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# **English at Utrecht University – A Student Survey on Language Policy**

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## Preface

The research course “Taalbeleid” (language policy), offered by dr. Hans Van de Velde, was the direct starting point of this thesis. The aim of this course was to examine a language policy case study. This year (2010), the case study was the language policy of Utrecht University. ‘Language policy’ is a broad concept, which could include a focus on a macro-level issue (for instance, selecting one language as the official language in a multilingual country). It could also include a focus on an issue at the micro-level, for example, investigating the official rules and regulations on language use in class at Utrecht University. The study focuses on the latter issue.

Universities in the Netherlands became more internationally oriented in the recent past. This is also true for Utrecht University. The inclusion of more international students logically influenced the University of Utrecht’s language use in education. In this period, the research group ‘Taalbeleid’ focused on multiple questions, ranging from mapping the abstract language policy to examining students’ opinions about the matter. All the information and data gathered in this course are incorporated in this thesis in some way, although the student survey is afforded prominence in the discussion. During the research course, a group focused on designing a survey to assess the attitudes of university teachers. Unfortunately, it was not possible to conduct the survey. Therefore, the opinions and experiences of university teachers and staff are not represented in this thesis.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow students that participated in the course ‘Taalbeleid’ for their permission to use the data gathered by them. I could never have done this by myself. Without the use of data gathered by fellow students, the scope of this study would have diminished significantly. I would also like to thank prof. dr. Hans Van de Velde for all his support and suggestions, especially for helping me through the maze called SPSS. The final and most important group I would like to thank here are the students who participated in this survey. The critical opinions and sharp remarks offered by the participants greatly enhanced the depth of treatment of a specific language policy issue presented in the thesis. All the students’ quotes reported in the thesis are free translations by the researcher. For the sake of completeness, the original remarks are reported in appendix B.

Finally, it must be noted that my goal was to make this thesis accessible and interesting to readers without a linguistic background. The style in which the thesis is written is therefore less formal than usual.

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## 1 Introduction

“I have the strong impression that this survey was prompted by the whining of some first-years [...]”  
(Participant 1827).

The thesis is based on a survey conducted among approximately 13000 students of Utrecht University on the topic ‘language policy’ and English education. Of the potential 13000 students, 2257 students finally participated in the study. As indicated by participant 1827, the opinions of students on this matter may be very strong. However, the thesis did not originate from complaints by daunted first year students. From personal experience, I learned that being educated in a second language results in complications and for effective education, these complications need to be addressed. Additionally, my advanced studies in linguistics provided concepts with which I could approach this topic. The aim of this thesis is therefore to provide an overview of the difficulties students at Utrecht University encounter when they are educated in English and to provide some practical proposals that could be applied in this context. Ultimately, I hope that the thesis will serve as a base for ongoing future research at Utrecht University about the language in education policy.

The reason for my personal interest in language policy and especially the use of English at universities can perhaps be traced back to a former class-mate at my secondary school. This straight-A student excelled in his science classes, but was less successful at learning foreign languages, including English. Although everyone expected that he would enrol at a technical university, he decided to study at an HBO (a lower level of higher education in the Netherlands). When I asked him about his decision, he told me that following the study that he wanted was impossible because of the emphasis on English as language of teaching and learning in that course. This state of affairs was confirmed during the course of writing this thesis when I was contacted by a masters student from the faculty of Science at Utrecht University, in a response to the student survey. It is impossible for a Dutch student to follow a science research master in the Netherlands where Dutch is used as language of teaching and learning. The exclusion of potentially successful students in the sciences from masters research courses in the Netherlands because of an unrelated issue (the use of language in education) seemed unfair to me. The

current *lingua franca* of scientific research is indeed English. Graddol (1997: 9) reports that increasingly, even German scholars are reporting scientific findings in English, especially for the sciences. Moreover, it is understandable that universities want to be internationally attractive and thus offer much of their postgraduate education in English. Having always kept this paradox in mind, I was inspired to participate in a course directly related to these issues during my master year. The subject of the research course 'Taalbeleid' (Language Policy) was the language policy of Utrecht University. The case-study conducted during the course, guided by prof. dr. Hans Van de Velde, was the start of this thesis.

This thesis can roughly be divided into three parts. The first part will contextualise the study by providing a theoretical framework of the goals and language policy at the UU, as well as a discussion of relevant contingent matters. The actors involved in developing a language policy and the actors that are confronted with language policy in practice will be described. The broad context will be described by focussing on internationalisation at Dutch universities the role of the Dutch government and the views of universities on these matters. The rules and regulations for language in education at Utrecht University will be sketched for the different levels of administration and governance. An interview with policy staff of the faculty of Humanities on the subject of language policy concludes the theoretical framework of this study. The second part contains the main focus of the thesis: language policy in practice at Utrecht University. The results from a survey conducted by a subgroup participating in the course 'Taalbeleid' will be discussed briefly. Results from an 'eavesdropping project' are reported where the researchers observed a classroom session to verify how the formal language policy statements for the course were implemented in reality. Results from the survey among Utrecht University students will be discussed. Data from all these projects will be integrated into a discussion in the final part of the thesis. In this section, proposals are made that could assist Utrecht University to enhance students' experiences when they participate in English medium of instruction courses.

The ultimate goal of this thesis is to provide a clear image of the difficulties students face and the opinions of students that participate in courses where English is the language of education at Utrecht University. Ultimately, I would like to provide the university with useful information and proposals, which, in my opinion, will improve the experiences of students with respect to successful education in English *and* Dutch at Utrecht University.

## 2 Internationalisation at Dutch Universities

“Expand the use of English in all of the Utrecht University and in all programs. This will have huge economic and social benefits for the university and for the Netherlands” (Participant 1797, international student).

Before considering the influence of internationalisation at Dutch universities on language in education, and at Utrecht University in particular, it is essential to know why this development is taking place. The main objectives of universities in general, conducting scientific research and enhancing scientific knowledge, benefit from the process of internationalisation and therefore depend to some extent on the ability of Dutch universities to attract foreign university teachers, researchers and students. The situation can be compared to the competition for food in a fish pond; the pond that contains Dutch scientific researchers and university teachers is relatively small. The only way to grow is to expand the pond itself by attracting more researchers and teachers from universities outside the Netherlands. This process is facilitated by promoting the use of English at Dutch universities as language of education, based on the assumption that international scholars are able to teach and report research results in English. The influx of specific scientific knowledge brought along by foreign teachers and researchers is beneficial to the universities. In the first place, the quality and knowledge of a particular field of study are enhanced. If a university markets the additional strengths of its teaching and research core in this manner, it could attract more students, and this generates money for both scientific research and the general operations of the university. If more research is conducted, the quality of education and knowledge will improve, and this will enhance the ability of the university to attract more (foreign) researchers and students. If the assumed added benefits (increased research output, improvement of scientific knowledge and increased high quality student enrolments) materialize, this process would continue undisturbed for years to come. The process of internationalisation does not only have benefits for universities. It also enhances the ability of students to study, or eventually work, abroad. The national introduction of the bachelor-master structure in the Netherlands has resulted in the following: “Utrecht University’s degree programmes lead to internationally recognised, accredited qualifications” (UU *Information for International Students-Education*). In the ‘Language Code of Conduct’, which will be discussed in detail in section 4.2.2, the university foregrounds its commitment to align its

education with international standards, increasing the mobility of students that attained a bachelor and master degree from Utrecht on a global level.

Institutions concerned with higher education in the Netherlands are positively oriented towards internationalisation. For example, *Vereniging Samenwerkende Nederlandse Universiteiten*, VSNU (the Association of Cooperating Dutch Universities), emphasises the fact that universities already operate in an international context by cooperating but also competing with universities abroad. However, the VSNU stresses that if Dutch universities aspire to an important international position in the higher education context, education must truly be internationally oriented, hinting towards education in English (VSNU). The positive influence of foreign researchers, university teachers and students is not only recognised by education institutions. In the past few years, the Dutch government relaxed regulations for so-called 'knowledge-migrants'; highly-educated people who wish to come and work or study in the Netherlands. The document *Blueprint of Modern Migration Policy*, ordered by state-secretary Albayrak, was presented in June 2008. In this memo the Dutch government confirms that too few foreign companies and knowledge-migrants settle in the Netherlands. The conditions and regulations for knowledge-migrants to apply for a residence permit are alleviated in this modernised version of the migration policy. Not only will this result in an improved quality of the working population and present the Netherlands as an attractive place for foreign investors to settle, it will also contribute to the development of science and culture (Blauwdruk Modern Migratiebeleid, p 17). The most evident difference in this policy formulation is the new approach towards knowledge levels: the advanced quality of a potential migrant's knowledge and skills become the focus. The new policy will make the possibility to work and study at Dutch universities more accessible for foreigners. This is the reason why the VSNU, the *Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek* (Dutch Organisation of Scientific Research), the TNO (Dutch Organisation of Applied-Scientific Research), the *Promovendi Netwerk Nederland* (Promovendi Network Netherlands) and the students union ISO all support state-secretary Albayrak's modern migration bill.



### 3 Actors in Language Policy

“[...]It is good that students have the chance to express their opinion in this way” (Participant 1737)

When considering language policy, it is important to make a distinction between the actors that have a role in its development and those actors who are concerned with the policy in practice. The first part of this thesis, to section 5, is concerned with the theoretical framework of language policy at Utrecht University and its developers. The highest governing body in the Netherlands that determines language policy in education is the Dutch government and its ministry of education. As will be discussed in section 4.1, the Law on Higher Education directly influences the language policy at Utrecht University. Other actors in the development are the two main university associations, the VSNU, and the *Nederlands-Vlaams Accreditatie Organisatie*, NVAO (Dutch-Flemish Accreditation Organisation). The first organisation is concerned with education, research and the organisation of Dutch universities and is additionally involved in the internationalisation debate. The second body “independently ensures the quality of higher education in the Netherlands and Flanders by assessing and accrediting programmes and contributes to enhancing this quality”(NVAO). The quality standards set by the NVAO apply to all educational programmes and institutions are regularly evaluated to determine if they comply with the criteria. Therefore, the quality of teachers and materials provided in a non-Dutch course must also be assured and in this context, an accompanying language policy for the course becomes important. The next actor is the university itself. The Strategic Plan 2009-2013, designed by the university’s executive board, claims that Utrecht University is striving towards a strong international position. In order to do so, providing English courses for (foreign) students and therefore creating a dynamic language policy that supports internationalisation is essential. As will be seen in section 4.2.2, the faculties and their schools also participate in the language policy development process. Ultimately, faculties and schools are confronted with the realities of language policies when they implement them.

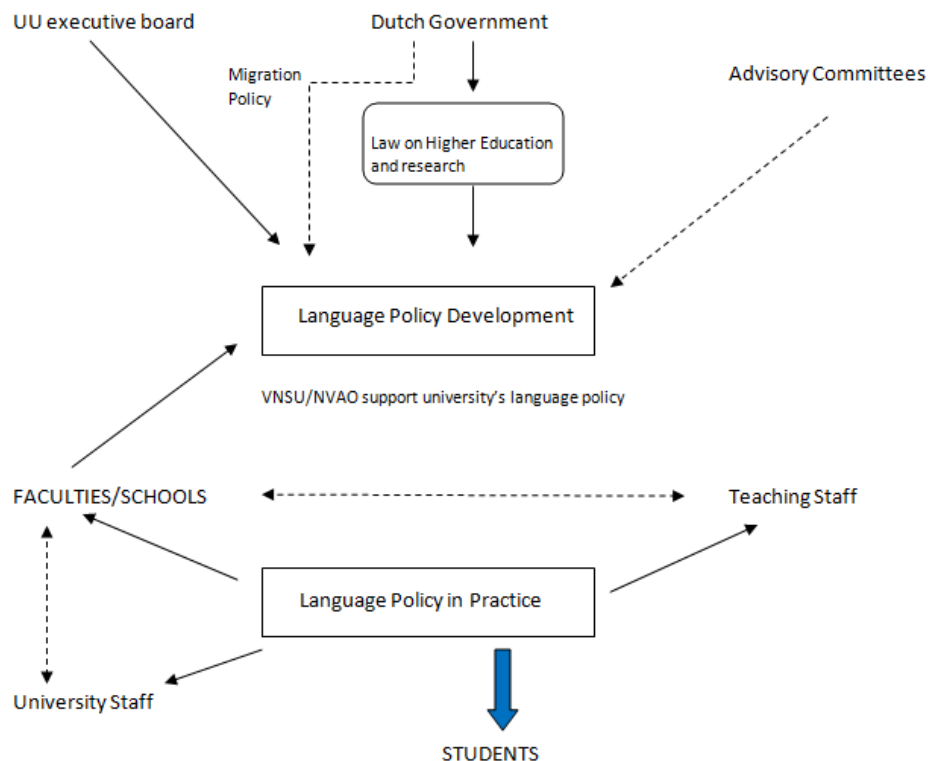


Figure 1: The actors involved in the development and practice of Utrecht University's language policy

The second part of this thesis will focus on the practical aspect of the language policy. The people that are actively involved with this type of policy are divided into three main groups. The first group entails the university's staff. Since the main goal is to attract more international students, the administration as well as the supporting staff will be faced with an increased use of English. One of the objectives of the Strategic Plan is that bilingualism will become the norm for external as well as internal communication. The second group involved in language policy in practice is the teaching staff. Another objective of the Strategic Plan is to include English language skills for university teaching into the *Basis Kwalificatie Onderwijs*, the compulsory teaching qualification that all Utrecht University staff completes. These objectives are all still in development phase. The students at Utrecht University comprise the final group that participate in the language policy in practice. Although this is a large stakeholder group and this group will be the main "participants" in the language policy in practice, their opinion about the matter is absent from formal Utrecht University documents. This thesis aims to close this gap by providing

insight into students' opinions on the topic of internationalisation and its resultant effects on the language in education policy of courses at Utrecht University.

## 4 Laws and Regulations on Language Policy<sup>1</sup>

“[Having] classes in English is fine, if the level of the teacher is high enough and if there is a legitimate reason to do it in English” (Participant 2041)

In this section, the official rules and regulations on language policy at Utrecht University will be explored. The order of discussion will start from the highest level of rule formation, namely the Dutch constitution, towards the lowest levels of policy making, at the level of the educational programmes and schools.

### 4.1 The Law on Higher Education

In the search for rules that affect policy making concerning the use of English in Dutch higher education institutions, particularly Utrecht University in this case study, the Dutch civil code was examined first (Wet op Hoger Onderwijs en Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek). Article 7.2 of the law on higher education and scientific research is concerned with language:

The education is given and the exams are taken in Dutch. In deviation from the first full sentence, another language can be exploited:

- a. If it concerns an educational programme concerning that language

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<sup>1</sup> The original texts (Law on Higher Education, Language Code of Conduct) are taken up in Appendix D

- b. If it concerns education within the framework of a guest lecture given by a non-Dutch speaker, or
- c. If the specific nature, design or quality of education as for the origin of the students compels to that, corresponding to a, by the institution's board designed, behavioural code.

(text valid on 12-05-2010)

Where the sub sentences (a) and (b) are clear about the conditions for the use of another language in education, sentence (c) provides a very broad framework that can be interpreted in various manners by the education institutions. Although article 7.2 shows that the heritage of students can be a reason for switching to another language, this is not obligatory. Articles 7.28 and 7.29, which are concerned with the admission criteria to Dutch education institutions, state that educational programmes can demand that the level of command of Dutch must be sufficient for foreign students to follow their education in this language. Both articles state the following:

In the case of a diploma handed out outside of the Netherlands, the institution's board can decide that no exams or parts of it can be taken before proof is delivered of a sufficient command of the Dutch language to the satisfaction of the exam committee concerned for fruitfully following that education. The institution board can as well decide that the concerned will not be enrolled before the, in the afore-mentioned full sentence, sufficient proof has not been delivered.

(text valid on 12-05-2010)

Therefore, at first sight, this would mean that the language of education in the entire higher education sector, with the exception of sub sentences (a) and (b) from article 7.2, would be Dutch. The changing context of globalisation brings new pressures on Dutch institutions (and other higher education institutions across the world) that influences language in education legislation similar to that discussed above. The pressure to attract foreign students, teachers and researchers, and the assumed resultant benefits for universities, drives a review of the legislative arrangements for Dutch universities discussed above. Even within a previous dispensation where it is regarded as unproblematic that all education would be offered in Dutch

in the Netherlands, article 7.2 already gave higher education institutions a lot of freedom via sub sentence (c) to expand their educational offerings by including courses offered in English.

## 4.2 Laws and Regulations at Utrecht University

Before exploring the language policy of Utrecht University, an outline is given of its structure of administration. The language policy is then discussed with reference to the different levels of administration and how these levels are affected by the policy.

### 4.2.1 Organisational Structure of Utrecht University

In terms of its administration, Utrecht University is split “along two lines: the corporate level and the level of faculties and service departments” (UU Governance and Administration). Figure 2 provides a schema of this structure:



Figure 2: Structure of Utrecht University, based on image of website [UU-Governance and Administration](#).

At the corporate level, the university is governed by two boards: the executive board, which is the body that actively manages the university on a daily basis, and the supervisory board that functions as a control on the executive board and that is responsible for governance. The supervisory board consists of prominent members of society, such as a former mayor of Rotterdam, a partner at PriceWaterhouseCoopers or the chairman of the Council of Public Health and Health Care, and this governance body regularly approves the Strategic Plan, the Annual reports and budgets proposed by the executive board of Utrecht University. The Board of Directors governs the affairs of the University Medical Centre, separate from the executive board. “The University Council (universiteitsraad or U-raad) is an elected advisory body representing all staff and students of Utrecht University” (UU Governance and Administration-representation) and has regular meetings with the executive board. The executive board may also consult different advisory committees, of which the Teaching Advisory Committee and the Advisory Committee on the Quality of Personnel Policy are most relevant to this thesis. The Teaching Advisory Committee counsels the executive board on the topics of education and education quality within Utrecht University and also has the task to communicate matters related to education across all faculties. The Committee on the Quality of Personnel Policy advises the executive board on topics involving university staff.

At the level of faculties and service departments, Utrecht University can be divided into seven different faculties, respectively Humanities, Law, Economics and Government, Geosciences, Social and Behavioural Sciences, Science, Medicine (University Medical Centre Utrecht) and the faculty of Veterinary Medicine. Each faculty is managed by a faculty board and has its own faculty council that operated similarly to the University Council. The faculty itself has a subdivision of four levels of administration. The first level is that of the departments, “which provide the context for education and research in their own research field” (Faculty of Humanities). The (scientific) staff are appointed at this level. For a complete overview of the faculties and their departments, see appendix A. The second level of administration comprises of the schools and they are concerned with the content and organisation of education. Schools may stretch across departments, or draw within-department distinctions, for instance between the Bachelor or Master phase. The schools also construct their own Onderwijs en Examen Regeling, or OER (Education and Examination Regulations), which spells out the offering of courses and also the admission requirements for students of that particular school. The two

remaining levels left are that of the research institutes, which are concerned with the content and production of research by the faculty, and services and facilities.

