intend to stay in the Netherlands (M = 2.91), as opposed to the group that does not intend to stay in the Netherlands (M = 2.09). This difference was significant for speaking skills (t (87) = 2.93, p = .004), and interaction skills (t (87) = 2.63, p = .010). The results of this test can be found in table 6 below, including the skills that were not significantly higher when a student intended to stay in the Netherlands after university.

There was an effect between the desire to stay and writing skills, though it was not significant. Furthermore, there is no effect between whether students took classes and their desire to stay (r = .076, p = .481).

Want to s	Want to stay in NL			
Yes (N=36)	No (N=53)			

-	М	SD	М	SD	<i>t</i> -test	t
Speaking skills	2.91	1.58	2.09	.97	.004	87
Interaction skills	3.07	2.26	2.26	1.18	.010	87
Writing skills	2.71	1.61	2.12	1.37	.079	1.78
Reading skills	3.90	1.45	3.56	1.81	.826	.46
Listening skills	4.10	1.91	4.00	1.50	.382	.13

Table 6 Using t-test for Equality of Means for desire to stay in NL and skills

RQ 3: Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to learn Dutch

For *RQ3*, which is about what types of motivation influence international students to learn Dutch, I have looked at international students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Below there is a pie chart which shows different motivations for international students to learn Dutch, for which the motivational factors were categorized in the methods section. The question was answered by 47 participants. The two main reasons were 'to have more job opportunities' and 'to integrate into society', which are both extrinsic motivation to learn Dutch. From the 47 respondents of that question (N = 47), 14 had mostly intrinsic motivation to learn Dutch (N = 14), while 33 had mostly extrinsic motivations to learn Dutch (N = 33).

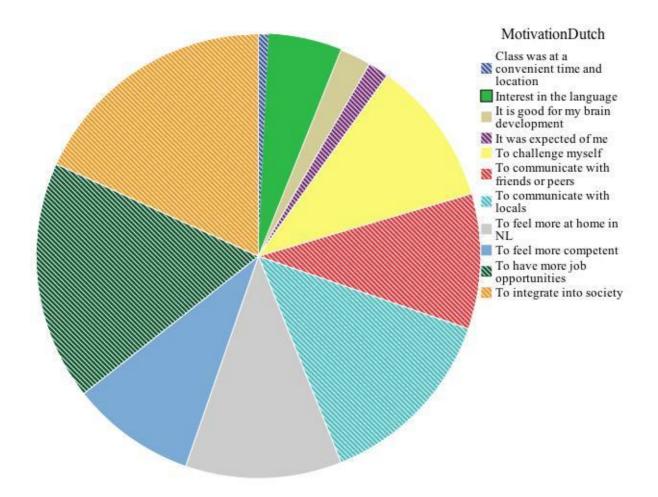


Figure 3 *Pie chart with motivational reasons to learn Dutch (Extrinsic motivation is patterned)*

As can be seen in the pie chart, the four main motivations to learn Dutch were the following: to integrate into society (N = 10), to have more job opportunities (N = 9), to communicate with locals (N = 7), and to challenge themselves (N = 6). Of these reasons, only 'to challenge myself' is considered intrinsic motivation to learn Dutch.

RQ4: Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to migrate to the Netherlands

In order to answer RQ4, students were asked about why they wanted to come to the Netherlands. In the survey, there was a question about motivation for alumni to stay in the

Netherlands. This was an open question, as the participants already lived in the Netherlands and had their own personal reason for this. Most alumni included the opportunity for a career (extrinsic motivation) in their answer, which is not surprising, considering they just graduated and wanted to find a job. Most of all the participants that we asked this question, however, also included their love for the country (intrinsic) or friends that live here (extrinsic) in their answer, which means there is a mix of intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors at play. This means that a pull factor such as job opportunity is more important to people who already decided to stay, while a pull factor such as network is more important for people who are still studying, and consider staying after graduating.

All participants were asked what their motivation was to come to the Netherlands. The division between intrinsic and extrinsic responses can be found in the table below.

Characteristics	Cases
	N (%)
Intrinsic motivation	40 (39.6)
Extrinsic motivation	52 (51.5)
Both	6 (5.9)
Total (N=98)	

Table 7 Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to come to the Netherlands

RQ5: In which ways do universities stimulate students to learn Dutch?

RQ5 looks at in which ways universities stimulate and facilitate their international students to learn Dutch. This question was answered by looking at the open questions in the survey where the students were able to give feedback about their experience.