#### 4.2.2 Current Language Policies at Utrecht University

At the corporate level of Utrecht University, the *Language Code of Conduct* (LCL) is the universal language policy (appendix D). It is constructed by the executive board in conformity with the Law on Higher Education, article 7.2. The LCL was proposed in 2004, just after the introduction of the bachelor – master structure. In the pre-amble, the reasons for striving towards an internationally oriented university and thus the striving towards bilingual education are set out. Article 1 of the LCL is very similar to the afore mentioned article 7.2 of the Law on Higher Education, with the specification that the dean of the faculty can make the decision of deviating from Dutch as the language of education for an educational programme. Amongst others, the LCL explains the role of the schools' *Onderwijs en Examen Regeling* (OER) (Education and Exams Regulations), which should specify the language(s) in which the courses are given, the admission requirements and how the admission requirements are tested in terms of the language of education. Also, the student statute and the OER must be available in the language of education, as well as Dutch. Changing the language of education may neither enhance the number of credits that stands for a course, and the introduction of a new teaching language may not negatively influence students. The admission requirements may not be higher for courses offered in English and the dean is responsible for providing a “suiting language level for staff” (LCL, article 6) that are engaged in an educational programme in a foreign language. At first glance, the LCL is a clear and universal description of the language policy of Utrecht University. It was surprising that the LCL was very difficult to access. It is expected that a policy document that concerns the entire university should be easily accessible, both in Dutch and in English. Unfortunately, this document, as far as the researcher could determine, does not exist in English. Another concern is that this document is older than six years. It can therefore be argued that some of the articles are less relevant, or are in need of further specification, due to the changes in the higher education context in the past six years. In terms of its content, the universality of the document (the “uniformity” with which it would be applied in different faculties) is arguable: the responsibility of active language policy is levelled at the individual faculties and their deans.

Since the schools of faculties are responsible for the content and organisation of education, the OER of every school specifies the requirements of admission, including language proficiency in the language of education. The language requirements and the language of education of the educational programmes are listed in respectively articles 2.2 and 3.3 in the OER of every school. In the case of Dutch students, it is assumed that the level of English proficiency is satisfactory for study via English in higher education, since all students accepted at university must have graduated from the VWO, the highest level of secondary school in the Netherlands, or have earned their propaedeutics at an HBO. Therefore, according to the OERs, Dutch students are capable of following courses at higher education level in English. However, the proficiency levels of VWO graduates may vary. Therefore, the language proficiency skills of students have been taken up in the student survey, in order to research the correctness of the assumption made in the OER. According to the OER 2009-2010, foreign students who want to enrol at Utrecht University to follow an English educational programme must comply with the language requirements set for English, and if they want to enrol in a Dutch educational programme, foreign students have to comply with the requirements of both Dutch *and* English. Only foreign students who are native speakers of English and/or are in the possession of a diploma from Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, Singapore, Great Britain, the United States, or South Africa are granted exemption from these requirements. Extra requirements in terms of linguistic skills can be set according to the specific nature of schools' educational programmes. The universal language requirements covering all the university's OER 2009-2010, for all the schools, are as follows:

*Dutch*

- States exam NT2, Dutch as a second language, programme 2, and/or
- Certificate Dutch as a Foreign Language: 'Profile Academic Linguistic Skill' (Profiel Academische Taalvaardigheid – PAT) or 'Profile Linguistic Skill Higher Education' (Profiel Taalvaardigheid Hoger Onderwijs - PTHO).



### *English*

- IELTS (International English Language Testing System), academic module. The minimum required IELTS score (overall band) must be: 6.5 with at least 6.0 for the component 'writing'.
- TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language). The minimum required TOEFL score is: 93 (internet-based) test.
- Cambridge EFL (English as a Foreign Language) Examinations, with one of the following certificates: (a) Cambridge Certificate in Advanced English; minimum score: B; (b) Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English; minimum score: C.

## **5 Interview with Prof. Dr. Peter Coopmans and Marjolein Boessenkool**

“I’ve never had a course in English” (Participant 2526)

“In my master, there are no courses with Dutch as the teaching language” (Participant 1251)

During the course *Taalbeleid*, the executive boards of all seven faculties were contacted through a questionnaire about the language in education arrangements in their faculty. Unfortunately, only two faculties, Humanities and Social Sciences, and one bachelor programme, biomedical sciences, responded to this request. The following section contains a summary of an interview conducted with two members from the administration of the Humanities faculty, who showed special interest in this research and internationalisation in general at Utrecht University. Prof. dr. Peter Coopmans is the vice-dean and director of education of the faculty of Humanities. Marjolein Boessenkool is the Education Programme Supervisor and a member of the policy support staff that are concerned with, and amongst other matters, the task force of teacher training, master programme evaluations and internationalisation. They give their view on the faculty’s policy on language and internationalisation and report difficulties with the implementation of the language policy at Utrecht University in practice.

Prof. dr. Peter Coopmans explained that the language policy in itself is not a very important matter in the Humanities faculty, but it becomes important when the faculty responds to one particular prominent goal accepted by Utrecht University: internationalisation. The main issues discussed at the faculty board and by staff are arrangements related to student exchange and how to design educational programmes that are interesting to foreign students. Language skill and policy is discussed, but always in relation to the way in which this university wants to present itself “in the battle field of internationalisation” (Peter Coopmans). The position of the faculty Humanities staff on the language policy is not clear, except where it is related to the subject of internationalisation. However, according to Marjolein Boessenkool, the faculty Humanities did take one specific decision related to language use. It was decided to use English as language of education in the research masters, with the exception of the programme in Dutch literature. This decision was based on the faculty’s acceptance that their research is presented in an international context, and on the fact that all students need orientation in research or analytical skills. Therefore, the joint curriculum of the research programme has to be taught in English. This decision was made at the level of the entire university. At the moment, there is no university-wide systematic discussion of the teaching language of academic masters. As vice-dean of education, Peter Coopmans could give permission that the teaching language of a course or educational programme could change. “Some of the educational programmes have been changed into a bilingual programme since the introduction of the bachelor-master structure”. If a course or educational programme has a good reason for changing their teaching language, Peter Coopmans would not resist that in principle. The potential of language skills to increase prospects in the labour market for students is an important element he considers in taking decisions about potential changes in the language of teaching of a course. Language policy cannot be seen as an isolated issue, but has to be considered from various perspectives. In this light, the differences between faculties and their needs for internationalising education can be made clear. The vice-dean illustrated this remark as follows: “for instance, most master students of Veterinary Medicine are quite sure of their future working field and would not benefit from following English courses”. Students from Humanities may find themselves in policy functions, large organisations or ministries, which can be in the Netherlands, but with an international dimension. On the subject of enhancing the English skills of students, Coopmans explained two views that are now dominant at Utrecht University. The first one corresponds with the requirements from the LCL: when graduating from secondary school, it is expected that

students demonstrate appropriate levels of English proficiency to follow a course in English, write a paper and give an oral presentation in English. If this is not the case, the university offers, via the James Boswell Institute, (academic) English courses for a reduced price. The second view is to build in 'repair courses'. However, then the following dilemma occurs: if these repair courses are part of the major programme, something else has to be removed so that credits do not increase. On the other hand, if this repair course is obligatory, but extracurricular, it is difficult to motivate students. A good option is cooperation between the programme of English, or the James Boswell Institute to provide a tailor-made course for a certain faculty in English. The focus then remains on the content of the course, but students follow their classes in English and have to write their paper and give their presentations in English as well. In these courses, they also receive feedback on their use of English, which helps in developing their English skills. This is called the "language-across-the-curriculum" approach. Unfortunately, this arrangement has not proven to be successful yet since it requires changes to the bachelor's major programme and it will result in increased costs and efforts on the part of various role-players.

In conclusion, it is clear that language policy in itself is not a prominent matter on the faculty's agenda. However, in relation to the aim of Utrecht University with respect to internationalisation, decisions on language policy have, and will be taken on short notice. There are ample arrangements for the faculty management to respond to needs in a dynamic manner. It is clear that the development of a universal or "uniform" language policy for the entire university is not possible and maybe not appropriate either because the priorities may vary between faculties. Finally, the dilemma considering the improvement of students' English skills if they have to attend a course in which the language in education is English has been explained.

## 6 Language in Practice: the Eavesdropping Project

"Do not stick to Dutch Language if you want to call the Master International" (Participant 2787, international student)

During the course 'Taalbeleid', several subgroups investigated the language policy of Utrecht University in practice. The following section focuses on the results of a subgroup from the course 'Taalbeleid': The *Eavesdropping Project*. In this section results from observations of the

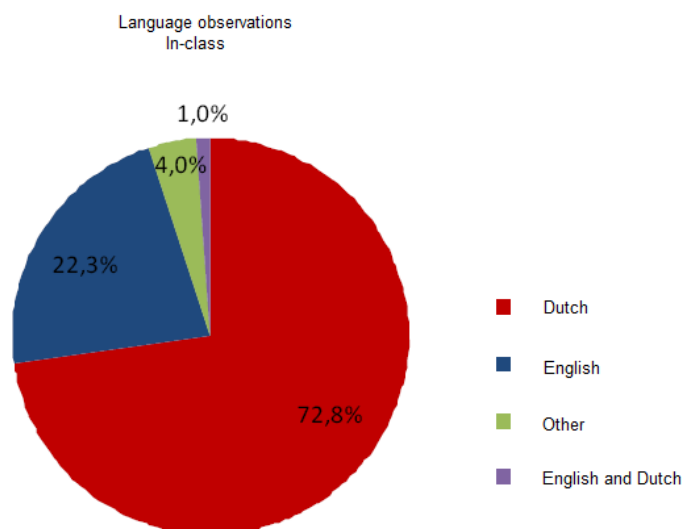
language of instruction at Utrecht University in practice<sup>2</sup> are reported.

As a complement to the student-survey, which mainly focuses on the personal experiences and opinions of students with respect to the language of teaching, the Quick Anonymous Observations (QAO) group have designed an eavesdropping project to map the reality of language of instruction at Utrecht University. Based on the linguistic research method by Labov, the object of this project was to gather objective quantitative information by literally eavesdropping on classes that were given across the entire university. The course information about these classes, including the official teaching language, were studied and compared to the language used in class sessions as observed by the QAO group. A list of all courses and their course specifications given in the academic year 2009/2010 were supplied to the QAO group. Based on the ratio between the number of classes given in each faculty, a selection was made of university buildings, and every location was divided into territories. The entire research group 'Taalbeleid' was mobilised to assist with the observations: 18 people visited 31 locations at the Uithof, University College and Town Centre. Observations were made by "eavesdropping" in-class (observations in class), but also "eavesdropping" outside of class, in for instance canteens or hallways (overhearing students talking to each other). All the data were gathered and comparisons between the formal language of instruction policy, taken from the course descriptions, and the observations of language of instruction in reality were made. The number of observations within-class sessions amounted to 202. Of these class sessions, in 147 instances Dutch was used as language of teaching; English was used as language of teaching in 45 cases, in 8 cases other modern languages were used and in 2 instances there was a mix between Dutch and English. The pie-chart in Figure 3 shows the percentages of language of instruction observed within-class.

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<sup>2</sup> Thanks to Marijke Kranenburg, Mathilde van Arkel and Nynke Oosterhuis, who formed the group Quick Anonymous Observations during the course Taalbeleid

Figure 3: language observations in class



The percentages are very similar to the observations made of languages used outside the classroom: in 74.4% of the outside classroom observations, Dutch was used as language of discussion, English was used in 24.4% of the instances and in only one of the instances (1.2%), a mix between Dutch and English was observed outside the classroom. No other modern languages were observed outside the classrooms. Of the 202 observations made during class, 150 had unique coursecodes. This suggests that some courses were visited twice, for instance because a course was taught at different locations, in different groups, or at different times. Using the 150 course codes, the official language of teaching of 108 courses could be derived from the course prospectus.

Language	Percentage %	Number of observations
Dutch	64.81	70
English	27.78	30
Other Modern Languages	7.41	8
Total	100	108

table 1: Teaching language according to course prospectus

The data were analysed in several ways in order to test whether the form of language policy spelled out in the course prospectus and language use in practice are in alignment. Out of 108 cases, there were 9 courses in which the official teaching language was Dutch, and English was spoken in practice. However, there were also 6 instances where the course prospectus indicated English as the teaching language, where Dutch was spoken in class.

We also tested whether there was a significant preference for changing the teaching language from Dutch to English, which can be expected if an international student or teacher attends the course; or conversely, if there is an indication that there is a need to change the course language from English to Dutch. A McNemar test was conducted and it showed no significant preferences ( $p = 0.607$ ). The Marginal Homogeneity Test was used to calculate whether there was a significant difference between the observed language and the official language of teaching from the course prospectus. The data for other modern languages were recoded into a single category for this purpose. The amount of discrepancies between the official teaching language and use in practice proved not to be significant ( $p = 0.662$ ). As the category 'other modern languages' may be influencing the data, it was excluded from the second calculation. However, there were still no significant discrepancies between theory and practice in this context ( $p = 0.439$ ).

It can be concluded that the policy spelled out in the course prospectus is clear and consistent when compared to observations of implementation of the language of teaching in practice. In the next section, the opinions and experiences of students with respect to language of teaching are reported. The presentation of these results close an important gap identified in this study: namely, the underrepresentation of student views in the language in education policy formulation processes.

## **7 Language in Practice: Survey among Utrecht University Students**

“Was ok. And of course, I'd love to win a VVV voucher” (Participant 2883)

Although students, together with teaching staff, are important actors in the process of establishing and implementing new language policies, they were not included or consulted in a

significant manner in discussions that inform decisions to date. This section describes the survey used to gather student opinions about internationalisation at the University of Utrecht as well as their preferences, needs and experiences related to the language of education.

## 7.1 Survey: Division and Content

The questions posed in this study were based on Dörnyei's *Questionnaires on Second Language Research*. Since this survey on language policy was conducted among students, it was decided that the questionnaire had to remain short. The researchers were very aware of the fact that the target group may quit if they were of the opinion that the survey took a considerable amount of time. The estimated time frame within which a questionnaire could be completed (ten minutes) was therefore mentioned prominently in the welcoming text. The questions in the survey were subdivided into different categories. The survey starts by gathering personal information, followed by position questions on language use in practice. Next, students' attitudes on language use in their education are measured. Finally, an estimation of students' own language skills and those of their teachers are made in the last two sections. A set of closed questions was developed, as closed questions leave no room for subjectivity and make coding and processing the data much easier. However, participants were free to leave any extra information or remarks after having finished the survey.

The personal information section of the student survey concerns factual information about the students themselves. The questions were chosen carefully to ensure detail reporting for specific faculties, levels of education and official teaching language. For the entire survey, please consult appendix A.

The second part of the survey consists of eight position questions on the students' experiences with language in their classes. These provide factual information about language policy in practice. In this section, different types of question formation were used. The first half of the questions produce ordinal scale data, as the possible answers are as follows: always, mostly, sometimes, seldom and never. This type of question formation was needed, since nuances might be important. Examples of these types of questions are:

- (1) *My classes are in English*
- (2) *During courses where the language of instruction is Dutch, English study material is being used*

During the second half of the section on experiences with language use, however, participants had to choose between yes and no answers to indicate whether they had ever come across a particular situation:

- (1) *It has happened that a course, which should have been in Dutch, was taught in English, because a student did not speak Dutch*
- (2) *It has happened that I did not choose to follow a particular course, because the language of instruction was English.*

The third section of the survey focuses on students' attitudes towards the use of English and Dutch in their education. Here, an adaptation of the Likert scale format was used, providing the participants the opportunity to indicate to what extent they agree with a statement, by marking one of the existing options. In the original Likert scale format, all options are explicitly named, resulting in ordinal data. However, the answers in this experiment range from entirely disagree to entirely agree, on a five points scale, where the options in between are left blank. The interval scales that results from this are easily transformed into numbers one to five for processing the data, and makes it possible to calculate averages and means. A condition of the Likert scale format is that the questions must be characteristic, or show a distinct positive or negative attitude. Neutral positioned statements do not seem to work in this type of question formation, since they do not extract a distinctive evaluative reaction. The following two examples are clearly positively and negatively oriented towards the use of English at Utrecht University

(5) *In my future career, a good proficiency of English will be necessary*

Entirely disagree      0      0      0      0      0      Entirely agree

(6) *I find the use of English as the main language at the university a threat for the position of Dutch*

Entirely disagree      0      0      0      0      0      Entirely agree

The final two sections of the survey were concerned with the language skills of both students and teachers. The student skills section was inserted to investigate whether this



influenced attitudes towards the use of English, but also to examine whether there are discrepancies between the different types of language skills. Again using the Likert scale format, the questions were asked for both languages and divided into the four different types of language skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking.

- (7) *I am able to follow classes in English/Dutch*
- (8) *I am able to give a presentation in English/Dutch*
- (9) *I am good at reading an English/Dutch article in my field of study*
- (10) *I am good at writing a paper in English/Dutch*

The section on the language skills of teachers was constructed in a similar manner. As the language skills used in teaching are predominantly active, the following questions were posed for English as well as Dutch:

- (11) *The proficiency level of English/Dutch of the teacher, who is not a native speaker of English/Dutch, is good enough to teach in English/Dutch*
- (12) *The proficiency level of English/Dutch of the teacher, who is not a native speaker of English/Dutch, is good enough to make PowerPoints in English/Dutch*

After completion of the survey, participants were free to add comments or ask questions. These additional comments were also incorporated in the data evaluation. Respondents were also asked to leave their email address for the lottery of gift vouchers, which were handed out a week after participation in the survey. Participants who were interested in the subject and curious about the results were asked to contact the research group through their email address and interested students were informed about the results reported in the thesis.

## 7.2 Data Collection

The most efficient method of gathering information from a large group such as students from Utrecht University is by far to conduct a survey. The difficulty, however, remains decisions about how to reach the participants. Fortunately, other researchers solved this problem in the past

and we could learn from their experiences. Therefore, by order of dr. Hans Van de Velde, the internet tool CLEO, Creating Language Experiments Online was developed. As the name already implies, this online survey developing programme is especially equipped for the type of research done in language research. Participants can log-on to the system with a unique code, which guides them to the corresponding survey. There are, however, some downsides on using the internet to conduct surveys. The researchers do not have any control on the circumstances in which the participants complete the survey. Secondly, researchers should trust that the participants read the instructions carefully, which is often problematic. Finally, as will be shown later, there is always the risk of technical breakdowns. However, as the internet is the quickest way to reach as many students as possible, it was decided that this method should be used. In addition, conducting the survey via the CLEO programme made data processing much easier as the system delivers the answers in formats that can easily be transformed to data sets. Utrecht University provided the course 'Taalbeleid' with a directory consisting of university email addresses of students who indicated in the past that they were willing to participate in university research (around 13000 students). By sending out an email to all the students in this directory with the survey code and the announcement they had a chance at winning one of ten 25 euro VVV-vouchers. The response of students was extraordinarily high: out of 13000 emails sent (approximately 37% of all Utrecht University students), 2257 surveys were completed in just 48 hours. Unfortunately, due to a technical error, the language policy survey had been written over by a survey from another research group. However, the large response of over 17% on short notice is already an indicator of the interest in the subject by students of Utrecht University.

### **7.3 The Data Set**

This section will contain a description of the adaptations and choices made on shaping the initial data set into one suitable for statistical calculations. The second part will explore the composition of the final data set, sketching a general image of the participants involved in this survey.

### 7.3.1 Editing the data

Forty-eight hours after sending out the request email to the students from the directory, a technical error occurred in the CLEO system overwriting the survey used in this study with a different one. However, within that time frame, a total of 2282 completed surveys were saved onto the server. The rough data could be extracted from the server as plain text files. A total of four documents were constructed, since the English and Dutch version data were separate, as well as the personal information sections and the (position) questions. Copying the data to an excel file, the four files were merged into two: the data from the Dutch version and the data from the English version of the survey. The two data files could now be imported into the statistical calculation programme SPSS 16.0 for Windows, which is used for all the analyses conducted in this thesis.

Before using the data for analyses, the data matrix had to be cleared from errors by deleting several participants, including test trials and deletions for matters of consistency. Also, as a total of only twelve follow a programme at either the IVLOS or the University College Utrecht<sup>3</sup>, these data sets were excluded from the data file. This decision was effected since the low response in these cases did not provide representative results for these two institutes apart from being too small in number to enable further statistical analysis. After removing these cases from the file, the final data set consisted of 2257 completed surveys.

### 7.3.2 Composition Final Data Set

This section provides a general overview of the characteristics of the participating students. First of all, it is interesting to see that the distribution of male and female students is not balanced: exactly one-third of the participants in this survey is male (33.5 %) and two-third (66.5%) of the participants is female. As for native language, 2087 participants are Dutch native speakers, only 20 are English by origin and 150 participants indicate that their native language is different than the options given (table 2). As the number of participants that use English as a native language is very low, it was decided that the options *English* and *Other* were grouped together under a new variable name: *different*. This was done to prevent difficulties with the statistical calculations, since post hoc tests can only be carried out with a sufficient amount of instances. Therefore, the distribution of the recoded variable is as follows: the number of Dutch native

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<sup>3</sup> None of the participants follow their educational programme at the Roosevelt Academy, which is therefore excluded from the data file as well.

speakers is 2087 (92.5%) and the number of participants with a different native language is 170 (7.5%). Table 3 shows the distribution of levels of education across all participants.

	Frequency	Percentage
Dutch	2087	92,5
English	20	0.9
Other	150	6.6
Total	2257	100

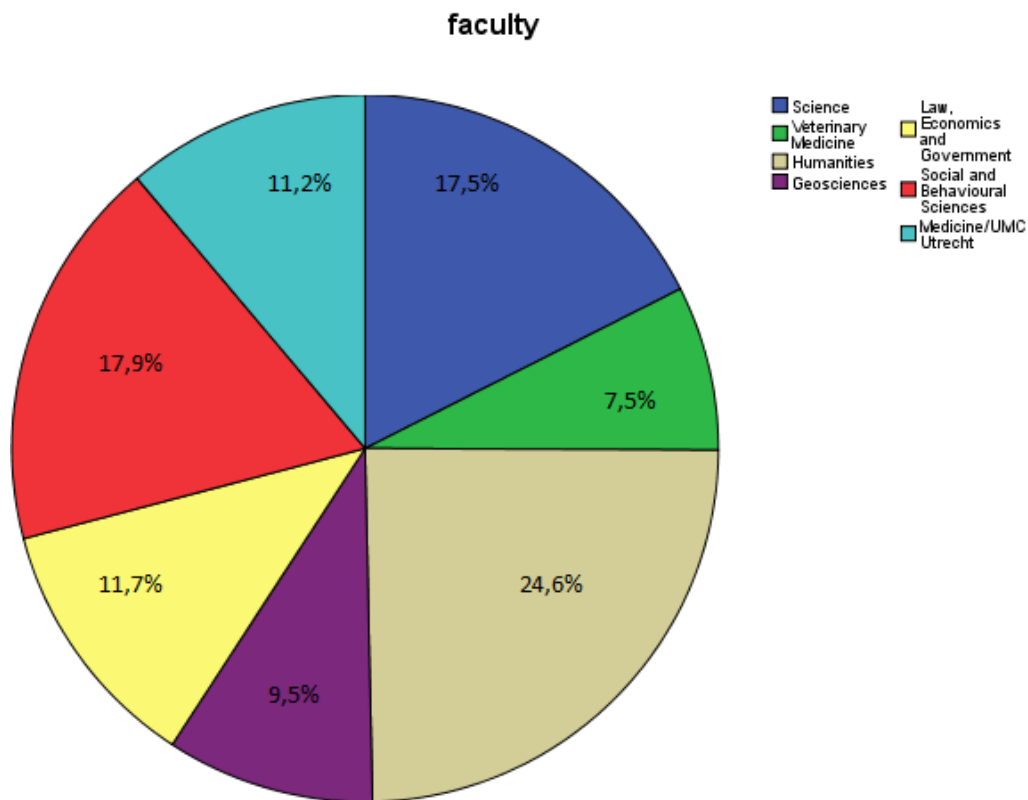
**Table 2: Native language of the participants in the student survey**

	Frequency	Percent
A bachelor	1290	57.2
A pre-master	46	2.0
An academic master	502	2.2
An educative master	28	1.2
A research master	226	10.0
Other	165	7.3
Total	2257	100.0

**Table 3: Distribution level of educational programme in the student survey**

For the purpose of this study, it is especially important to consider the distribution of the faculties across the data matrix, because faculties determine their own language of teaching policy in their programmes. As argued earlier, due to the nature of the language arrangements of Utrecht University, differences between faculties and therefore between participants' responses could be expected. Figure 4 shows the distribution based on faculty of the participants in this study. Close to a quarter of the participants in this survey are from the faculty of Humanities, which is also the largest faculty of Utrecht University. Science and Social and Behavioural Sciences are both represented by approximately 17% of the respondents.

Around 11% of the participants follow their educational programmes at both the faculties of Medicine and Law, Economics and Government. Finally, the faculties of Geosciences (9.5 %) and Veterinary Medicine (7.5%) complete the distribution of the participants in this survey according to faculty.



**Figure 4: Distribution of faculties in the data set**

Although these results seem suitable for statistical calculations, problems occur when the data are sorted according to other variables, for example, faculty or language of teaching. A similar problem as that of the native language question occurs here. As the pre-master and the educative master form a relatively small proportion of the total amount of responses, these have been merged into a new variable. Bachelor and pre-master were combined to *BA*, and the academic and educative master responses were grouped to form the group *MA*. The research master group were titled *RMA*. If left in the original formation, calculating relations to other parts of the survey would be problematic. It must also be noted that there is a significant

difference between the level of participants in this survey and at which faculty they follow their educational programme ( $\chi^2 = 950$ ;  $df = 18$ ;  $p = <0.001$ ). For instance, the faculties of Veterinary Medicine and Medicine have not yet fully transformed to comply with the requirements of the relatively new bachelor/master system: the pre-doctoral and post-doctoral educational programme levels are still operational. Therefore, the results from two faculties were grouped at the option *other* (95.7%). The bachelor-master structure was adopted in 2007 for Veterinary Medicine and from 2005 gradually onwards for Medicine. It was presumed that the participants who indicated *Other* would have started their study at least before 2007. Therefore, it is presumed in this thesis that, when translating these studies into the new bachelor-master system, these students would at the moment be following a master. Consequently, the options academic master, educative master and other are combined into one group, encoded as the MA (master). A similar situation is prevalent in the research master responses: Science and Geosciences are responsible for 59.3% of the research master students in this survey. A graph of the distribution of level amongst the faculties can be found in appendix E. It is important that during the statistical analyses and the resultant interpretations, these lopsided distributions are kept into account.

The final distribution of a particular variable to be discussed in this section is that of the official language of teaching of the participants' current educational programme. It is expected that this variable influences the students' responses with respect to practical experiences, attitude and skills in the survey. It can be argued that since they have deliberately chosen to follow their education in English, students who follow an English educational programme, may be more positively oriented towards that language. Whether there is a positive correlation between attitude and teaching language will be one of the questions investigated in the following section.

	Frequency	Percentage %
Dutch	1786	79.1
English	434	19.2
Other	37	1.6
Total	2257	100

Table 4: Distribution of teaching language in the student survey

As the ‘other’ group is relatively small compared to the ‘Dutch’ and ‘English’ groups, it will not be included in the calculations related to language of teaching, to prevent a distorted image. It also appears that there is a relationship (Cramér’s  $V = 0.484$ ) between language of teaching and level of education. Programmes at the level of bachelor, pre-master, or *other* study are offered in Dutch more frequently than in English. On the other hand, educational programmes in the master phase may vary between Dutch and English. As mentioned in section 5, the research masters are predominantly offered in English (97.8%). These connections are all significant: ( $\text{Chi}^2 = 1059$ ;  $\text{df} = 6$ ;  $p = <0.001$ ). This observation is interesting for analysis.

Unfortunately, although general information on the distribution of students in terms of faculties, gender, origin and so forth were requested at Utrecht University’s directorate of Education and Research, this information was not yet available before the deadline of this thesis. However, in this thesis it is assumed that the composition of the data set is a representative sample survey of Utrecht University students. Over 90% of the participants in this survey have Dutch as their native language, where about 80% follow an educational programme where the official teaching language is Dutch. However, it must be kept in mind that there is a relationship between the level of education and the teaching language of educational programmes: for the research masters, English is the obligatory language of education. In the following section, the results of the survey will be analysed.

## 8 Analysing the Data

“I’m curious about the results. [...] Good luck!” (Participant 3501)

The following section contains the results of the survey . These will be presented and analysed by means of statistical calculations, using the analytical software programme SPSS 16.0 for Windows. The order of discussion follows the order of items are they were included in the survey<sup>4</sup>. The information gathered from the *personal information* data was discussed in section 7.3.2 and will not be repeated here. The starting point for data discussion will therefore be *experiences/ language in practice*. This will be followed by respectively the sections on *attitude*,

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<sup>4</sup> Short forms of the questions from the survey will be used. It is reminded to the reader that the survey has been taken up in full length in appendix A

*own skills* and *teacher's skills*. After presenting the results, these four themes will all be analysed in terms of faculty, level of education and teaching language of the educational programme. All will be concluded by a short summary of the results.

## 8.1 Experiences/Language in Practice

The eight questions presented to the participants on this subject resulted in two different types of data. Therefore, the two types of data will be discussed separately.

### 8.1.1 The Use of English

The options given after the first four questions range from *never* to *always*, which, similar to a time line, do not have clear boundaries. The data from these questions are therefore ordinal, which has consequences for the types of analyses that can be used. The frequency results are listed in Table 5. As can be seen in Table 5, most of the participants have been in contact with English in their classes, either by having followed an English course in a certain extent (72.5%) or having English study materials in a Dutch course (97.2%). However, during English courses, Dutch study materials are hardly used as 62.6% have never experienced that. Although there is much contact with English at Utrecht University, 75.9% of the participants indicate there has seldom or never been a focus on improving the English skills of the students. However, this table provides a general view of the entire university. As different faculties, different levels of

	Always		Mostly		Sometimes		Seldom		Never		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1 My classes are in E	269	12	175	7.8	540	24.1	640	28.6	615	27.5	2239	100
2 D instruction, E materials	472	22	1074	50.2	443	20.7	93	4.3	59	2.8	2141	100
3 E instruction, D materials	30	1.6	39	2.1	176	9.5	450	24.2	1162	62.6	1857	100
4 Improving E skills	33	1.8	110	6.1	289	16.1	429	23.9	931	52	1792	100

**Table 5: Frequencies on questions 1 to 4**

education or educational programmes with different teaching languages may differ in their approach to English, the data were analysed accordingly. First, it was calculated whether there



were significant differences between the responses given between participants of the seven faculties. Since the data are ordinal and independent by nature, the levels of significance were calculated through a Kruskal Wallis test, as was recommended by Baarda, de Goede and van Dijkum (p6):

Kruskal –Wallis results	Sign	Science	Vet. Medicine	Humanities	Geosc.	Law, Economics , Government	Social Sciences	Medicine
		N Rank	N Rank	N Rank	N Rank	N Rank	N Rank	N Rank
1 My classes are in E	*	394 971.74	170 1226.34	547 1138.59	214 661.90	260 1049.21	405 1302.62	249 1411.73
2 D instruction, E materials	*	373 931.22	169 1127.57	539 1043.45	187 931.22	240 1529.20	395 916.88	235 1215.85
3 E instruction, D materials	*	347 940.60	138 696.52	447 911.33	199 929.44	224 1020.59	319 961.97	183 955.42
4 Improving E skills	*	336 835.81	126 1096.10	429 874.08	195 880.17	224 871.43	313 921.17	169 931.64

Table 6: Kruskal Wallis calculations divided by faculty.

As is shown in Table 6, participants from different faculties have responded significantly differently to the first four questions on *experience/ language in practice*. In Kruskal Wallis calculations, a low mean rank means a low overall score of the participants on a particular question, whereas a high mean rank, implies a high score on the responses. Participants from the faculty of Geosciences most often follow classes in English (mean rank 661.90), where the faculty of Medicine is the least in active contact with English during their classes (mean rank 1411.73) ( $\chi^2= 233.436$ ;  $df=6$ ;  $p <0.001$ ). The faculty of Medicine work, with respect to the other faculties, most with English study materials (mean rank 1215.85). The faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences uses English study materials the least often (mean rank 916.88), ( $\chi^2= 234.838$ ;  $df=6$ ;  $p <0.001$ ). In Veterinary Medicine, Dutch study materials are most often distributed in English courses (mean rank 696.52), whereas this occurs the least at the faculty of Law, Economics and Government (mean rank 1020.59) ( $\chi^2= 46.999$ ;  $df=6$ ;  $p <0.001$ ). Finally, the faculty of Science focuses most on improving the English skills of their students (mean rank 835.81), where this is done least at the faculty of Veterinary Medicine (mean rank 1096.10) ( $\chi^2= 31.351$ ;  $df=6$ ;  $p <0.001$ ). The level of education and its influence on the participants' experiences are investigated next.

Kruskal –Wallis results	Sign.	BA	MA	RMA
		N Rank	N Rank	N Rank
My classes are in English	*	1327	691	221
		1238.95	1163.93	265.31
Dutch language of instruction, English materials	*	1315	660	166
		1077.04	1139.11	752.37
English language of instruction, Dutch materials		1063	572	222
		929.18	925.78	939.03
Focus on improving English skills	*	1017	555	220
		940.39	904.95	672.29

Table 7: Kruskal-Wallis calculations divided by level of education

As can be seen from Table 7, the research master group is most in contact with English in all the questions asked in this section. With a mean rank of 265.31, the participants in the research master follow significantly more English courses ( $\text{Chi}^2 = 462.424$ ;  $\text{df} = 2$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) than the bachelor (mean rank 1238.95) or master group (mean rank 1163.93). Similarly, significantly more English study materials are used in Dutch courses ( $\text{Chi}^2 = 61.159$ ;  $\text{df} = 2$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). However, no significant differences were found between the levels of education on the use of Dutch materials in English courses ( $\text{Chi}^2 = 0.153$ ;  $\text{df} = 2$ ;  $p = 0.926$ ). The focus on improving students' English skills is, logically, most present in the level of education with the most contact to English: the research master group (mean rank 672.29) ( $\text{Chi}^2 = 57.948$ ;  $\text{df} = 2$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). The final division made in discussing the results of these questions is by language of teaching. Logically, participants who follow an English educational programme significantly ( $\text{Chi}^2 = 1759$ ;  $\text{df} = 4$ ;  $p < 0,001$ ) have the most classes in English (mean rank 297,99). This trail of thought is further carried out in the next question, where English study materials are used in Dutch courses. When participants from the English group are following a class in Dutch, they make significantly more often use of English study materials (mean rank 847.37) than participants with Dutch (mean rank 1090.38) as their teaching language ( $\text{Chi}^2 = 215.3$ ;  $\text{df} = 4$ ;  $p < 0,001$ ). No significant differences were found between the teaching languages and the use of Dutch materials in English courses ( $\text{Chi}^2 = 15.572$ ;  $\text{df} = 4$ ;  $p = 0,06$ ). Students with an English teaching language also receive the most support for improving their English skills ( $\text{Chi}^2 = 105.7$ ;  $\text{df} = 4$ ;  $p < 0,001$ ).

<b>Kruskal –Wallis results</b>	Sign.	Dutch N Rank	English N Rank
1 My classes are in English	*	1773 1295.92	429 297.99
2 Dutch language of instruction, English materials	*	1776 1090.38	328 847.37
3 English language of instruction, Dutch materials		1403 903.80	423 945.67
4 Focus on improving English skills	*	1339 945.87	424 680.29

**Table 8: Kruskal Wallis calculations divided by language of teaching**

### 8.1.2 Shift in Course language

The second set of four questions in *Experiences/Language in Practice* could only be responded to by *yes* or *no*. Table 9 consists of the frequency statistics on the final four set of questions:

	Yes	No
5 TL English, but taught in Dutch	10.8%	89.2%
6 TL Dutch, but taught in English because of student	17.2%	82.8%
7 TL Dutch, but taught in English because of teacher	28.1%	71.9%
8 Did not follow course, because it was taught in English	7.3%	92.7%

**Table 9: Frequencies on questions 5 to 8**

As can be seen from Table 9, some participants in this survey have experienced that, although the course description indicated a certain language, the course was lectured in another. It has happened to 17.2% of the respondents that the teaching language has been changed from Dutch to English, because of the presence of a non-Dutch speaking student. A non-Dutch

speaking teacher has been the cause for a language shift for 28.1% of the participants. On the other hand, for 10.8% of the participants it has also occurred that, although the official teaching language of a course was English, the lectures were given in Dutch. A total of 7.3% of the participants in this survey (n =165) have decided not to follow a course, since the teaching language of that course was English. As questions 5 to 7 all involve a switch between the official language of teaching and the language spoken in class, the three questions were combined into a new variable: the total of language of teaching switches. If participants had indicated they had experienced at least one of the three situations offered in 5 to 7, they received a score *yes* in the new variable:

	Yes	No
(9) total of students with language switch	41.3%	58.7%

**Table 10: Frequencies (new variable totswitchTL)**

This total score of language switches illustrates clearly that, although for different reasons, 41.3% of the respondents have had experience with a switch of teaching language. First it is examined whether there are significant differences between the faculties and to what extent students are confronted with language switches<sup>5</sup>.

	Science		Veterinary Medicine		Humanities		Geosciences		Law, Economics, Government		Social Sciences		Medicine	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
No	173	44.5	24	14.5	320	58.6	115	54.5	207	80.5	287	71.8	174	71.3
Yes	216	55.5	142	85.5	226	41.4	96	45.5	50	19.5	113	28.2	70	28.7
Tot	396	100	170	100	555	100	215	100	264	100	405	100	252	100

**Table 11: Frequencies of total of switches in teaching language grouped by faculty**

The total amount of participants who experienced language switches during their educational programmes ranges from 19.5% for Law, Economics and Government to a striking 85.5% for Veterinary Medicine students. As the one-way ANOVA calculation has shown, these results turn

<sup>5</sup> Cross tabulations on questions 5 to 7, between the faculties, are presented in Appendix F

out to be significant ( $F(6,2206) = 49.548$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). By means of a post-hoc Bonferroni test, the exact distribution of significant differences between the faculties can be calculated (Table 12).