I have also looked at descriptive statistics, and I have done an independent samples *t*-test. The mean of the construct 'student's satisfaction about their school's language

stimulation' is 2.34 out of 5. The standard deviation is 1.07. An independent samples *t*test was conducted to compare the school's stimulation of Dutch classes in the groups of students who did take Dutch classes and students who did not. Stimulation was rated higher (M = 2.5, SD = 1.03) as opposed to (M = 2.1, SD = 1.08) in the group that did take classes (t (90.7) = 1.925, p = 0.057). This showed a nearly significant difference in the scores.

When participants were asked what their school should have done better, only ten replied that 'nothing' should be done (N = 10). All other participants (N = 91) had suggestions and recommendations for their schools. This means that most participants would like to see an improvement in the way that their school stimulated them to learn Dutch. The most important thing that international students would like to see differently in their respective schools when it comes to language classes, is to make them more affordable.

Moreover, students mentioned that there was not enough information on Dutch classes, so they had to put effort into finding a class themselves. If a university offered classes, there were only a beginners level classes (A1 or A2), which is something that especially German students found particularly bothersome, as they tend to learn quickly or already are on that level of Dutch when migrating to the Netherlands. A few other recurring comments were that the classes should admit more students, there should be more classes in general, and classes should be made mandatory or at least in return for ECTS. A few students mentioned they would be interested in an internet course, which coincidentally Ep-Nuffic is currently developing (2015). Many international students mentioned they would like to have taken Dutch classes in exchange for ECTS. The rest of the responses will be reviewed in the discussion.

Discussion

In this study, 101 participants were asked about their experiences with the Dutch language and their motivations to learn Dutch and to come to the Netherlands. Based on the results section of this research, I will discuss the implications of the study.

RQ1: Experience with the Dutch language

My hypothesis and prediction for *RQ1* were the following:

H1: Having more experience with the Dutch language makes students more likely to want to stay. *Prediction*: If more experience with Dutch language makes international students more likely to want to stay, and I ask students about the amount of experience and their willingness to stay, then students with more experience will be more willing to stay.

To check this *H1*, I have looked at the frequency of Dutch use, whether the international students took classes or not, if they had Dutch friends or house mates, and their desire to stay in the Netherlands after their study.

First of all, there was a total of 36 students who had the desire to stay in the Netherlands after finishing their studies, which does not concur with the 70% that was mentioned by the Minister of Education (Tweede Kamer [Letter of Government], 2014, 22 452, nr. 41). The number does come closer to the amount of students that actually stay after their studies, which is 26%, compared to 29% in this survey. From the 12 alumni that filled out this survey, 10 are currently living in the Netherlands. This is plausible, as the survey was distributed in the Netherlands, and therefore most alumni who saw it were currently in the Netherlands.

A factor that I would have suspected to play a larger role in the decision to stay for international students, is whether they took Dutch classes at all. There was no significant correlation between wanting to stay and taking classes.

Another factor that was taken into consideration because it could provide motivation for students to stay, was having Dutch friends and housemates. These friends and housemates are part of a student's network, and having a network in a country is a major reason to migrate (Chirkov et al, 2007, p. 202). Furthermore, having Dutch friends and housemates was seen as an important factor that influences the decisions to stay in this research, as international students with Dutch friends and housemates tend to be more surrounded by the Dutch language, but results showed that neither of those factors were significant. This was a surprising result, because personal relationships are considered an extrinsic motivational factor, and they are an important reason to migrate or to stay in a country according to Chirkov et al. (2007, p. 202).

Lastly, there was no significant difference in whether students used Dutch more often or not. I would have suspected this to be a factor, as speaking a language better improves the relationships with people from the host country (DuFon & Churchill, 2006, p. 18).

All in all, the hypothesis that international students who have more experience with the Dutch language due to immersion are more likely to stay after their studies, is incorrect.

RQ2: Dutch language proficiency in international students

My hypothesis and prediction for *RQ2* were the following:

H2: Higher proficiency in Dutch makes students more likely to want to stay. *Prediction*: If higher proficiency in Dutch makes students more likely to want to stay, and self-reported skills are a good reflection of proficiency, then students with high self-reported skills will be more often willing to stay.