Faculty	Law, Economics, Government	Social and Behavioural Sciences	Medicine	Humanities	Geosciences	Science	Veterinary Medicine
Mean	0.19	0.28	0.29	0.41	0.45	0.56	0.86
Sd	0.397	0.451	0.453	0.493	0.499	0.498	0.353

**Table 12: Mean scores (total of switches in teaching language)**

Full line = significant difference between adjacent faculties

Dotted line = significant differences between faculties that stand further apart

Although there are no significant effects detectable between neighbouring faculties, up to Science and Veterinary Medicine, there are significant differences between faculties that lie further apart. Striking are the results for the faculty of Veterinary Medicine, which places itself with a percentage of 85.5% far above the others. The explanation for this result can be traced back to the sub question 7: TL Dutch, but taught in English because of teacher (consult appendix F, Table 3). A total of 82.3% of Veterinary students indicated that they experienced a language switch due to the nationality of a teacher, where the second highest score on this subject is only 38.5% for Science. The most probable explanation for this observation is that obligatory courses in Veterinary Medicine may be given by foreign guest lecturers more frequently than in other faculties. When comparing the data on the total amount of language switches, significant effects ( $F(2,2165) = 2.717$ ;  $p = 0.017$ ) are seen. After conducting a post-hoc Bonferroni calculation, it was discovered that the master student group encounter language switches significantly more often than bachelor or research master students. However, the language of teaching of an educational programme does not have an influence on the occurrence of language switches ( $F(1,2174) = 1.302$ ;  $p = 0,180$ ).

For the final question on *experiences/language in practice*, I did not choose to follow a particular course, since it was taught in English, the same grouping of variables are used. The ANOVA calculation showed significant differences between the faculties when the responses to question 8 are analysed ( $F(6,2180) = 8.822$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). However, after a post-hoc analysis, the only significant difference in this variable was between the faculty of Humanities, having the highest score (12.3%), and Science (2.9%) and Medicine (1.6%), having the lowest scores (see Table 13).

	Science		Veterinary Medicine		Humanities		Geosciences		Law, Economics, Government		Social Sciences		Medicine	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
No	372	97.1	153	96.2	477	87.7	189	90	226	89.7	371	93.7	239	98.4
Yes	11	2.9	6	3.8	67	12.3	21	10	26	10.3	25	6.3	4	1.6
Tot	383	100	159	100	544	100	210	100	252	100	396	100	243	100

**Table 13: Frequencies of I did not choose to follow a course, since it was taught in English grouped by faculty.**

A possible explanation for the exception of Humanities could be that this faculty contains the (foreign) language programmes, which could explain the higher percentage of occurrences.

Table 14 contains the distribution of results when the responses to question 8 are categorised along level of education:

Did not follow course, because it was taught in English	BA		MA		RMA		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
No	1180	91.3	633	93.6	214	97.7	2027	92.7
Yes	112	8.7	43	6.4	5	2.3	160	7.3

**Table 14: Frequencies of I did not choose to follow a course, since it was taught in English grouped by level of education**

Significant differences between the levels of education were found after an analysis of responses to this question ( $F(2,2184) = 6.316$ ;  $p = 0.002$ ). As expected, due to the obligatory language of teaching of the research masters at Utrecht University, which is English, very few of the participants in this group would decline following a course, since it is taught in English (97%). By conducting a post-hoc Tukey test, it can be concluded that significant differences exist between the responses of the BA and RMA students but the MA students do not show significant differences with both these levels of education.

### 8.1.3 Conclusion

To conclude, the most important observations made in this section will shortly be discussed. It was shown for the first four questions discussed in this section; *my classes are in English*, *TL Dutch*, *English materials*, *TL English*, *Dutch materials* and *Focus on improving English skills*, that there were significant differences between faculties. However, only estimations of the effects could be given as the data were ordinal by nature. Based on Chi-square calculations, it was

argued that there were less differences in opinion between the faculties in questions 3 and 4 than in the responses to the first two questions. The high Chi-square score for the grouping variable level of education on the question 'my classes are in English' can be explained by the variable *research master*. As English is the obligatory language of teaching in the research masters, it is expected that the scores on this subject for this group would be exceptionally high. The second part of this section was devoted to the final four questions on *experiences/language in practice: TL English, but taught in Dutch, TL Dutch, but taught in English because of students, TL Dutch, but taught in English because of teacher and did not follow course, because it was taught in English*. After recoding the responses to questions related to language switches in general into a new variable, the total amount of students who experienced a language switch was more than 40%. This is argued to be a better indication of the total number of students that were exposed to a change of language of teaching in their course. As is shown in Table 12, there are no significant differences between adjacent faculties when grouped according to ascending percentages. However, significant differences exist between faculties that are removed from one another. The outcomes of the faculty of Veterinary Medicine, strikingly (and significantly) differ from the other faculties. It was argued that obligatory courses in Veterinary Medicine may involve many guest lecturers or international students. For the final question discussed, number eight in Table 10, significant effects were found between the faculties related to not choosing a course for its language of teaching. Especially high scores were found for the faculty of Humanities. As this faculty is the home to (modern) language studies, including Dutch Language and Culture, this could have influenced the results.

## 8.2 Attitude

In this section, participants were asked to indicate to what extent they agreed or disagreed with a specific statement. The following statements were presented (the short forms will be used in the tables in this section):

- Within an educational programme with Dutch as the teaching language, the language of instruction of all obligatory classes must be Dutch (TL Dutch, obligatory courses Dutch)
- In my opinion, it should be possible to do exams in Dutch, even when the language of instruction is English (TL English, exams can be made in Dutch)

- The use of English at the university is a good preparation for an international career (English at university good preparation international career)
- In my opinion, English should only be used as instruction language when the teacher is a native speaker of English (TL English only if teacher is native speaker)
- In my opinion, English should only be used as instruction language when there is a student in the group who does not speak Dutch (TL English only if non-speaking Dutch student present)
- In my future career, a good proficiency of English will be necessary (English important for my future career)
- In my future career, a good proficiency of academic skills in Dutch is necessary (Dutch important for my future career)
- In the Bachelor programme, Dutch should be the only language used (TL bachelor only Dutch)
- In the Master programme, Dutch should be the only language used (TL master only Dutch), and finally
- I find the use of English as the main language at the university a threat for the position of Dutch (Use of English threat for position of Dutch).

The frequency results are reported in Table 15. When looking at these overall results, the respondents in this survey are not negatively inclined towards English education at Utrecht University: in both statements where it was proposed that Dutch should be the only language used, in either the Bachelor or Master programme, the respondents disagreed strongly with a mean score of 1.77 (sd 1.037) for BA and 1.60 (sd 0.930) for MA. Also, as 71.8% of the participants disagree with the final statement; the use of English at the university is not considered a threat for the position of Dutch by the majority of respondents (mean 2.03; sd 1.210). Responses to the question whether the obligatory courses of a Dutch programme must be given in Dutch, some discord is detected. There is only a slight difference between the participants that to some degree do not agree with this statement (41.4%), and the participants that to some degree do find that obligatory courses of a Dutch educational programme must be



Attitude	Entirely	Partially	Neutral	Partially	Entirely	Total	Mean	Sd
	Disagree	disagree		agree	agree			
	N	N	N	N	N	N		
1 TL Dutch, obligatory courses Dutch	395	528	281	556	470	2230	3.08	1.426
%	17.7	23.7	12.6	24.9	21.1	100		
2 TL English, exams can be made in Dutch	27	61	178	904	1067	2237	4.31	.825
%	1.2	2.7	8.0	40.4	47.7	100		
3 English at university good preparation international career	455	518	336	472	453	2234	2.98	1.439
%	20.4	23.2	15.0	21.1	20.3	100		
4 TL English only if teacher is native speaker	820	685	332	270	133	2240	2.20	1.221
%	36.6	30.6	14.8	12.1	5.9	100		
5 TL English only if non-speaking Dutch student present	842	657	311	285	143	2238	2.21	1.248
%	37.6	29.4	13.9	12.7	6.4	100		
6 English important for my future career	70	194	395	660	917	2236	3.97	1.102
%	3.1	8.7	17.7	29.5	41.0	100		
7 Dutch important for my future career	52	120	315	735	1011	2234	4.13	1.000
%	2,3	5,4	14,1	32,9	45,3	100		
8 TL bachelor only Dutch	1181	614	230	120	67	2212	1.77	1.037
%	53.4	27.8	10.4	5.4	3.0	100		
9 TL master only Dutch	1391	494	219	74	42	2220	1.60	.930
%	62.7	22.3	9.9	3.3	1.9	100		
10 Use of English threat for position of Dutch	1033	572	280	240	111	2236	2.03	1.210
%	46.2	25.6	12.5	10.7	5.0	100		

Table 15: Frequencies of all participants in this survey on attitude section

offered in Dutch (46%). The overall mean score is therefore neutral at 3.08 and results include a large standard deviation of 1.426, which shows the difference of opinion amongst the participants. However, the respondents to this survey generally agree that if they would follow

an English course, they should be able to take their exams in Dutch (mean 4.31; sd 0.825). This question is connected to the so-called 'linguistic rights' of native students: as they study in the Netherlands, they should be able to take their exams in their native language. The respondents do not feel strongly about the circumstances under which a course can be given in English; they neither find that English courses should be given only by native speakers (mean 2.20; sd 1.221), nor that English can only be used if international students are enrolled in that course (mean 2.21; sd 1.248). On average, the participants see that a good proficiency of English will benefit them in their future careers (mean 3.97; sd 1.102), but estimate that good academic skills in Dutch will even be more important (mean 4.13; sd 1.000). The most striking result that has come up in this part of the survey is the division amongst participants considering the statement that the use of English at the university is a good preparation for an international career. A total of 41.4% of the participants agree to some extent that the use of English is indeed a good preparation for an international career. On the other hand, 43.6% disagree to some extent to this statement. The overall results are therefore neutral, with a mean score of 2.98, and a high standard deviation of 1.439. Although these results provide a clear image of the averaged points of view on English at Utrecht University, it is more interesting to see where there are differences in opinion and between which groups. Therefore, the following analyses will focus on presenting the differences between groups.

### 8.2.1 Attitude Position Questions

#### 1 TL Dutch, obligatory courses Dutch

The first question posed in the survey under the heading *attitude* was whether participants feel that when following a Dutch educational programme, all the obligatory courses involved must be taught in Dutch. As can be seen in Table 15, the opinions differ greatly among Utrecht University students. In an attempt to understand the variance better, a one-way variance analysis was conducted based on categorisation of responses per faculty, level of education and language of teaching. However, as shown in Table 16, none of these analyses provided statistically significant differences:

<b>TL Dutch, obligatory courses Dutch</b>	F	Df	Significance (p)
Faculty	1.566	6,2223	0.153
Level of Education	2.994	2,2227	0.050
Teaching language	0.492	2,2227	0.611

**Table 16: ANOVA results on faculty, level of education and teaching language (TL Dutch, obligatory courses Dutch)**

It can be concluded that diversity in opinion observed in Table 14 is also valid across faculties, levels of education and teaching languages.

## 2 TL English, exams can be made in Dutch

<b>TL E, exams in D</b>	F	Df	Significance (p)
Faculty	1.656	6,2230	0.128
Level of Education	12.348	2,2234	0.000
Teaching language	24.789	1,2235	0.000

**Table 17: ANOVA results on faculty, level of education and teaching language (TL English, exams taken in Dutch)**

The results related to participants' responses to the question whether they should be able to take examinations in Dutch, even if the course was offered in English, are interesting. As can be seen in Table 15, the respondents on average react very positively to this statement with a mean score of 4.31 (sd 0.825). When dividing these results into faculties, no significant differences are found by means of ANOVA calculations ( $F(6,2230) = 1.656$ ;  $p = 0.128$ ). However, when grouping the participants to level of education, there are significant differences between the groups ( $p < 0.001$ ). On the basis of a one-way ANOVA, it is concluded that there is a significant difference between the *BA* level ( $n = 1323$ ), *MA* level ( $n = 689$ ) and the *RMA* level ( $n = 225$ ) of education in response to the possibility of taking Dutch examinations in courses offered in English. According to a post-hoc analysis (Tukey), it was shown that participants following a research master agree significantly more to the statement above (mean 4.56; sd 0.748), followed by bachelor students (mean 4.28; sd 0.826) and the master students (mean 4.27; sd 0.833). The differences between the bachelor and master level are not significant ( $p = 0.989$ ).

TL E, exams in D	Entirely Disagree		Partially disagree		Neutral		Partially agree		Entirely agree		Mean	Sd
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
	BA	16	1.2	37	2.8	111	8.4	556	42	603		
MA	9	1.3	19	2.8	59	8.6	289	41.9	313	45.4	4.27	0.833
RMA	2	0.9	5	2.2	8	3.6	59	26.2	151	67.1	4.56	0.748

**Table 18: Frequencies, mean scores and standard deviations on TL English, exams can be made in Dutch, grouped by level of education**

The differences between participants with different languages of instruction were calculated in a similar way. At a mean score of 4.54 (sd 0.746), the respondents following an English educational programme (of which approximately half consists of research master students), agree most with being able to take exams in Dutch (mean 4.25; sd 0.835), even when a course is taught in English. The ANOVA analysis showed a significant effect ( $F(2,2234) = 22.524$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ).

An interesting question to ask now is whether students with a different first language than Dutch also agree with this statement. The following remark was made by participant 3214: “it is unfair that the [D]utch can use their native language in exams for international master programmes”. Similarly, participant 3432 reacted: “I am one of [the] foreign students of MBI (master business informatics). English is not my native language as well. Within this department, Dutch students are allowed to give their final thesis present[ation] in Dutch. I found this is not consequent to the course.” Considering these remarks, it was decided that the responses to the statement concerning taking exams in Dutch, whereas the teaching language of a course is in English would be compared to participants with different native languages (Table 18). Strikingly, although there is a significant difference between Dutch native speakers and participants that have another native language ( $F(1,2235) = 24.789$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), contradicting to what was expected from the basis of the afore mentioned remarks, foreign participants concur with the statement to a larger degree (mean 4.61, sd 0.719) than participants with Dutch as their native language (mean 4.28; sd 0.828).

TL English, exams can be made in Dutch	Dutch		Other	
	N	%	N	%
Entirely disagree	26	1.3	1	0.6
Partially disagree	58	2.8	3	1.8
Neutral	170	8.2	8	4.8
Partially agree	868	41.9	36	21.6
Entirely agree	948	45.8	119	71.3
Total	2070	100	167	100
Mean	4.28		4.61	
Sd	0.828		0.719	

Table 19: Frequencies native language (TL English, exams can be made in Dutch)

This finding can be interpreted as positive for the development of bilingual education. A possible explanation is that students with other native languages are confident enough about their English proficiency and that allowing Dutch students to take the exam in Dutch would not disadvantage the non-native Dutch students.

### 3 English at university good preparation international career

E good preparation international career	F	Df	Significance (p)
Faculty	8.703	6,2227	0.000
Level of Education	51.861	2,2231	0.000
Teaching language	186.881	1,2196	0.000

Table 20: ANOVA results on faculty, level of education and teaching language (English at university good preparation international career)

The statement whether the English which is used at Utrecht University is a good preparation for an international career will be discussed next. As demonstrated in Table 15, opinions differ greatly among the participants. To provide insight about the variance in opinions on this matter, variance between faculties were investigated first of all. With  $(F(6,2227) = 8.703; p < 0.001)$ , it is demonstrated that there are, indeed, significant differences in opinion between the faculties. Those students in faculties which indicated that they have the least contact with English during

their courses, are most positive about the statement that English used at university is a good preparation for an international career (see Table 21); these attitudes are prevalent in the veterinary medicine and social and behavioural sciences faculties (mean score of 3.26).

English at university good preparation international career	Entirely Disagree		Partially disagree		Neutral		Partially agree		Entirely agree		Mean	Sd
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
	Science	78	19.8	87	22.1	63	16	84	21.3	82		
Geosciences	66	31	50	23.5	23	10.8	41	19.2	33	15.5	2.65	1.474
Medicine	43	17.2	64	25.6	44	17.6	70	28	29	11.6	2.91	1.299
Humanities	102	18.7	136	24.9	91	16.7	98	17.9	119	21.8	2.99	1.432
Vet. Medicine	20	11.8	35	20.7	35	20.7	39	23.1	40	23.7	3.26	1,342
Law, Ec, Government	83	32.2	63	24.4	27	10.5	43	16.7	42	16.3	2.60	1.484
Soc. and Beh Sciences	63	15.6	83	20.5	53	13.1	97	24	108	26.7	3.26	1.441

**Table 21: frequencies, mean scores and standard deviations on English at university is a good preparation for an international career, grouped by level of education**

The participants in faculties that are in most contact with English as language of teaching have scored significantly lower: Law, Economics and Government (mean 2.60; sd 1.484) and Geosciences (mean 2.65; sd 1.474). Knowing that there are significant differences between the levels of education and languages of teaching, the results for this item viewed from the perspective of level of education might provide new insight (Table 22). These results indicate a statistically significant difference between the levels of education ( $F(2,2231)= 51.861$ ;  $p<0.001$ ) and opinions about the usefulness of English in preparation for an international career. As is illustrated in Table 20, an astonishing number of 43.0% of the participants following a research masters strongly disagree, and a total of 70.1% in total disagree with the statement that the use of English in their education is going to benefit them in their future careers (mean 2.11; sd

1.249). As the post-hoc Tukey calculations indicate, the research masters group scores significantly lower than the other levels of education ( $p < 0,05$ ) indicating that they do not agree with this expectation. Although the MA group reacts more negatively to this

English at university good preparation international career	Entirely Disagree		Partially disagree		Neutral		Partially agree		Entirely agree		Mean	Sd
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
	BA	222	16.8	289	21.8	200	15.1	299	22.4	313		
MA	138	20.0	169	24.5	110	15.9	146	21.2	127	18.4	2.93	1.411
RMA	95	43.0	60	27.1	26	11.8	27	12.2	13	5.9	2.11	1.249

**Table 22: Frequencies, means and standard deviations on level of education (English at university good preparation international career)**

statement (mean 2.93, sd 1.411) than the BA group (mean 3.15, sd 1,429), these differences are not statistically significant ( $p > 0.05$ ). Strikingly, these results indicate that students who had the most experience with English education at Utrecht University, are most critical of its contribution of the importance of English in preparing them for an international career. However, it may not necessarily be that students are critical towards the quality of English education. Another possibility is that because they use so much English, they probably are proficient in the language and do not regard it as a specific enhancer of chances in future careers. Another option might be that English is not as important in the participant's future career, but other languages (for instance German) might be. The responses to *The use of English at the university is a good preparation for an international career* will now be compared as categorised by language of teaching (Table 23). Again, the responses prove to differ significantly when divided into different groups according to language of teaching ( $F(1,2196) = 186.881$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). On the basis of a one-way ANOVA calculation, it is established that there are significant differences between participants with Dutch as the language of language in their educational programme ( $n = 1773$ ) and participants with English as language of teaching. The respondents following an English educational programme are indeed most critical about the

English at university good preparation international career	Entirely Disagree		Partially disagree		Neutral		Partially agree		Entirely agree		Mean	Sd
	N		N		N		N		N			
	Dutch	266	15.0	396	22.3	280	15.8	424	23.9	407		
English	185	43.5	112	26.4	46	10.8	42	9.9	40	9,4	2.15	1.329

**Table 23: Frequencies, mean and standard deviations on teaching language (English at university good preparation international career)**

statement that English used at the university is a good preparation for an international career (mean 2.15; sd 1.329), than the *Dutch* group (mean 3.17; sd 1.397).

The remarkable responses to the position question *The use of English at the university is a good preparation for an international career* need in-depth research. As this thesis is based on a broad survey, future investigations must focus on the research master students, or, in general, students with an English educational programme. The cause of the negative responses to this question must be investigated more fully, before one could conclude that the quality of education in English, crucial for the internationalisation project of Utrecht University to be a success, is in need of improvement.

#### 4 TL English only if teacher is native speaker

TL E only if L1 teacher	F	Df	Significance (p)
Faculty	5.028	6,2233	0.000
Level of Education	23.127	2,2236	0.000
Teaching language	80.012	1,2201	0.000

**Table 24: ANOVA results on faculty, level of education and teaching language (Teaching language English only if teacher is native speaker)**

The participants were confronted with the position question whether a course can only be taught in English, if this is done by a native speaker. The overall tendency in the responses is that the majority does not find it problematic to take classes from non-native English speakers in that language. However, a one-way ANOVA analysis shows significant differences between participants of different faculties with respect to this subject ( $F(6,2233) = 5.028$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ).



Though, when considering the mean ranks, the distances between the answers are very small, ranging from 1.92 (sd 1.474) for Geosciences to 2.37 (sd 1.231) for Social and Behavioural Sciences. When calculating the exact distribution of significant differences between the faculties by means of a post-hoc Tukey test, it appears that significant differences only exist between the faculties Geosciences and Sciences versus Social and Behavioural Sciences and Law, Economics and Government, which form the far-ends of the scale. Considering the responses to the previous statement, English at the university as a good preparation for a future career, it is interesting to note the levels of education of students and their opinions on taking English courses from a non-native speaker.

TL English only if L1 teacher	Entirely Disagree		Partially disagree		Neutral		Partially agree		Entirely agree		Mean	Sd
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
	Science	173	43.9	105	26.6	53	13.5	46	11.7	17		
Geosciences	107	50.2	52	54.4	28	13.1	15	7	11	5.2	1.92	1.175
Medicine	81	32.3	85	33.9	34	13.5	36	14.3	15	6	2.28	1.224
Humanities	190	37	162	31.5	81	15.8	51	9.9	30	5.8	2.16	1.194
Vet. Medicine	50	29.6	65	38.5	26	15.4	22	13	6	3.6	2.22	1.117
Law, Ec, Government	89	34.5	73	28.3	38	14.7	33	12.8	25	9.7	2.35	1.327
Soc. and Beh Sciences	118	29.2	131	32.4	69	17.1	59	14.6	27	6.7	2.37	1.231

**Table 25: Frequencies, mean and standard deviations grouped by faculty on TL English only if teacher is native speaker**

Looking at the mean scores arranged by level of education, large and significant differences are evident ( $F(2,2236) = 23.127$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) (Table 26):

TL English only if L1 teacher	Entirely Disagree		Partially disagree		Neutral		Partially agree		Entirely agree		Mean	Sd
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
	BA	222	16.8	289	21.8	200	15.1	299	22.4	313		
MA	138	20.0	169	24.5	110	15.9	146	21.2	127	18.4	2.93	1.411
RMA	95	43.0	60	27.1	26	11.8	27	12.2	13	5.9	2.11	1.249

**Table 26: Frequencies, means and standard deviation grouped by level of education on TL English only if teacher is native speaker**

Participants following a research masters significantly discriminate themselves again from the entire set of students (Tukey,  $p < 0.05$ ). The opinions of the research masters students hinge between 'entirely disagree' (1) and 'partially disagree'(2), in contrast to the opinions of other students who are more neutral.

TL English only if L1 teacher	Entirely Disagree		Partially disagree		Neutral		Partially agree		Entirely agree		Mean	Sd
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
	Dutch	562	31.7	563	31.7	298	16.8	240	13.5	112		
English	246	57.5	110	25.7	31	7.2	22	5.1	19	4.4	1.73	1.088

**Table 27: Frequencies, means and standard deviation grouped by teaching language on TL English only if teacher is native speaker**

Similar responses are found when differences are investigated between groups categorised along lines of language of teaching: only the participants with an English educational programme significantly ( $F(1, 2201) = 80.012$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) distinguish themselves from the population (mean 1.73; sd 1.088), hovering between 'entirely disagree' (1) and 'partially disagree'(2). Students with Dutch (mean 2.31; sd 1.224) as their language of teaching score higher, indicating that they feel more strongly that teaching in English should be conducted by native speakers.

It can be concluded from these results that respondents who are in frequent contact with English, i.e. following a research masters and/or English educational programme, feel most

strongly that their teachers do not have to be native speakers in order to successfully teach a course.

## 5 TL English only if non-speaking Dutch student present

It was postulated in the design of the survey that English used as language of teaching would increase because of the presence of more international students that are not able to use Dutch. The data presented at Table 15 showed that the majority of Utrecht University participants in this survey does not agree with this statement. According to the students in this survey, the presence of a non-Dutch speaking student does not invariably result in English language teaching. To verify whether there are differences in opinion between the faculties, a one-way variance analysis was conducted, but ( $F(6,2231)= 1.366$ ;  $p = 0.224$ ) no significant differences were found between the faculties. Similar results were obtained when testing for significant differences related to the grouping variable *level of education*:

<b>TL E, only if non-Dutch student is present</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>Significance (p)</b>
Faculty	1.266	6,2231	0.224
Level of Education	1.795	2,2235	0.166
Teaching language	4.164	1,2199	0.041

**Table 28: ANOVA results on faculty, level of education and teaching language on TL English only if non-speaking Dutch student present**

On the basis of Table 28, depicting the ANOVA analyses, it can be concluded that no significant differences between the faculties, or levels of education are found with respect to the statement that English can only be used as a language of teaching in the presence of a non-Dutch speaking student. However, a significant effect was found on the opinions of students with either Dutch or English as the language of teaching in their respective educational programmes. As can be seen from Table 29, although students following a Dutch educational programme stand negatively towards the statement (mean 2.24; sd 1.213), students following an English educational programme are even more critical (mean 2.10; sd 1.379).

TL E, only if non-Dutch student is present	Entirely Disagree		Partially disagree		Neutral		Partially agree		Entirely agree		Mean	Sd
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Dutch	614	34.6	559	31.5	261	14.7	245	13.8	95	5.4	2.24	1.213
English	213	49.9	86	20.1	45	10.5	38	8.9	45	10.5	2.10	1.379

Table 29: Frequencies, means and standard deviations grouped by teaching language on *TL English only if non-speaking Dutch student present*

## 6 English important for my future career

TL E, only if non-Dutch student is present	F	Df	Significance (p)
Faculty	21.398	6,2229	0.000
Level of Education	30.550	3,2232	0.000
Teaching language	152.420	1,2197	0.000

Table 30: ANOVA results on faculty, level of education and teaching language on *English important for my future career*

It was shown in Table 15 that the bulk of the participants indicate they will need English in their future careers. However, it is expected that the responses to the statement *in my future career, a good proficiency of English will be necessary*, will vary significantly across faculties, levels of education and teaching language, as all the different educational programmes prepare students for their individual working fields, either nationally or internationally orientated. Starting with the distribution across faculties, it is clear that there are significant differences between the faculties related to this statement ( $F(6,2229) = 21.398$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). After conducting a post-hoc Tukey analysis, it was found that students from the faculty of Veterinary Medicine indicated least of all the students that English proficiency is necessary in their future careers (mean 3.35; sd 1.174). They scored significantly ( $p < 0.05$ ) lower than the faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences (mean 3.69; sd 1.130), which also shows a significant difference with the remaining faculties (see Table 31). Since the respondents from these faculties have indicated that they have not encountered many English courses during their educational programmes, it is not surprising that they have indicated to have the least need for English proficiency in their future.

Faculty	Veterinary Medicine	Social and Behavioural Sciences	Humanities	Law, Economics, Government	Science	Geosciences	Medicine
Mean	3.35	3.69	3.94	4.09	4.13	4.23	4.27

**Table 31: Mean scores on *English important for my future career***  
 full line = significant difference to adjacent faculty  
 dotted line = significant difference to Geosciences and Medicine

Participants of the faculties of Humanities (mean 3.94; sd 1.148), Law, Government and Economics (mean 4.09; sd 1.044) and Science (mean 4.13; sd 1.046) have statistically significant indicated that their need of English in their future career is higher than the first two faculties. The faculties of Geosciences (mean 4.23; sd 0.935) and surprisingly Medicine (mean 4.27; sd 0.910) have resulted in the highest scores. As expected, since the faculties of Science and Geosciences have thus far come up in this survey as being most positively oriented towards English, and most in contact with English in class, these faculties have scored high on this statement. Medicine, achieving the highest score on the question whether a good proficiency of English is necessary for a student's future career, however, does not correspond to the image sketched of the faculty with respect to English.

As reported by the Vice-Dean of Humanities, the issue of whether English is necessary in future careers, is used as one of the criteria for decisions about the changing of the language of teaching in programmes from Dutch to English (e.g. the language of teaching in the research masters was changed to English). Data from this study can provide insight into the opinions of students on this matter (Table 32):

English important for future career	Entirely Disagree		Partially disagree		Neutral		Partially agree		Entirely agree		Mean	Sd
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
BA	39	3.0	113	8.6	259	19.6	392	29.7	518	39.2	3.94	1.092
MA	28	4.1	77	11.2	129	18.7	215	31.2	241	34.9	3.82	1.147
RMA	3	1.3	4	1.8	7	3.1	53	23.6	158	70.2	4.60	0.757

**Table 32: Frequencies, means and standard deviations grouped by level of education on *English important for future career***

By means of a one-way ANOVA, it was established that there are significant differences between the levels of education ( $F(3,2232) = 30.550$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) with respect to opinions about the use of English for future career opportunities. As can be seen from the table and graph above, the participants following a research masters differ from the other levels of education when it comes to the perceived importance of English in their future careers (mean 4.60; sd 0.757). Confirmed by a post-hoc Tukey analysis, the research masters group significantly distinguishes itself from the other levels of education ( $p < 0.05$ ), which do not differ significantly from each other ( $p = 0.224$ ).

E important for future career	Entirely Disagree		Partially disagree		Neutral		Partially agree		Entirely agree		Mean	Sd
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Dutch	63	3.6	179	10.1	358	20.2	560	31.7	609	34.4	3.83	1.116
English	6	1.4	10	2.3	26	6	92	21.4	269	68.8	4.54	0.823

**Table 33: Frequencies, means and standard deviations grouped by teaching language on English important for future career**

Similarly, when grouping the results according to language of teaching, significant differences are found ( $F(1,2197) = 152.420$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) between groups. Students following an English programme indicated that English is significantly more important for their future careers (mean 4.54; sd 0.823) than students following a Dutch programme (mean 3.83; sd 1.116).

The most important observation to be made is that the research masters group seem to hold the same opinions as that of university officials concerning the importance of English in the international market place, and the ultimate work destination of research masters students in the international arena. These opinions are similar to those expressed by Prof. dr. Peter Coopmans and Marjolein Boessenkool in section 5. In this context, it is worrisome that students do not feel that increased English used at the university is a good preparation for an international career. The discrepancy between the need for English by the research masters students and their opinions about the importance of English in their future careers need more in-depth research.

## 7 Dutch important for my future career

TL E, only if non-Dutch student is present	F	Df	Significance (p)
Faculty	18.835	6,2227	0.000
Level of Education	70.526	3,2230	0.000
Teaching language	339.088	1,2195	0.000

**Table 44: ANOVA results on faculty, level of education and teaching language on Dutch important for my future career**

In acknowledgement of the bilingual nature of Dutch students (as a result of high proficiency in English upon exist from high school) the participants were also asked about the importance of Dutch academic skills in their future careers. As can be seen in Table 15, the participants from this survey indicated that Dutch academic skills are very important for their future careers (mean = 4,13). However, it is expected that the participants who indicated that they have a lower need of English in their future career, will score high on this position question. As expected, after conducting a one-way ANOVA ( $F_{6,2227} = 18.835$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), the order found in

Dutch important for future career	Entirely Disagree		Partially disagree		Neutral		Partially agree		Entirely agree		Mean	Sd
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
	Science	17	4.3	33	8.4	88	22.3	138	34.9	119		
Geosciences	9	4.2	20	9.3	36	16.8	83	38.8	66	30.8	3.83	1.098
Medicine	6	2.4	17	6.8	28	11.2	89	35.6	210	52.1	4.12	1.015
Humanities	6	1.1	26	2.8	85	15.6	159	29.1	270	49.5	4.12	1.015
Vet. Medicine	5	3	3	1.8	16	9.5	67	39.9	77	45.8	4.24	0.917
Law, Ec, Government	6	2.3	12	4.7	24	9.3	57	22.1	159	61.6	4.36	0.989
Soc. and Beh Sciences	3	0.7	9	2.2	38	9.4	143	35.5	210	52.1	4.36	0.802

**Table 35: Frequencies, means and standard deviation grouped by faculty on Dutch important for my future career**

the previous question is roughly mirrored. The faculties of Science and Geosciences who have thus far been the most positive about and in contact with courses in English, now indicate that Dutch is less important for their future career than the other faculties (Table 35). As the post-hoc Tukey analysis shows, there are only significant differences between Geosciences and Sciences versus the other faculties. The distribution of opinions ordered to level of education is likewise mirrored in relation to the previous question.

Indeed, it is established through an ANOVA analysis that significant differences exist between the levels of education on this statement ( $F(3,2230) = 70.526$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). The research masters score significantly lower on this statement (mean 3.26; sd 1.248) than the Masters (mean 4.38; sd 0.938) and Bachelors (mean 4.21; sd 0.909). In other words, in the Masters and Bachelors there is less contact with English as language of education and there is no expectation for international careers. Therefore students perceive their Dutch proficiency as particularly important for their future careers.

<b>Dutch important for future career</b>	Entirely Disagree		Partially disagree		Neutral		Partially agree		Entirely agree		Mean	Sd
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
BA	13	1	54	4.1	197	14.9	441	33.4	616	46.6	4.21	0.909
MA	12	1.7	34	4.9	59	8.6	228	33.1	356	51.7	4.38	0.938
RMA	27	12.1	32	14.3	59	26.3	67	29.9	39	17.4	3.26	1.248

**Table 36: Frequencies, means and standard deviation grouped by level of education on Dutch important for my future career**

These distinctions also exist when comparing the languages of teaching with one another ( $F(1,2195) = 339.088$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). Participants following an English educational programme are significantly less inclined to need Dutch academic skills in their future careers (Table 37). However, it must be noted that 49.9% of the participants following an English educational programme indicated they have a need for Dutch academic skills in their future careers.



<b>Dutch important for future career</b>	Entirely Disagree		Partially disagree		Neutral		Partially agree		Entirely agree		Mean	Sd
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Dutch	16	0.9	55	3.1	192	10.9	595	33.7	910	51.5	4.32	0.854
English	35	8.2	63	14.7	117	27.3	126	29.4	88	20.5	3.39	1.198

**Table 37: Frequencies, means and standard deviation grouped by teaching language on Dutch important for my future career**

An interesting option is to filter out the respondents of the survey that indicated that they have a native language different from Dutch. It could be argued that these participants are international students and that their response to this question is therefore a “non-response” that should be ignored. Excluding the non-Dutch native speakers from the analyses does not, however, change the results: with a mean score of 3.47 (sd 1.145), the research masters group remains less positive about the potential use of Dutch skills in their future careers.

## 8 TL bachelor only Dutch

<b>TL bachelor only Dutch</b>	F	Df	Significance (p)
Faculty	10.318	6,2205	0.000
Level of Education	4.974	2,2209	0.008
Teaching language	22.412	1,2173	0.000

**Table 59: ANOVA results on faculty, level of education and teaching language on TL Bachelor only Dutch**

The participants were asked to indicate to what extent they agreed to the following statement: *in the Bachelor programme, Dutch should be the only language used*. As can be seen in Table 15, for the most part, respondents have indicated that they do not agree. It appears that there are significant differences with respect to this statement between the faculties ( $F(6,2205) = 10.318$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ).

TL Bachelor only Dutch	Entirely Disagree		Partially disagree		Neutral		Partially agree		Entirely agree		Mean	Sd
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
	Science	178	45.4	121	30.9	41	10.5	32	8.2	20		
Geosciences	149	71	38	18.1	13	6.2	6	2.9	4	1.9	1.47	0.881
Medicine	92	37.4	95	38.6	39	15.9	16	6.5	4	1.6	1.96	0.970
Humanities	320	59.1	139	25.7	40	7.4	26	4.8	16	3	1.67	1.007
Vet. Medicine	70	42.9	45	27.6	28	17.2	12	7.4	8	4.9	2.04	1.159
Law, Ec, Government	156	60.5	55	21.3	29	11.2	9	3.5	9	3.5	1.68	1.036
Soc. and Beh Sciences	216	53.7	121	30.1	40	10	19	4.7	6	1.5	1.70	0.934

**Table 39: Frequencies, means and standard deviation grouped by faculty on TL Bachelor only Dutch**

By conducting ANOVA analyses and a post-hoc test according to the Tukey method, it was calculated that the faculty of Geosciences (mean 1.47; sd 0.881) opposes this statement most strongly, showing a significant difference of opinion with the faculties of Veterinary Medicine, Social and Behavioural Sciences and Science. Where the faculties of Geosciences and Science have thus far been aligned with each other, respondents from the faculty of Science (mean 1.97, sd 1.160) disagree to a lesser extent with this statement that Dutch should be the only language used in the teaching of the Bachelor programmes. However, it must be kept in mind that the differences between the faculties are small, with a mean ranging between 1.47 for Geosciences and 2,04 for Veterinary Medicine. Categorisation of the results according to level of education also highlighted significant differences ( $F(2,2209) = 4.974$ ;  $p = 0.008$ ) between groups. After conducting a post-hoc Tukey test, it was shown that the opinions of the research masters group (mean 1.62; sd 0,967) and the bachelor group (mean 1.82; sd 1.075) differed statistically significantly, but that they did not differ extensively from the master group (mean 1.72; sd 0,975).

TL Bachelor only Dutch	Entirely Disagree		Partially disagree		Neutral		Partially agree		Entirely agree		Mean	Sd
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
BA	687	52	353	26.7	152	11.5	85	6.4	43	3.3	1.82	1.075
MA	364	53.8	202	29.9	66	9.8	26	3.8	18	2.7	1.72	0.975
RMA	130	60.2	59	27.3	12	5.6	9	4.2	6	2.8	1.62	0.967

**Table 40: Frequencies, means and standard deviation grouped by level of education on TL Bachelor only Dutch**

Categorising the participants according to language of teaching highlighted significant differences ( $F(1,2173) = 22.412$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) between groups as well. An interesting result from the ANOVA analysis is that the participants with Dutch as their language of teaching are significantly less negative about the exclusive use of Dutch in the Bachelor programme than those with English or another language of teaching (Table 41):

TL Bachelor only Dutch	Entirely Disagree		Partially disagree		Neutral		Partially agree		Entirely agree		Mean	Sd
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Dutch	884	50.3	511	29.1	199	11.3	109	6.2	55	3.1	1.56	0.941
English	269	64.5	97	23.3	28	6.7	11	2.6	12	2.9	1.83	1.057

**Table 41: Frequencies, means and standard deviations grouped by teaching language on TL bachelor only Dutch**

## 9 TL master only Dutch

TL Master only Dutch	F	Df	Significance (p)
Faculty	7.804	6,2213	0.000
Level of Education	14.241	2,2216	0.000
Teaching language	74.438	1,2181	0.000

**Table 42: ANOVA results on faculty, level of education and teaching language on TL Master only Dutch**

The statement about Dutch as the only language of teaching used in the Bachelor programme was also presented to participants for the Masters programme. Similar to the position question on the Bachelor programme, the majority of respondents does not agree with the statement (Table 15). However, significant differences between groups are visible again if participants are categorised according to faculties ( $F(6,2213)= 7.804$ ;  $p<0.001$ ). The faculty of Veterinary Medicine is least critical towards the use of Dutch as the only language of teaching in the masters programmes. The Tukey method revealed that only this faculty differs significantly from the other faculties (mean 1.92; sd 1.085) on this issue. The other faculties do not significantly differ from each other (mean between 1.33 and 1.76).