To check this hypothesis, I have looked at the students' self-reported Dutch skills. This research shows that students with some higher self-reported Dutch language skills are more likely to stay in the Netherlands. This was the case for speaking and interaction skills, but there is no significant effect when it comes to reading, listening, and writing skills. Speaking and interaction skills show that a student has at least a passive knowledge of the language and can communicate with other people. This means that the students' Dutch level is high enough to take part in *lingua receptiva* when they start working in the Netherlands. Therefore, speaking and interaction skills are more important when it comes to learning a foreign language, as speakers will be better prepared for their professional life in the Netherlands. Furthermore, according to DuFon and Churchill, speaking skills will improve quicker when a learner is immersed in a culture, which is the case for the participants of this study (2006, p. 8).

As Dörnyei and Czisér's research showed (2005, p. 332), learning a second language is good way to connect to a different culture, and therefore it can be assumed that international students would like to integrate into Dutch society by learning the Dutch language. In this case, the higher self-reported level of Dutch suggests that students have the motivation to learn the language in order to stay here when they have finished their studies. Having a higher level of speaking and interaction skills means that they can communicate better with Dutch people, and put effort into learning the language. This could be because they want to have more job opportunities, or because they are interested in the language and culture.

The findings of RQ2 suggest that there is a significant effect between the desire to stay in the Netherlands, and Dutch speaking and interaction skills. Therefore, when a student has higher self-reported speaking and interaction skills, they are more likely to stay in the Netherlands. Thus, the hypothesis that international students have a better Dutch proficiency is correct.

RQ 3: Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to learn Dutch

For this research question, my hypothesis was the following:

H3 Students who are extrinsically motivated to learn Dutch have a higher intention to stay in the Netherlands. *Prediction*: If extrinsic motivation to learn Dutch makes students have a larger intention to stay in the Netherlands, and I ask students about their motivation to learn Dutch, then students who are mostly extrinsically motivated to learn Dutch are more likely to stay.

This hypothesis and prediction were tested by looking at the motivations international students had to learn Dutch.

This research showed that international students have a larger extrinsic motivation to learn Dutch than an intrinsic motivation. This does not concur with Oxford and Shearin's research, which concluded that intrinsic motivation is more rewarding to a person (1994, p. 13), and therefore students will feel more accomplished to learn a second language when they have an intrinsic reason to do so. However, according to Dörnyei and Cziser (2005, p. 332), international students are more likely to migrate to a country because of pull factors, which is an extrinsic reason to migrate. The pull factors that are discussed in studies are the job market, a student's network, and friends and family that already live in that country. In the case of this research, international students leaned more towards extrinsic motivation to learn Dutch. This does seem reasonable, as most students will probably want to stay because of extrinsic reasons, and therefore learn the language. Therefore, the hypothesis for *RQ3* is correct, because students mostly stay or intend to stay for extrinsic reasons.

RQ4: Motivation to migrate to the Netherlands

My hypothesis and prediction for this research question were:

H4 Students who are extrinsically motivated to migrate to the Netherlands are more likely to stay. *Prediction*: If a student is extrinsically motivated to migrate to the Netherlands, and I will measure this by looking at their motivation, then the students with extrinsic motivation will be more likely to stay.

The hypothesis was tested by looking at the motivations that international students had to move to the Netherlands, and by looking at whether the international students want to stay or not.

Aside from the motivation to learn Dutch, I have also looked at the motivation to stay in the Netherlands after graduating. The descriptive analysis showed that students mostly gave extrinsic reasons to stay in the Netherlands, such as job opportunities, and their network. Although there is no significant effect between the desire to stay in the Netherlands and having Dutch friends or housemates, as can be seen in the results from the main research question, it is known that push and pull factors are highly important when migrating. The results of the survey reflect this partly. Most alumni, who currently reside in the Netherlands, decided to stay because of a job opportunity. The other participants of the survey who are still studying, however, had other reasons to stay in the Netherlands: because they like the country, and because they have a network of friends here.

The participants who said they wanted to go elsewhere after their studies, said they wanted to do so mostly because they do not like Dutch culture, they miss their friends and family in their home country, and they thought they had more job opportunities in their field in other countries. This shows that they also used push and pull factors as their main motivation to move somewhere else after their studies.

All in all, the hypothesis that students who are extrinsically motivated intend to stay in the Netherlands, is partly correct as alumni who currently live in the Netherlands stayed because of extrinsic motivation, but there is no significant result for participants who are currently enrolled in university.

RQ5: In which ways do universities stimulate students to learn Dutch?