TL Master only Dutch	Entirely Disagree		Partially disagree		Neutral		Partially agree		Entirely agree		Mean	Sd
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
	Science	261	66.1	74	18.7	42	10.6	13	3.3	5		
Geosciences	168	79.2	30	14.2	4	1.9	7	3.3	3	1.4	1.33	0.795
Medicine	119	48	85	34.3	33	13.3	7	2.8	4	1.6	1.76	0.903
Humanities	360	66.4	105	19.4	44	8.1	21	3.9	12	2.2	1.56	0.953
Vet. Medicine	77	47	43	26.2	30	18.3	8	4.9	6	3.7	1.92	1.085
Law, Ec, Government	167	64.7	50	19.4	29	11.2	4	1.6	8	3.1	1.59	0.967
Soc. and Beh Sciences	239	59.6	107	26.7	37	9.2	14	3.5	4	1	1.60	0.870

**Table 43: frequencies, means and standard deviation grouped by faculty on TL Master only Dutch**

When the participants are categorised according to level of education the research masters students' opinions differ statistically significantly from the other groups ( $F(2,2216) = 14.241$ ;  $p<0.001$ ; Tukey post-hoc analysis; mean 1.25; sd 0.629). Although all the other levels, bachelor and masters differ statistically significantly from the research masters, no significant

Level of Education	RMA	MA	BA
Mean	3.35	3.69	3.94

**Table 44: Mean scores (TL master only Dutch)**  
full line = significant difference to adjacent level of education

differences exist between these groups ( $p = 0.556$ ). With respect to language of teaching, participants who follow a Dutch educational programme (mean 1.68; sd 0.961) hold different opinions from those ( $F(1,2181) = 74.438$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) respondents with English (mean 1.26; sd 0.714) as their language of teaching. The students following an English programme are significantly more critical towards the statement that Dutch should be the only teaching language in the Masters programme (see Table 41).

TL Master only Dutch	Entirely Disagree		Partially disagree		Neutral		Partially agree		Entirely agree		Mean	Sd
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Dutch	100	57.2	445	25.3	201	11.4	72	4.1	34	1.9	1.68	0.961
English	360	84.3	43	10.1	14	3.3	2	0.5	8	1.9	1.26	0.714

**Table 45: Frequencies, means and standard deviation grouped by teaching language on TL Master only Dutch**

## 10 Use of English threat for position of Dutch

Use of E threat for position of D	F	Df	Significance (p)
Faculty	5.338	6,229	0.000
Level of Education	5.747	3,2232	0.003
Teaching language	19.319	1,2197	0.000

**Table 46: ANOVA results on faculty, level of education and teaching language on Use of English threat for position of Dutch**

The final position question that the participants responded to was whether they find that the use of English as the main language at university is a threat for the position of Dutch. As can be seen from Table 15, the general opinion amongst the participants in this survey is that this is not the case (mean 2.03; sd 1.210). First, the results were tested for significance if grouped by faculty. There are differences between faculties regarding this issue ( $F(6,2229) = 5.338$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ).

Use of English threat for the position of Dutch	Entirely Disagree		Partially disagree		Neutral		Partially agree		Entirely agree		Mean	Sd
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
	Science	197	50.1	102	26	43	10.9	35	8.9	16		
Geosciences	108	50.5	52	20.1	32	12.4	25	9.7	18	6.9	1.93	1.181
Medicine	105	41.8	74	29.5	36	14.3	31	12.4	5	2	2.03	1.113
Humanities	233	42.5	122	22.3	80	14.6	72	13.1	41	7.5	2.21	1.315
Vet. Medicine	54	32.3	59	35.3	23	13.8	19	11.4	12	7.2	2.26	1.227
Law, Ec, Government	132	51	52	20.1	32	12.4	25	9.7	18	6.9	2.02	1.285
Soc. and Beh Sciences	204	50.5	112	27.7	41	10.1	37	9.2	10	2.5	1.85	1.085

**Table 47: Frequencies, means and standard deviation grouped by faculty on Use of English threat for the position of Dutch**

When calculating the exact relation between the faculties by means of the post-hoc Tukey method, only the faculty of Humanities proved to differ significantly from the other faculties and stood, together with Veterinary Medicine, least critical towards this statement. An explanation for the results can be that students from the faculty of Humanities are often involved in linguistic studies and may come across other situations in which a dominant language (in this case English in science) has undermined the native language. According to Prof. dr. Peter Coopmans, it is normal for students of Humanities to have a more critical view towards English in education because it “is a part of their nature”.

Categorisation of responses by level of education indicated significant ( $F(3,2232) = 5.747$ ;  $p = 0.003$ ) differences between groups. After conducting a post hoc analysis, it was shown that participants following a research masters are less afraid that English could potentially pose a threat to the position of Dutch (mean 1.77; sd 1.090) than the participants who are in their Bachelor or Master phase (both mean 2.06; sd 1.219).

Use E threat for position D	Entirely Disagree		Partially disagree		Neutral		Partially agree		Entirely agree		Mean	Sd
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
	BA	595	45	345	26.1	164	12.4	152	11.5	67		
MA	308	44.6	183	26.5	91	13.2	69	10	39	5.7	2.06	1.1219
RMA	130	58.3	44	19.7	25	11.2	19	8.5	5	2.2	1.77	1.090

**Table 48: Frequencies, means and standard deviation grouped by level of education on Use of English threat for the position of Dutch**

When the responses were categorised according to language of teaching, there are some differences between groups. In general, both groups responded negatively towards the use of English at the university being a threat for the position of Dutch. However, as students following an English educational programme (mean 1.26; sd 0.714) are more inclined to take a positive stand towards English education, this group reacted significantly more negative ( $F(1,2197) = 19.319$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) on the final position question than the Dutch group (mean 1.68; sd 0,961). Another explanation could be that these participants might be bilingual and therefore feel that using multiple languages does not threaten the already acquired language.

TL Master only Dutch	Entirely Disagree		Partially disagree		Neutral		Partially agree		Entirely agree		Mean	Sd
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
	Dutch	100	57.2	445	25.3	201	11.4	72	4.1	34		
English	360	84.3	43	10.1	14	3.3	2	0.5	8	1.9	1.26	0.714

**Table 49: Frequencies, means and standard deviation grouped by teaching language on Use of English threat for the position of Dutch**

### 8.2.2 Conclusion Attitudes

In this section, the results from the ten position questions are summarised, explaining the most important and also the unexpected findings. Overall, the respondents that participated in the survey do not by definition hold a negative opinion towards being educated in English.

The use of English at the university is generally not experienced as a threat for Dutch. For instance, responses to the statement related to the use of English only in the presence of a non-Dutch student or native-speaker teacher, the majority of respondents reacted negatively. Similar negative reactions were found to the proposal that Dutch should be the only language used in the Bachelor or Master programme, the majority of respondents reacted negatively. This suggests that participants are positive in general to the use of English as language of teaching. Following English courses should remain an option. However, on the first statement, whether the obligatory courses of a Dutch educational programme must be given in Dutch, no statistically significant differences emerged. The opinions of the respondents on this subject are divided throughout all the layers of university as no significant differences were found between the faculties, levels of education as well as language of teaching. Some unexpected results were reported in the study. On the question whether it should be possible for students to take their exams in Dutch in an English educational programme, some surprising findings were made. An analysis of some of the remarks contributed by international students prepared the researcher to expect that the majority of respondents would disagree with this statement. Surprisingly, the participants with a different native language than Dutch agreed with this statement even more than Dutch respondents. Another unexpected result was that the Medicine students regard English as an important issue in their future careers, but they have the least contact with English in their programmes. It could be argued that Medical students want to keep up with new (research) methods, pursuing an international career, or communicating with patients in English, which could explain the positive responses to the use of English in their future careers. Overall, the faculties of Science and Geosciences seem to be most positively positioned towards using English as language of education. This was also true for participants following a research masters. When considering the importance of good proficiency in English for the future careers of these groups, the following tendencies became clear: together with, surprisingly, Medicine, these faculties indicated most strongly that a good proficiency of English is important for their future. For the research masters students, this effect was even stronger. However, as these groups verify that their future career lies in an international context, the results on whether the English used at the university is indeed a good preparation for an international career could be alarming. Participants that are least in contact with English (the Medical students) are mostly convinced of the fact that the use of English at the university is a good preparation for an international career. The students actually in contact with English and who selected



programmes that would supposedly provide access to international careers do not believe that using English at university is good preparation for their future careers. One could argue that they are dissatisfied with the quality of the preparation (the quality of English) for use in their future careers. However, this finding could also be explained in different manners and in the context of future research, the explanation of this finding is one of the most important findings to pursue.

## 8.3 Skills

The final section of the survey on the use of Dutch and English at Utrecht University considers the self-reported perceptions of language skills of students and student reports of the language skills of teachers in both languages. First, the self-perception of English skills of the respondents will be discussed, followed by a section on their perceptions of their Dutch language skills. Finally, the opinion of the participants on teachers' language skills will be discussed. As is customary for this thesis, the data will be discussed according to faculty, level of education and teaching language. As distinct questions may arise during the discussion, the results will also be analysed in relation to other variables.

### 8.3.1 Self-Reported Perceptions of English Skills

During this section of the survey, the participants were asked to estimate their proficiency in English by indicating to what extent they agreed with a statement about different types of language skills. Two of the questions focus on receptive language skills: participants were asked if they were able to follow a lecture in English (listening) and whether they could read an English article on their field of study (comprehensive reading). The other two questions focused on productive language skills: the participants were asked if they were able to give presentations in English (oral skills) and if they could write a paper in English (writing). The overall results are listed in Table 50. As is illustrated in the table, the respondents participating in this survey believe that they have strong skills in English in terms of receptive skills. The majority of respondents (84.5%) indicated that they are able to follow their classes in English. Moreover, a total of 87% indicated that they are good at reading an English article in their field of study. The

Self-reported perception of English skills	Entirely Disagree	Partially disagree	Neutral	Partially agree	Entirely agree	Total	Mean	Sd
	N	N	N	N	N	N		
1 I am able to follow classes in English	26	108	211	732	1146	2223	4.29	.910
%	1.2	4.9	9.5	32.9	51.6	100		
2 I am able to give a presentation in English	217	415	512	629	452	2225	3.31	1.256
%	9.8	18.7	23	28.3	20.0	100		
3 I am good at reading an English article in my field of study	20	81	180	832	1120	2243	4.32	.842
%	0.9	3.6	8.5	37.1	49.9	100		
4 I am good at writing a paper in English	172	373	510	659	494	2208	3.42	1.224
%	7.8	16.9	23.1	29.8	22.4	100		
5 I get better results for classes taught in English	408	475	958	104	130	2080	2.56	1.058
%	19.6	22.8	46.1	5.2	6.2	100		

**Table 50: Frequencies, means and standard deviation of all participants on own English skills**

productive language skills, however, are more problematic. Here, only 48.3% indicated that they are able to give a presentation in English. That leaves 28.5% of the participants to react negatively to this statement. The remaining 23% stand neutral towards this statement. The participants estimated their writing skills at a similar level: 24.7% of the participants do not feel they are able to write a paper in English; another 23.1% react neutral, which leaves 52.2% of the participants that are of the opinion that they are able to write a paper. In response to the question whether participants scored higher in courses taught in English, almost half of the respondents reacted neutrally. This can be interpreted that these respondents do not experience language of teaching as an interfering variable in education. The majority of the other half of the participants scored lower in their English courses (42.4%), where 11.4% indicated to have scored higher. However, as has been shown in the course of this thesis,

differences in opinion often exist between the faculties, levels of education and, especially relevant in this section, language of teaching of respondents.

### Faculties

In terms of receptive skills, no significant differences exist between the faculties with regard to self-reported proficiency ( $F(6,2216) = 2.691$ ;  $p = 0.013$ ) for listening to and ( $F(6,2236) = 2.095$ ;  $p$

Faculty	Sign	Science	Vet. Medicine	Humanities	Geosc.	Law, Economics, Government	Social Sciences	Medicine
		Mean Sd	Mean Sd	Mean Sd	Mean Sd	Mean Sd	Mean Sd	Mean Sd
1 I am able to follow classes in English (listening skills)		4.35 0.885	4.24 0.957	4.28 0.910	4.44 0.827	4.34 0.939	4.20 0.902	4.18 0.942
2 I am able to give a presentation in English (oral skills)	*	3.36 1.213	3.18 1.271	3.37 1.263	3.45 1.228	3.57 1.279	3.04 1.268	3.18 1.192
3 I am good at reading an English article in my field of study (reading skills)		4.36 0.815	4.33 0.820	4.37 0.817	4.36 0.809	4.17 0.965	4.28 0.843	4.29 0.832
4 I am good at writing a paper in English (writing skills)	*	3.55 1.136	3.33 1.132	3.40 1.283	3.76 1.219	3.58 1.226	3.17 1.245	3.28 1.143
5 I get better results for classes taught in English	*	2.57 1.021	2.34 0.917	2.48 1.079	2.80 1.079	2.82 1.203	2.47 1.005	2.49 0.965

Table 51: ANOVA calculations and mean results grouped by faculty on own English skills

= 0.051) reading in English. In terms of the productive skills, there are differences between the self-reported perceptions of proficiency between faculties. When looking at the ability for students to do a presentation in English ( $F(6,2218) = 6.482$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), the students from the faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences score the lowest. With a mean score of 3.04 (sd 1.268), the respondents from the faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences are neutral to this statement. After conducting a post-hoc test, according to the Tukey method, it was calculated that they differ significantly from the faculties of Science (mean 3.36; sd 1.213), Humanities (mean 3.37; sd 1.263), Geosciences (mean 3.45; sd 1.228) and Law, Economics and Government (mean 3.57; sd 1.279). Veterinary Medicine and Medicine are both neutral towards their skill in presenting in English (both mean 3.18). Only slight differences in order are detected when calculating the differences between faculties in terms of the productive skill of writing a paper ( $F(6,2201) = 7.822$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). Social and Behavioural Sciences (mean 3.17; sd 1.245) again scores significantly lower than the faculties of Science (mean 3.55; sd 1.136), Law, Economics and Government (mean 3.58; sd 1.226) and Geosciences (mean 3.76; sd 1.219). No other significant differences existed between the faculties (Table 52).

Faculty	Social and Behavioural Sciences	Veterinary Medicine	Medicine	Science	Humanities	Geosciences	Law, Economics, Government
Mean	3.04	3.18	3.18	3.36	3.37	3.45	3.57
Sd	1.268	1.271	1.192	1.213	1.263	1.228	1.279

**Table 52: Mean scores grouped by faculty on *I am able to give a presentation in English***  
dotted line: there is a significant difference between Social and Behavioural Sciences and Science onwards  
dotted line: there is a significant difference between Medicine and Law, Economics and Government

Calculating the differences between the faculties with respect to the last statement, *I get better results for classes taught in English*, also showed significant differences ( $F(6,2073) = 6.672$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ).

Faculty	Veterinary Medicine	Social and Behavioural Sciences	Humanities	Medicine	Science	Geosciences	Law, Economics, Government
Mean	2.34	2.47	2.48	2.49	2.57	2.80	2.82
Sd	0.917	1.005	1.079	0.965	1.021	1.079	1.203

**Table 53: Mean scores grouped by faculty on *I am able to give a presentation in English***  
dotted line: there is a significant difference between Medicine and Geosciences onwards

The faculties of Geosciences and Law, Economics and Government scored, according to a Tukey post-hoc analysis, significantly higher on this item than the other faculties. However, it must be kept in mind that, with mean scores of respectively 2.80 (sd 1.079) and 2.82 (sd 1.203), these faculties are neutral towards achieving better grades when taught in English.

### Level of Education

When ordering the results according to level of education, a general tendency is observed.

When calculating the individual differences between the levels of education by means of a post-hoc Tukey test, it is concluded that the bachelor students judge their English skills significantly lower than the masters students. In their turn, the masters students judge their English skills significantly lower than the research masters students (Table 54).

Level of education	Sign.	BA	MA	RMA
		Mean Sd	Mean Sd	Mean Sd
1 I am able to follow classes in English (listening skills)	*	4.16 0.981	4.38 0.792	4.75 0.568
2 I am able to give a presentation in English (oral skills)	*	3.15 1.297	3.37 1.184	4.00 0.940
3 I am good at reading an English article in my field of study (reading skills)	*	4.18 0.899	4.46 0.725	4.66 0.643
4 I am good at writing a paper in English (writing skills)	*	3.25 1.255	3.52 1.162	4.13 0.888
5 I get better results for classes taught in English	*	2.48 1.044	2.54 1.036	3.02 1.086

Table 54: ANOVA calculations and mean results grouped by level of education on own English skills  
full line = significant difference to adjacent level of education

Although the levels of education show significant differences between groups, similarities can be seen across the levels of education: the participants in this study, regardless of their level of education, have estimated their productive language skills (oral skills and writing) lower than their receptive language skills (listening and reading). In the bachelor student group, there is a large difference between listening skills (mean 4.16; sd 0.981) and its counterpart oral skills (mean 3.15; sd 1.297) at 1.01 points. Similarly, the bachelor group have on average indicated that reading is easier than writing (mean 4.18; sd 0.899 for reading; mean 3.25; sd 1.255 for writing). As to whether the respondents receive higher grades for English courses, the response was between partially disagree and neutral (mean 2.48; sd 1.044). Despite the general higher scores of the masters students groups, the results for this group are similar that that reported by the bachelor group. Their listening skills (mean 4.38; sd 0.792) are judged to be better by 1.01 points on the Likert scaling used in this thesis, compared to their oral skills (mean 3.37; sd 1.184). And, as is also the case with the bachelor students, masters students have estimated their reading skills (mean 4.46; sd 0.725) 0.94 points higher than their writing skills (mean 3.52; sd 1.162). No significant differences were found between students following a bachelor or a masters concerning achieving better results when taught in English (mean 2.54; sd 1.036; Tukey,  $p = 0.664$ ).

<b>Language skills</b>	Listening - Oral (means)	Difference	Reading-writing (means)	Difference
BA	4.16 – 3.15	1.01	4.18 – 3.25	0.94
MA	4.38 – 3.37	1.01	4.46 – 3.52	0.94
RMA	4.75 – 4.00	0.75	4.66 – 4.13	0.53

**Table 55: Overview of differences between language skills (level of education)**

Although less strong, the tendency of higher Likert scale scores on the receptive language skills in comparison to the productive language skills is followed through in the group of research masters students in this survey. The difference between the listening skills (mean 4.75; sd 0.568) and language production skills (mean 4.00; sd 0.940) for research masters students is 0.75 points. The perceptions of the reading (mean 4.66; sd 0.643) and writing (mean 4.13; sd 0.888) skills are closer together; the difference here is 0.53. As for the final question, the research masters students are neutral towards scoring higher grades, if the language of teaching of a course is English. In short, although the levels of education significantly differ from one another

in terms of self-reported perceptions of English skills, there is a tendency in all levels of education that students judge their receptive language skills considerably higher than their productive language skills. All participants have answered fairly neutral to the position question on receiving better grades if a language was taught in English.

### Language of Teaching

It was expected that students enrolled for a course where English is used as language of education would rate their own English skills higher than students who take courses in Dutch. The results of the one-way ANOVA analysis indicate that students following an English educational programme judge their language skills significantly higher than other students. After conducting a post-hoc Tukey analysis, it was shown that for all the language skills (listening, reading, presenting and writing), the students with Dutch as their language of teaching perceived their skills in English as being significantly lower than students in the English education programmes (Table 56).

Language of teaching	Sign.	Dutch	English
		Mean Sd	Mean Sd
1 I am able to follow classes in English	*	4.17 0.942	4.77 0.556
2 I am able to give a presentation in English	*	3.11 1.238	4.09 0.996
3 I am good at reading an English article in my field of study	*	4.24 0.866	4.65 0.625
4 I am good at writing a paper in English	*	3.23 1.211	4.20 0.932
5 I get better results for classes taught in English	*	2.39 0.965	3.21 1.160

Table 56: ANOVA calculations and mean results grouped by teaching language on own English skills

### Native Dutch vs Non-native Dutch

Finally, the students' perceptions of their English skills will be discussed in light of some of the remarks made by respondents that participated in the survey, concerning the English skills of international students. As can be concluded from looking at the following two remarks, the opinions of the English language skills of international students vary widely<sup>6</sup>. Participant 1589 wrote that she "found it very disturbing that, during an English taught course, foreign students, who are used to writing and speaking in English, are given more attention and therefore logically getting better results". On the other hand, participant 2067 notices in her "international study, where the majority consists of foreign students, that their level of English IS VERY LOW".

Therefore, an attempt was made to calculate how proficient the international students find themselves in English and whether this differs from the average scores calculated in this section. However, extracting the international students from the data file proved to be complicated, as there was no specific question in the survey that could indicate whether a student was international or not. Therefore, to extract the international students, it was decided to select the respondents who have indicated not to have Dutch as their native language and who are currently following a research masters programme. As the research masters courses are all given in English, the data from the non-Dutch students were compared to research masters students who have indicated Dutch as their native language (Table 57). It must be noted that dividing the participants from the research masters into native Dutch and non-native Dutch speakers remains an approximation of the number of international students within this level of education. It appears that, for the receptive skills, the Dutch and non-Dutch native speakers share similar perceptions of their English skills. However, it seems that the non-Dutch native speakers estimate their own productive English skills higher than their Dutch fellow research masters students: at an average score of 4.44 (sd 0.852), the non-Dutch native speakers have judged that they are at ease with giving presentations in English, in contrast to the Dutch students who estimated their presentation skills in English at 3.91 (sd 0.934) ( $F(1,222) = 10.368$ ;  $p = 0.001$ ). Similarly, the non-Dutch students scored an average of 4.38 points (sd 0.990) when they reflect on their abilities to write a paper in English, in contrast to Dutch students who are slightly less confident (mean 4.08; sd 0.859). However, it must be noted that these differences are not statistically significant ( $F(1,222) = 3.808$ ;  $p = 0.052$ ). These results can be explained

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<sup>6</sup> Original quotes are found in appendix B



Research masters	Sign.	Dutch native speakers Mean	Non-Dutch native speakers	Average all participants
1 I am able to follow classes in English		4.77	4.64	4.75
Sd		0.492	0.843	0.568
2 I am able to give a presentation in	*	3.91	4.44	4.00
English		0.934	0.852	0.940
Sd				
3 I am good at reading an English article in my field of study		4.66	4.64	4.66
Sd		0.558	0.959	0.643
4 I am good at writing a paper in		4.08	4.38	4.13
English		0.859	0.990	0.888
Sd				

**Table 57: English skills of non-Dutch and Dutch native speakers compared within the research master group**

in various ways. First of all, international students living in the Netherlands often do not speak Dutch. Although they may not be native speakers of English, much of their communication in daily life will take place in English, which will improve their productive use of English. Ultimately, because it is the language they use predominantly for communication in the Netherlands, it could simply give them the impression that their English skills are improving. A second explanation, which is less probable, but more worrisome for the university, is that the English education in their home country may be qualitatively better. However, what must be noted on these results is that they are based on the judgement of students of their own English skills. Students may be under- or overestimating their proficiency in English. In a study conducted in South Africa, Coetzee-Van Rooy and Verhoef (2000: 178) found a discrepancy between self-reported English proficiency and objective tests of English proficiency. Unfortunately, the scope of this survey did not include an assessment of the actual English proficiency of the participants. This could be considered for future research projects.

### 8.3.2 Self-Reported Perceptions of Dutch Skills

The participants were also asked to rate their own proficiency in Dutch. The inclusion of these questions affords the researchers the opportunity to compare perceptions of language skills of the participants in a foreign language and a native language. The frequency scores are listed in Table 58:

Own Dutch skills	Entirely Disagree	Partially disagree	Neutral	Partially agree	Entirely agree	Total	Mean	Sd
	N	N	N	N	N	N		
1 I am able to follow classes in Dutch (listening)	72	14	20	258	1879	2243	4.72	0.801
%	3.2	0.6	0.9	11.5	83.8	100		
2 I am able to give a presentation in Dutch (oral skills)	82	46	130	688	1296	2242	4.37	0.955
%	3.7	2.1	5.8	30.7	57.8	100		
3 I am good at reading a Dutch article in my field of study (reading)	78	19	49	387	1703	2236	4.62	0.866
%	3.5	0.8	2.2	17.3	76.2	100		
4 I am good at writing a paper in Dutch (writing)	77	36	128	709	1289	2239	4.38	0.927
%	3.4	1.6	5.7	31.7	57.6	100		

**Table 58: ANOVA calculations and mean results of all participants on own Dutch skills**

As can be seen from table 58, the average scores on Dutch language skills indicate an overall higher perception of language skills than those reported by the same participants for English. However, as was the case with English proficiency, the productive language skills (oral skills mean 4.37; sd 0.955, writing mean 4.38; sd 0.927) are judged lower than their receptive counterparts (listening mean 4.72; sd 0.801, reading mean 4.62; sd 0.866). Striking in this table is the steady number of participants who have indicated that they entirely not agree with the statements on Dutch language skills (between 3.2 and 3.7%). The most plausible explanation is that these results come from non-Dutch speaking international students. However, as it cannot be exactly verified which students are international, this explanation remains a suggestion.

## Faculties

Faculties	Sign	Science	Vet. Medicine	Humanities	Geosc.	Law, Economics, Government	Social Sciences	Medicine
		Mean Sd	Mean Sd	Mean Sd	Mean Sd	Mean Sd	Mean Sd	Mean Sd
1 I am able to follow classes in Dutch (listening skills)	*	4.67 0.857	4.77 0.670	4.82 0.553	4.66 0.972	4.46 1.220	4.78 0.620	4.76 0.734
2 I am able to give a presentation in Dutch (oral skills)	*	4.27 0.986	4.44 0.858	4.51 0.807	4.21 1.090	4.14 1.283	4.40 0.835	4.51 0.843
3 I am good at reading a Dutch article in my field of study (reading skills)	*	4.55 0.932	4.73 0.670	4.74 0.681	4.46 1.029	4.38 1.247	4.68 0.690	4.66 0.785
4 I am good at writing a paper in Dutch (writing skills)	*	4.27 0.976	4.51 0.749	4.51 0.771	4.20 1.117	4.23 1.273	4.47 0.773	4.37 0.836

**Table 59: ANOVA calculations and mean results grouped by faculty on own Dutch skills**

The differences between the faculties were calculated by means of a one-way ANOVA analysis. The question on perceptions of listening skills showed significant differences between the faculties ( $F(6,2236) = 7.214$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), which, after conducting a Tukey post-hoc test, could be ascribed to differences in perceptions held by students in the faculty of Law, Economics and Government. This faculty has scored significantly lower on Dutch listening skills (mean 4.46; sd 1.220) than the other faculties (mean 4.66, for Geosciences, and upwards). However, when looking at the responses to the presentation (oral skills) question, the adjacent faculties do not differ from one another, but there are differences over distances ( $F(6,2235) = 7.322$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ).

Faculty	Law, Economics, Government	Geosciences	Science	Social and Behavioural Sciences	Veterinary Medicine	Medicine	Humanities
Mean	4.14	4.21	4.27	4.40	4.44	4.51	4.51
Sd	1.283	1.090	0.986	0.835	0.858	0.843	0.807

**Table 60: Mean scores (I am able to give a presentation in Dutch)**  
dotted line: there is a significant difference between Law, Economics and Government and Social and Behavioural Sciences onwards  
dotted line: there is a significant difference between Geosciences and Medicine onwards

As is shown in Table 60, no significant differences of perceptions of Dutch skills are found between adjacent faculties, but there are significant differences to be found between the faculties of Law, Economics and Government (mean 4.14; sd 1.283) and Social and Behavioural Sciences onwards (mean 4.40; sd 0.835). Similarly, although the faculty of Geosciences does not differ significantly from its neighbours, the faculties of Medicine (mean 4.51; sd 0.843) and Humanities (mean 4.51; sd 0.807) report significantly higher perceptions of Dutch skills. Law, Economics and Government and Geosciences are also the faculties responsible for the significant score found in the ANOVA analysis ( $F(6,2229) = 7.719$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) on Dutch reading skills. None of the remaining faculties differ significantly from another. A similar result is found on the final language skill investigated: *I am good at writing a paper in Dutch* ( $F(6,2232) = 6.290$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). Only these faculties report a significantly lower perception of Dutch writing skills than the other faculties. A possible explanation of these results could be the amount of international students that have participated in this survey. As was remarked in chapter 7.3.2, the faculties of Science, Geosciences and Law, Economics and Government provide the lion's share of the research masters students that participated in this survey. As discussed previously, many international students follow their educational programme at this level, which may have lowered the scores of Dutch language skills for these faculties. Unfortunately, the exact distribution of international students cannot be calculated across all faculties, as this information was not included as an item in this survey.

### Level of Education

Throughout the study, significant differences were reported between levels of education. As is illustrated in Table 61, this trend continues when perceptions of Dutch skills are reviewed as part of the survey: significant differences in perceptions of Dutch language skills exist across all types of educational levels and language skills:

Educational level	Sign	RMA	BA	MA
		Mean Sd	Mean Sd	Mean Sd
1 I am able to follow classes in Dutch (listening skills)	*	4.33 1.378	4.77 0.660	4.74 0.763
2 I am able to give a presentation in Dutch (oral skills)	*	3.99 1.366	4.39 0.880	4.46 0.904
3 I am good at reading a Dutch article in my field of study (reading skills)	*	4.16 1.423	4.66 0.758	4.69 0.778
4 I am good at writing a paper in Dutch (writing skills)	*	3.92 1.411	4.40 0.835	4.50 0.857

**Table 61: ANOVA calculations and mean results grouped by level of education on own Dutch skills**  
 full line = significant difference to adjacent level of education

However, after conducting a post-hoc analysis, according to the Tukey method, it was shown that perceptions of Dutch skills for the research masters level were significantly lower than the bachelor and master level students, who did not display significantly different perceptions of Dutch skills. The self-reported perception of the listening skills of the research masters group are on average 4.33 (sd 1.378), where the scores of the bachelor and master groups are respectively 4.77 (sd 0.660) and 4.74 (sd 0.763) ( $F(2,2240) = 30.137$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). The counterpart of listening is regarded as oral presentation in this study, where the research masters (mean 3.99; sd 1.366) again report lower self-reported scores of Dutch language skills than participants in the bachelor (mean 4.39; sd 0.880) and masters (mean 4.46; sd 0.904) groups ( $F(2,2239) = 21.043$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). For reading, respondents following a research master record a self-reported perception of Dutch skills score on average of 4.16 (sd 1.423), while perceptions of Dutch skills are 4.66 (sd 0.758) for the bachelor and 4.69 (sd 0.778) for the masters group ( $F(2,2233) = 36.033$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). The lowest score related to perception of Dutch language skills for the research masters students is writing: mean 3.92; sd 1.411 ( $F(2,2236) = 34.093$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). The bachelor and masters group scores of self-reported Dutch skills are 4.40 (sd 0.835) and 4.50 (0.857). There is a plausible reason for the

lower score on Dutch language skills in the research masters group. It could be argued that the percentage of international students is higher within this level of education than in the others. As can be seen from the standard deviation scores in Table 36, there is more variation between the answers of different respondents within the research masters group than in the bachelor or master. This indicates that there are more respondents in this level of education that have judged their Dutch language skill as being low, bringing down the average score for self-reported perception of Dutch language skills for this group. As has been the overall tendency in the section on language skills, within each level of education, the participants have judged their receptive language skills higher than their productive language skills (Table 62).

<b>Language skills</b>	Listening – Oral (means)	Difference	Reading-writing (means)	Difference
RMA	4.33 – 3.99	0.34	4.16 – 3.92	0.24
BA	4.77 – 4.39	0.38	4.66 – 4.40	0.26
MA	4.74 – 4.46	0.28	4.69 – 4.50	0.19

**Table 62: Overview of differences between Dutch language skills (level of education)**

What is most interesting to note here is that, next to judging the Dutch skills overall higher than the English skills, the differences between the productive and corresponding receptive skills in Dutch are much lower than those in English (Table 62). Therefore, it can be concluded that the majority of respondents in this survey are less proficient in English than in Dutch, and their productive language skills of writing and presenting in English are in relation to Dutch even lower.

### Teaching Language

The final grouping variable included as a demonstration of self-reported perceptions of Dutch language skills is that of the language of teaching. Similarly to the discussion of the perceptions of the English skills, large discrepancies are expected between the respondents following an English educational programme versus the Dutch and ‘other’ educational programmes. Indeed, the respondents following an English educational programme have indicated to be significantly less able ( $F(1,2204) = 174.901$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) to follow classes in Dutch (mean 4.27; sd 1.402) than the other participants in this survey. These results are repeated for the perceptions of

	Sign.	Dutch Mean Sd	English Mean Sd
1 I am able to follow classes in Dutch	*	4.82 0.524	4.27 1.402
2 I am able to give a presentation in Dutch	*	4.46 0.783	3.95 1.408
3 I am good at reading a Dutch article in my field of study	*	4.73 0.603	4.13 1.442
4 I am good at writing a paper in Dutch	*	4.51 0.7	3.83 1.435

**Table 63: ANOVA calculations and mean results grouped by level of education on own Dutch skills**

proficiency in Dutch for the other three language skills investigated in this survey; participants with English as their language of teaching record significantly lower scores for self-reported perceptions of proficiency in Dutch language skills than students in a Dutch educational programme (Table 64).

Own Dutch skills	F	Df	Significance (p)
Listening	174.901	1,2204	0.000
Presenting	101.471	1,2203	0.000
Reading	179.186	1,2197	0.000
Writing	199.274	1,2200	0.000

**Table 64: ANOVA results grouped by teaching language on own Dutch skills**

However, when looking at the standard deviations of the English group, it can again be argued that, since the deviations are much higher than those in the Dutch and 'other' groups, the lower scores for perceptions of Dutch proficiency are due to the inclusion of international students (that are not proficient in Dutch at all) in this group.

### 8.3.3 Teacher's Language Skills

In the final part of the survey, the opinions of students on the language skills for both Dutch and English of their teachers are discussed. In the introduction to this section (consult appendix A), participants were asked to keep in mind the last course for which these questions were relevant. The four position questions in this part focused on the overall teaching skills of the teachers, *the proficiency level of the teacher, who is not a native speaker of English/Dutch, is good enough to teach in English*, and developing supporting teaching materials, *The proficiency level of the teacher, who is not a native speaker of English/Dutch, is good enough to make PowerPoints written in English/Dutch*. The overall results are found in Table 65. In response to whether the English proficiency level of the teacher was good enough to give classes in English, the average score was neutral (mean 3.28; sd 1.041). However, when looking at the exact percentages, almost a quarter of the participants (23%) do not agree with this statement. As 32% have indicated to be neutral and 44.9% do think that the teacher's level of proficiency is adequate, the score is mediated to a neutral average. On the subjects of non-native speakers of English developing a PowerPoint, the participants are overall more positive: only 6.2% of the respondents do not think that their teacher's proficiency level is sufficient, 18.8% react neutral

Teacher's skills	Entirely Disagree		Partially disagree		Neutral		Partially agree		Entirely agree		Mean	Sd
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
1 E notL1 teacher good enough to teach	106	5.2	365	17.8	658	32.1	689	34.1	222	10.8	3.8	1.041
2 E notL1 teacher good enough PP	24	1.2	102	5.0	388	18.8	1020	49.5	526	25.5	3.93	.862
3 D notL1 teacher good enough to teach	79	4.0	319	16.2	804	40.9	584	29.7	181	9.2	3.24	.965
4 D notL1 teacher good enough PP	49	2.5	180	9.3	700	36.0	722	37.2	292	15.0	3.53	.942

Table 65: frequencies, means and standard deviation of all participants on teacher's language skills



and as much as three-quarters (75%) of the respondents find the proficiency level of the teacher high enough to make PowerPoints. The second set of questions focuses on the Dutch language skills of non-native speakers. 40.9% of the participants are neutral towards whether the proficiency level of Dutch for a non-native Dutch teacher is good enough to give classes in that language. A total of 20.2% does not agree that the level of Dutch of a non-native teacher is sufficient to teach in that language, whereas 38.9% agree with this statement. However, it is clear from the results that only some of the participants experienced this situation. This is indicated by the drop in number of responses to these questions. It could therefore be that this high average for a neutral position is due to the fact that some of the participants did not encounter this situation in the past and therefore remained neutral. This observation can be backed up by some of the remarks made by participants: instead of skipping a question, they have opted for the middle answer (appendix B). The ability to make PowerPoints in Dutch is judged more positively: only 11.8% of the participants do not think that the level of Dutch of their teacher is high enough to make PowerPoints, 36.0% react neutrally and 52.2 % think that the non-native Dutch teacher is able to do so effectively. It will be interesting to see whether there are differences in opinion between the standard grouping variables used in this thesis: faculty, level of education and teaching language.

### Faculties

By means of an ANOVA analysis, it was calculated whether there are significant differences between faculties in terms of the perceptions of non-native English speaker skills and abilities to teach in that language. In fact, with a score of  $F(6,2042)= 11.240$ , the differences between the faculties prove to be significant ( $p<0.001$ ). After conducting a post-hoc analysis according to the Tukey method, the following order was found (Table 67).