An additional part of this research was to see what international students' opinions were about the way in which they were stimulated by their schools to learn Dutch. This research has shown that whether schools stimulate their students to take Dutch classes is not significant. Stimulation was rated higher (M = 2.5, SD = 1.03) as opposed to (M = 2.1, SD =1.08) in the group that did take classes (t (90.7) = 1.925, p = 0.057). This showed a nearly significant difference in the scores. Even though it was not significant, it is still important that universities offer information about Dutch classes, especially when students are already motivated to take these. As was explained in the letter of government by the Dutch minister of Education (2015), it is important for international students to have a passive knowledge of Dutch in order for them to fit in at their jobs after their study. One way to ensure this passive knowledge of Dutch, is by offering classes to international students.

From the results of the survey can be seen that students mentioned they think Dutch classes are too inaccessible, because of the high costs, and because there are not enough courses for all international students. As mentioned before, the average costs for a series of Dutch classes is around 500 euros, which is expensive for someone on a student budget who is not extremely motivated to learn the language. Students would like to take classes in exchange for ECTS, which can be considered extrinsic motivation to learn Dutch.

These findings imply that international students are likely to take Dutch classes when these are more accessible than they currently are, and they receive rewards for taking them.

Limitations and future research

One of the limitations of this research is that students were not asked about how motivated they were to learn Dutch. They were only asked about whether they took classes or not. When a student did not take Dutch classes, it does not necessarily mean they were not motivated enough to do so. It might have been the case that they had too many classes already and could not find the time, or they did not have the money or the information from school to take any classes. Adding a construct to measure motivation more specifically would have improved this study, as there was a possibility for correlation between motivation to learn Dutch and the desire to stay after graduating. This is something to consider for further research.

Additionally, the diversity in the participants might have been problematic for this research. As there were many different nationalities, and universities the participants attended varied, it was harder to draw clear conclusions about a certain university or level of higher education.

In the future, the focus of a subsequent research could be more on the link between the intent to stay in the Netherlands and motivation. It would also be interesting to see whether a conclusion can be drawn when it comes to separating learning Dutch and the desire to stay in the Netherlands. Currently, it is still unknown whether learning Dutch influences the decision to stay, or whether the decision to stay motivates students to learn Dutch. This research showed that about 29% of international students wants to stay in the Netherlands after finishing their studies. In general, the students have higher self-reported speaking and interaction skills when they want to stay.

To get more involved in whether universities are stimulation students to take Dutch classes in a satisfactory manner, research could be done on a specific university to have a more in-depth idea of the way that the school stimulates international students to learn Dutch. Instead of having 101 participants divided over 15 schools, a suggestion would be to have the same number of participants in one school.

Conclusion

In this study, I have researched what influence the Dutch language has on international students. This has been investigated with the help of five research questions that examined Dutch language skills, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to learn Dutch and to move to the Netherlands, and stimulation from universities for their students to learn Dutch. I will be reviewing my hypotheses and predictions to see if my research questions have been answered.

RQ1: Experience with the Dutch language

H1: Having more experience with the Dutch language makes students more likely to want to stay. *Prediction*: If more experience with Dutch language makes international students more likely to want to stay, and I ask students about the amount of experience and their willingness to stay, then students with more experience will be more willing to stay.

I have looked at whether experience with the Dutch language influences international students to stay in the Netherlands after their studies. To answer this research question, I have looked at the influence that Dutch friends and Dutch housemates have on the international student. I have also researched whether taking Dutch classes and using Dutch often influences the decision to stay in the Netherlands. None of the tests that have been done for this research question were statistically significant, therefore experience with the Dutch language does not influence a students' decision to stay after graduating.

RQ2: Dutch language proficiency in international students

H2: Higher proficiency in Dutch makes students more likely to want to stay. *Prediction*: If higher proficiency in Dutch makes students more likely to want to stay, and self-reported

skills are a good reflection of proficiency, then students with high self-reported skills will be more often willing to stay.

Having a better proficiency in a language increases the quality of interaction with native speakers, according to DuFon and Churchill (2006, p. 202). This will lead to a more positive perception of the culture the students are immersed in. Whether international students with higher self-reported Dutch skills have a greater intention to stay after their studies was answered by looking at self-reported Dutch skills and whether students want to stay in the Netherlands or not. This study has found that students who wish to stay have significantly better self-reported speaking and interaction skills than the students who do not want to stay. This effect means that students have a greater intention to stay in the Netherlands when their self-reported Dutch is better, or that the students decide to stay and therefore start to learn Dutch. All in all, the hypothesis *H2* concludes that students with a higher proficiency level in speaking and interaction skills are more likely to stay after their studies.

RQ3: Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to learn Dutch

H3 Students who are extrinsically motivated to learn Dutch have a higher intention to stay in the Netherlands. *Prediction*: If extrinsic motivation to learn Dutch makes students have a larger intention to stay in the Netherlands, and I ask students about their motivation to learn Dutch, then students who are mostly extrinsically motivated to learn Dutch are more likely to stay.

According to Williams and Burden (2002, p. 521), students who are extrinsically motivated to learn a language, will be more successful in doing so. To answer RQ3, I have looked at intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to learn Dutch. The results showed that more students were extrinsically motivated to learn Dutch, because they wanted to have more job

opportunities after graduating, integrate into society, and communicate with locals. The main intrinsic motivation to learn Dutch was to challenge themselves. I hypothesized that international students were extrinsically motivated to learn Dutch, because they were mostly influenced by job opportunities and their network, which was indeed the case. This is in line with the theoretical background and hypothesis of this research, which means that this hypothesis is true.

In this study, however, not enough information has been acquired about motivation to learn a new language aside from intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and further research could focus on more motivational factors.

RQ4: Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to migrate to the Netherlands

H4 Students who are extrinsically motivated to migrate to the Netherlands are more likely to stay. *Prediction*: If a student is extrinsically motivated to migrate to the Netherlands, and I will measure this by looking at their motivation, then the students with extrinsic motivation will be more likely to stay.

As Chirkov et al. (2007, p. 202) stated in their research, students who mostly want to migrate to a country because of push and pull factors, which are extrinsic motivations, will be more likely to stay. In order to answer RQ4, I have looked at why international students would like to stay in the Netherlands. Alumni mostly wanted to stay because of job opportunities, which is extrinsic motivation and a pull factor. Other participants of this study who are currently enrolled at a university would like to stay because they have friends here, which is extrinsic motivation and a pull factor, but also because they like Dutch culture and the country in general, which is intrinsic motivation. Therefore, H4 is partly true as the main reason for participants is to stay because of their network and job opportunities, which are

pull factors and extrinsic motivation, but there are other intrinsic factors that play a role in the decision to stay as well.

RQ5: In which ways do universities stimulate students to learn Dutch?

Additionally, this research has shown that the involvement of universities is insufficient compared to what international students would like to see. The feedback questions of this research showed that schools are unable to provide the Dutch classes that are currently in demand, and international students are generally dissatisfied with the manner in which universities provide Dutch classes and stimulate international students to take classes. It is beneficial to have at least a passive knowledge of Dutch if a student wants to continue working and living in the Netherlands, and therefore it is advisable to higher education institutions to offer more opportunities for international students to learn Dutch.

Lastly, I would like to answer my main research question: How does the Dutch language affect international students in their decision to stay in the Netherlands after graduating? This research has shown that the Dutch language has an effect on international students to some extent. Students are more extrinsically motivated to learn Dutch, and students whose selfreported Dutch speaking and interaction skills are better, do intend to stay in the Netherlands more often. Learning Dutch does affect students less than I originally anticipated, even though students are all confronted with Dutch language and culture when they come here.

With this research, I hope to have shown in which ways international students are motivated to learn Dutch in order for them to stay in the Netherlands, even though the research questions were not all answered in a way that was anticipated. All in all, my research showed that it is difficult to find an answer to the question if international students with more experience with the Dutch language, and a higher Dutch proficiency, are motivated to stay in the Netherlands. There was no clear connection between having more experience with the Dutch language and wanting to stay after graduating, although having a higher level of self-reporting speaking and interaction skills seemed to encourage students to stay. It is still unknown whether this is actually the case, as the outcome of this research is a two-way street in which either acquiring the Dutch language influences the motivation to stay, or the motivation to stay influences the wish to learn Dutch.

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Appendix I Survey

Thank you for filling out this survey. This survey will take about five minutes of your time. There are no right or wrong answers, as I am just looking for your opinion and experiences. Your answers will remain anonymous.

This survey contains some questions with multiple choice answers, and some open questions.

Were you born between 1985 and 2002? O Yes O No Gender

O Male O Female O I'd rather not say O Other:

What country are you from?

...

In which country did you receive your secondary education?

...

What Bachelor's or Master's degree are you doing or did you finish in the Netherlands?

What school do you currently attend or did you attend in the Netherlands?

•••

What does your group of friends look like?I only have Dutch friendsoooI only have friends who are internationals

What does your living situation look like?

O I live alone

O I mostly have Dutch housemates

O I mostly housemates who are also international students

O Other...

What type of school do/did you attend?

O I am an exchange student

O I currently attend a University College in the Netherlands

O I currently attend a university of applied sciences in the Netherlands

O I currently attend a university in the Netherlands

O I am an alumnus of a University College in the Netherlands

O I am an alumnus of a university of applied sciences in the Netherlands

O I am an alumnus of a university in the Netherlands

What phase of your studies are you in? O Bachelor O Master

Did you do your Bachelor's degree in the Netherlands? O Yes O No

Do you currently live in the Netherlands? O Yes O No

Why did you decide to stay in the Netherlands?

•••

Before moving to the Netherlands, were you planning on staying after finishing your degree? Not at all o o o o o Yes, I was definitely planning on staying

What would be your main motivation for staying in the Netherlands?

O A career

O Friends or family

O A significant other

O Because of the culture

O Because of the language

Are you planning on staying in the Netherlands at this moment? O Yes

O No

Why would you want to stay in the Netherlands?

•••

Why would you want to leave the Netherlands?

•••

Why did you decide to go to the Netherlands on exchange?

• • •

Would you like to live in the Netherlands after finishing your studies?No, absolutely notoooYes, I would love to

How well were you informed about your options to learn Dutch by your school?						
Not well at all	0	0	0	0	0	Extremely well
How much did your school stimulate you to take Dutch classes?						
Not at all	0	0	0	0	0	I had mandatory Dutch classes
How well did your school facilitate you in taking Dutch classes?						
Not well at all	0			•	U	Extremely well
Not well at all	0	0	0	0	0	Extremely wen
Do you think your school could have done something better in the way they stimulated you to take Dutch classes, and if so, what?						
Did you take any Dutch classes during your time in the Netherlands? O Yes O No						
Did you take the Dutch classes voluntarily? O Yes O No, they were part of my program						
Did you receive ECTS for taking the classes? O Yes O No						
Would you have taken the classes if you had not received ECTS? O Yes O No						
What was your main motivation to learn Dutch? (choose up to three answers)						
O To communicate with friends or peers						
O To challenge myself						
O To have more job opportunities after graduating						
O To communicate with locals						
O To integrate into Dutch society						
O Because I was interested in the language itself						
O Parents/teachers/peers thought it was important for me to learn						
O To feel more competent in certain situations						
O Because it was expected of me						
O Because the classes were at a convenient time and location						
O To feel more at ho						
O Because learning a new language is beneficial for the development of my brain						

O Other...

Do you regret not taking Dutch classes? O Yes O No Why do you regret not taking Dutch classes? ... Why do you not regret not taking Dutch classes? . . . How would you rate your Dutch speaking skills? No skills Near native 0 0 0 0 0 How would you rate your Dutch reading skills? No skills Near native 0 0 0 0 0 How would you rate your Dutch writing skills? Near native No skills 0 0 0 0 0 How would you rate your Dutch listening skills? No skills 0 0 0 0 0 Near native How would you rate your Dutch interaction skills? No skills 0 Near native 0 0 0 0 How often do you use Dutch? O Daily O Weekly O Monthly O Never O Other...

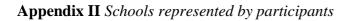
What was your motivation to study abroad?

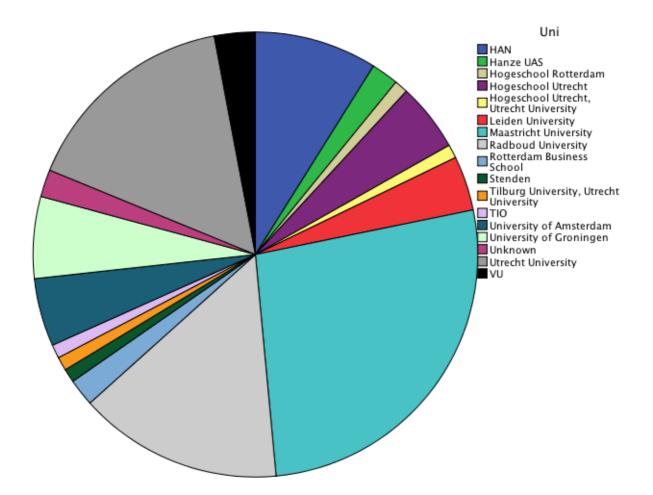
•••

Thank you for your response! By clicking send, you are consenting that your answers will be used for this research.

If you would like to receive the results of this research, you can fill out your email address below:

•••





Appendix III Nationalities and countries of high school education of participants