Faculties	Sign	Science	Vet. Medicine	Humaniti es	Geosc.	Law, Economics , Government	Social Sciences	Medicine
		Mean Sd	Mean Sd	Mean Sd	Mean Sd	Mean Sd	Mean Sd	Mean Sd
1 E notL1 teacher good enough to teach	*	3.44 0.968	3.20 0.993	3.48 1.062	3.16 1.141	3.27 1.014	2.95 1.068	3.23 0.876
2 E notL1 teacher good enough PP	*	4.11 0.809	3.78 0.785	3.91 0.921	4.00 0.881	3.89 0.913	3.90 0.841	3.83 0.772
3 D notL1 teacher good enough to teach		3.21 0.991	3.22 0.875	3.30 1.012	3.20 0.985	3.27 0.914	3.22 0.929	3.19 0.974
4 D notL1 teacher good enough PP		3.50 0.991	3.50 0.809	3.56 0.969	3.48 0.968	3.56 0.953	3.56 0.903	3.49 0.926

Table 66: ANOVA results grouped by faculty on *Teacher's language skills*

Faculty	Social and Behavioural Sciences	Geosciences	Veterinary Medicine	Medicine	Law, Economics, Government	Science	Humanities
Mean	2.95	3.16	3.20	3.23	3.27	3.44	3.48
Sd	1.068	1.141	0.993	0.876	1.014	0.968	1.062

Table 67: Mean scores (Teacher's level of English (not L1) is good enough to teach)

dotted line: there is a significant difference between Social and Medicine onwards

dotted line: there is a significant difference between Geosciences and Science onwards

Strikingly, students from one of the faculties that indicated that they are not in contact with English in class regularly, are most critical of the proficiency of the English skills of their teachers (mean 2.95; sd 1.068). In order to check whether the respondents from this faculty did not overly select a neutral position, the frequencies of Social and Behavioural Sciences were calculated separately for this question. This was not the case: 33.4% of the respondents from this faculty did not agree with the statement, 33.7% were neutral and a total of 32.8% agreed

with the statement. Even more striking, the other faculty that showed significant differences with some of the other faculties is Geosciences (mean 3.16; sd 1.141): one of the faculties that indicated to be most in contact with English. The perceptions of the English skills of teachers in the faculties of Veterinary Medicine (mean 3.20; sd 0.993), Medicine (mean 3.23; sd 0.876) and Law, Economics and Government (mean 3.27; sd 1.014) group more closely together. Science and Humanities are most positive on the English language skills of a non-native teachers with scores of respectively 3.44 (sd 0.968) and 3.48 (sd 1.062). The results related to the ability of non-native teachers in English to make PowerPoints are very different ( $F(6,2053) = 4.619$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). The faculties that were neutral to the English skills of their teachers previously (Veterinary Medicine, Medicine and Law, Economics and Government) now record the lowest scores, being significantly different from the faculty of Science:

Faculty	Veterinary Medicine	Medicine	Law, Economics, Government	Social and Behavioural Sciences	Humanities	Geosciences	Science
Mean	3.78	3.83	3.89	3.90	3.91	4.00	4.11
Sd	0.785	0.772	9.13	8.41	0.921	0.881	0.809

**Table 68: Mean scores (Teacher's level of English (not L1) is good enough to make PowerPoints)**  
dotted line: there is a significant difference between Law, Economics and Government and Science

As can be seen in Table 68, the faculties that scored the lowest on the previous question, now moved towards a more positive position: Social and Behavioural Sciences score 3.90 (sd 0.921), followed by Humanities (mean 3.91; sd 0.921), Geosciences (mean 4.00; sd 0.881) and Science (mean 4.11; sd 0.809). Although there are differences, these are not statistically significant ( $p = 0.062$ ). When dividing the position questions on the Dutch language skills of the teacher, significant differences were found for neither the teaching question ( $F(6,1960) = 0.606$ ;  $p = 0.726$ ) nor the question on making a PowerPoint ( $F(6,1936) = 0.424$ ;  $p = 0.864$ ).

### Level of Education

In this section, a comparison is made to investigate possible differences in opinion on the English and Dutch skills of teachers according to the levels of education of participants. As to whether the proficiency in English of a teacher is good enough to give classes in English, the

bachelor (mean 3.20; sd 1.036) and master (mean 3.26; sd 1.040) students react quite neutral, where the research masters group report a statistically significantly ( $F(2,2046) = 25.265$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) more positive attitude with a mean score of 3.73 (sd 0.960) (post-hoc Tukey method). Similar results are found for perceptions of students of the non-native English teacher's abilities to create a PowerPoint in English. As the ANOVA analysis points out, there is a significant difference between the levels of education ( $F(2,2057) = 20.430$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), which, according to a Tukey post-hoc analysis, is caused by the research masters level participants. With a score of 4.38 (sd 0.808), this group agrees most with the statement that non-native English speaking teachers can create effective PowerPoints, scoring significantly higher than the bachelor and masters groups (both mean 3.89). However, when looking at the responses to the non-native Dutch teacher questions, a different result was found (Table 69).

		BA	MA	RMA
		Mean	Mean	Mean
	Sign	Sd	Sd	Sd
1 E notL1 teacher good enough to teach	*	3.20 1.036	3.26 1.040	3.73 0.960
2 E notL1 teacher good enough PP	*	3.89 0.857	3.89 0.863	4.38 0.808
3 D notL1 teacher good enough to teach	*	3.29 0.965	3.23 0.935	2.97 1.021
4 D notL1 teacher good enough PP	*	3.58 0.936	3.50 0.902	3.27 1.057

**Table 69: ANOVA results grouped by level of education on *Teacher's language skills***  
 full line = significant difference to adjacent level of education

Here, the results are reversed. The bachelor and masters groups do not significantly differ from one another, but agree statistically significantly more than the research masters group that their teachers have appropriate language skills. With a score of 2.97 (sd 1.021), the research masters group report a neutral position towards the Dutch proficiency of a non-native teacher and their ability to teach in that language. As the research masters group is not supposed to follow Dutch classes, they have on average reacted neutrally towards this statement. However, the bachelor

(mean 3.29; sd 0.965) and masters (mean 3.23; sd 0.935) groups, although significantly differently, do not present different perceptions at all. A similar effect is found for the last question on making PowerPoints in Dutch. The research masters group (mean 3.27; sd 1.057) scores significantly lower than the bachelor (mean 3.58; sd 0.936) and masters (mean 3.50; sd 0.902) groups, but all scores indicate a 'neutral' and 'partially agree' position with respect to perceptions of the Dutch language skills of teachers.

### Teaching Language

Language of teaching	Sign.	Dutch	English
		Mean Sd	Mean Sd
1 E notL1 teacher good enough to teach	*	3.16 1.012	3.69 1.054
2 E notL1 teacher good enough PP	*	3.85 0.853	4.26 0.827
3 D notL1 teacher good enough to teach	*	3.29 0.944	3.01 1.011
4 D notL1 teacher good enough PP	*	3.58 0.912	3.31 1.024

**Table 70: ANOVA results grouped by teaching language on *Teacher's language skills***

The final categorisation of data with which potential differences between perceptions are investigated, is that of language of teaching. It is expected that the opinions of the respondents that follow an English educational programme are more positive of the proficiency of English of their teachers. Indeed, significant differences were found between the languages of teaching regarding the first statement ( $F(1,2012) = 90.855; p < 0.001$ ). This effect was due to a significant difference between participants with Dutch as their language of teaching (mean 3.16; sd 1.012) and those who follow English classes (mean 3.69; sd 1.054). However, with an average score of 3.69 for the English group, these respondents are not automatically satisfied with the

proficiency of their teachers. When calculating the responses of this language of teaching group, it appears that 14.8 percent of the students with an English educational programme do not agree that the proficiency level of their non-native teachers is good enough to teach classes in English. On the other hand, 63.9% of the respondents in this group indicated that, to some extent, they agree to the statement, bringing the average response to a score of 3.69 (sd 1.054). For the second question on English language skills of the teachers, where it was asked whether the proficiency level of a non-native teacher was sufficient to make an English PowerPoint, significant differences were found again by conducting a one-way ANOVA analysis ( $F(1,2024)=81.792$ ;  $p<0.001$ ). The Dutch (mean 3.85; sd 0.853) scored significantly lower than the English language of teaching group (mean 4.26; sd 0.827). The responses towards the position questions on the Dutch language skills of non-native teachers are mirrored (or repeated). Participants with Dutch as their language of teaching score significantly higher on questions 3 ( $F(1,1929)=24.816$ ;  $p<0.001$ ) and 4 ( $F(1,1906)=23.667$ ;  $p<0,001$ ). As there is little Dutch used in educational programmes with English as its language of teaching, the neutral results of the English group were expected.

#### **8.4 Conclusion of Language Skills**

The results from the position questions on participants' language skills and that of their teacher's will now be summarised. First of all it was observed that, as well in the perceptions of Dutch skills as in the perceptions of English skills section, the participants' receptive skills were overall judged to be better than their productive skills. The respondents in this survey have on average indicated that they believe they are more proficient in Dutch language skills, than in English. There were, however, differences to be detected between the the difference groups. For the receptive English skills, the faculties showed no significant differences. Perceptions of participants' English productive skills, on the other hand, did show significant differences: the faculties of Science, Geosciences and Law, Economics and Government have judged their productive skills significantly higher than the faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences. Furthermore, when dividing the data into different levels of education, it was found that the bachelor students estimated their English skills significantly lower than the master students, who in their turn scored significantly lower than the research masters students. As the research masters have English as the official language of teaching, this result was in line with the

significant difference between languages of teaching in different programmes: students following an English educational programme estimated their English skills on average higher than students following a Dutch educational programme. These results were mirrored or repeated in some way when the scores on students' perceptions of their Dutch language skills are taken into consideration. Here, the faculties of Law, Economics and Government and Geosciences scored significantly lower than some of the other faculties. Similarly, the mean scores of the research masters group were significantly lower for perceptions of Dutch language skills than the bachelor and masters students, who did not differ significantly from one another. Students following a Dutch educational programme have judged their proficiency significantly higher than the students following an English educational programme. Next to testing the 'standard' grouping variables used in this thesis, another calculation was done on the English skills data, which was based on respondents' comments on international students and language skills. Therefore, Dutch and non-Dutch native speakers following a research masters were compared. For the receptive skills, the scores related to their perceptions of language skills of the two groups are very similar, but the productive skills, on the other hand, were judged to be better by the non-native Dutch participants than their Dutch fellow students. It was noted that this discrepancy could be due to the fact that non-native Dutch students may have to use their English more productively in their daily lives in the Netherlands due to their inability to use Dutch.

When asking the participants about their teacher's language skills, some discord was reported. Although the mean scores vary between 3 (neutral) and 4 (partially agree), around one in five participants do not agree that the oral proficiency level of Dutch (20.2%) and English (23%) of a non-native speaker teacher is good enough to teach. Respectively 38.9% for Dutch and 44.9% for English do think that the proficiency level of the teacher is sufficient. A striking result emerged when the data was analysed according to faculty groups. It appears that the faculty of Geosciences, which indicate a lot of contact with English, report perception scores significantly lower on judging the teacher's oral English proficiency skills than the faculties of Science and Humanities. However, the writing skills of the teachers working at Geosciences are judged positively. For now, no explanation of this observation can be given. When looking at the levels of education, the research masters group scores significantly higher on judging the English language skills of their teacher, and no significant differences were found between the bachelor and masters group. As the research master group does officially not have any classes in

English, it was expected that the respondents from this group would skip, or indicate neutral perceptions, on the Dutch language skills statements. Indeed, this group scored significantly lower than the other levels of education, and was close to the neutral position. However, although the master and bachelor levels scored significantly higher than the research masters group, the scores from these groups also remained relatively low. Finally, the data on proficiency level of the teacher was scrutinised by investigating language of teaching groups. Although the English participants are overall significantly more satisfied with the level of their teacher's English skills, as 69.9% agree to the statement, there is still 14.8% that judge the oral language skills of their teacher to be insufficient to teach. No differences were found between the English and Dutch language of teaching groups reporting on the Dutch proficiency skills of the teacher.

The overall tendency of this section is that students that are more in contact with English during their courses, judge themselves to be more proficient in that language. Moreover, these groups judge the English proficiency skills of the teacher significantly higher than the participants that have less contact with English.

## 9 Ten Suggestions

“Great survey, but what is being done with the results?” (Participant 2584)

The following section contains ten concise statements of advice for the consideration of Utrecht University to improve on the language policy and English education provision at the university in general. These ideas can also be used as map for further research.

**(1) During the process of internationalisation, more attention must be paid to the position of (native) students.**

Although the largest group of actors in Utrecht University's language policy are the students, thus far this group has not been consulted on the subjects of internationalisation and English education. As has been shown in this thesis, students have strong opinions on these issues and should not be overlooked in policy decision-making



(2) A separate, focused and longitudinal research project must be established to find out why research masters students do not find the use of English at Utrecht University a good preparation for an international career.

As prof. dr. Peter Coopmans and Marjolein Boessenkool pointed out in section 5, that one of the reasons for changing the language of teaching of all the university's research masters programmes to English was to prepare these students for work in an international context. Results from this survey indicated that these students do not experience that this is the case. An in-depth and longitudinal research project must be conducted in order to discover the reason(s) for this dissatisfaction.

(3) It should be investigated whether changing the language of teaching of education is desirable in general.

A more careful deliberation should be started to consider whether changing the language of teaching to English at the university is indeed beneficial for Utrecht University and, most importantly, for its students. If the change in language of teaching of the research masters programme serves as a pilot, clearly the intended goals might not have been met.

(4) The Language Code of Conduct must be updated.

As the current Language Code of Conduct dates from 2004, an update is necessary. Not only because the content may be out of date, and be more effectively spread to raise the awareness of the university's staff to the rules and regulations stated in this document.

(5) The language requirements stated in the course description must be clear and should be communicated well to students.

The information on language of teaching should always be as clear as possible. As the proficiency levels of students may vary between languages, it is important that following a course in a particular language is based on the student's own decision.

(6) All faculties must set up specific rules and regulations on language use in-class and at their service departments.

As has been shown in this thesis, there are many differences between faculties with respect to language use. Therefore, next to an updated general Language Code of Conduct, each faculty should construct their own language policy document, attuned to the specific wants and needs of the fields of research and these documents should be reviewed regularly.

(7) Opportunities must be provided to students to enhance their productive English skills.

Although students are able to follow English courses at the James Boswell institute, the maximum number of participants in each block is too low (ranging between four and sixteen), and the costs are too high (between €220,- and €350,- per course) (JBI website). As was proposed by prof. dr. Peter Coopmans, optional 'repair courses' could be built in, during the major programme, where the course content is combined with feedback on English skills. This language-across-the curriculum approach would require good programme co-ordination and training for staff.

(8) A budget should be made available for courses to experiment with a bilingual programme in the bachelor-phase.

Departments and educational programmes should be encouraged to experiment with bilingual English-Dutch education in the bachelor programme. Bilingual programmes can prepare students for English master programmes, by taking a language-across-the curriculum approach. A suggestion on supporting these bilingual programmes is given in (9).

(9) Opportunities should be made available for students of English to work as student-assistants for other bilingual educational programmes and faculties.

From my own experience as a student-assistant of a Linguistics course, Multilingualism, I have experienced that providing extra support for the students' English skills was considered useful

by the students as well as the teachers. Moreover, the experience has also been valuable and educative for myself.

(10) During the process of internationalisation, attention should be paid to raise awareness and skills in intercultural communication, maybe more than on focusing on Dutch and English language skills per se.

A factor often forgotten in the discussion on internationalisation is that of intercultural communication. Working in an international context implies working with different cultures and languages, not only English. Focusing on intercultural communication may be a more effective preparation for an international future career than solely being taught in English.

## 10 Conclusion

This thesis discussed two aspects of language policy. The first part of this thesis concerned the development and theoretical aspects of language policy at Utrecht University. First, it was explained that internationalisation of Dutch universities in general benefits universities, by attracting more international students and researchers. The process of internationalisation is therefore supported by, not only university and research associations, but indirectly also by the Dutch government, who consider 'knowledge migrants' an enrichment for society. The modern migration policy of the Dutch government relaxes the rules and regulations considering the migration of 'knowledge-migrants' to work or study in the Netherlands. Dutch students may also benefit from an internationally oriented study and the presence of international students in a course. The introduction of the Bachelor-Master structure in Europe made it easier to work and study abroad as the diplomas are internationally recognised. Following this discussion of context, a theoretical framework was sketched to describe Utrecht University's language policy. The actors involved in the development of a language policy, as well as those actors who experience the consequences of that language policy in practice were discussed. Utrecht University's language policy is influenced by various role-players: the Dutch government and

other institutions with which the university have agreements. The faculties, schools and teaching staff play role in the language policy development in many ways. They are both actors in the development of the language policy, they experience the university's language policy in practice and they affect the language policy when they implement it in teaching and learning. This study highlighted the absence of one of the most important role-players in his process: the students of Utrecht University and this was also the focus of this thesis. After giving an overview of the actors involved, the official rules and regulations concerning language in higher education were spelled out. Starting from the highest level of rule formation, the articles in the Law on Higher Education and Research were discussed. The nature of these articles results in great potential variance of implementation. After explaining the organisational structure at the university, the official language policy document, the *Language Code of Conduct (2004)*, was discussed. Once again, the nature of this document leaves room for great variance in application and implementation of the language policy in the faculties and schools. It was argued that the document needs revision to ensure that it is still relevant. Specific language requirements for students are spelled out in the OER of every school, where, for native students, a diploma from the highest level of secondary school (VWO) or propaedeutics suffice for the minimum level of proficiency in English. After the discussion of the theoretical framework of the language policy at Utrecht University, a summary of an interview with two policy developers of the faculty of Humanities was discussed. Vice-dean of education prof. dr. Peter Coopmans and the Education Programme Supervisor Marjolein Boessenkool gave their views and experiences of language policy development and implementation in their faculty. They confirmed that language policy discussions are always discussed in relation to the process of internationalisation and that it was not very important matter on the agenda of the faculty. They also emphasised that the development of a language policy which applies to the entire university is problematic, as the needs in faculties are different. Moreover, faculties face a dilemma when it comes to improving students' English skills; if repair courses are part of the major programme, another course has to be excluded. Non-credit bearing courses are not taken seriously by students on the other hand. This interview concluded the theoretical framework and development of language policy at University Utrecht.

The second part of this thesis concerned language in practice at Utrecht University. First, the observations from the subgroup of the research course 'Taalbeleid' concerning the consistent application of language of teaching as recorded in the prospecti were reported.

During Quick Anonymous Observations, the language of teaching stated in the course description was verified by observing real language use in class. Only 15 out of 108 cases that were observed indicate a switch in language of teaching in the classroom. This issue is therefore implemented well at Utrecht University and staff should be encouraged to continue their diligent implementation of language of teaching statements in the prospect. The bulk of the second part was dedicated to an analysis of data from a fairly large student survey. The content of the survey was divided into four different sections: personal information, which contained factual information that was used for statistical calculations; language experiences in practice, which consisted of closed questions; attitudes, in which participants were confronted with statements on language use; and finally, estimations on Dutch and English language skills, self-reported perceptions by the students and student perceptions of the language skills of their teachers. The survey was constructed using an internet-tool specifically made for language experiments, namely CLEO. Distribution of the survey by means of the internet was the quickest method to reach many students and it made the data processing easier. Unfortunately, the survey crashed after being online for 48 hours. However, after clearing the data file, a number of 2257 surveys were suitable for statistic calculations and it was argued that this formed a representative sample of the Utrecht University student population. Next, the data were analysed. The ten most important observations were:

- (1) 72,5% of the participants followed a course taught in English and 97,2% used English study materials in a Dutch course.
- (2) 41,3% of the participants experienced that a course was given in a different language than that stated in the course prospectus.
- (3) In general, students felt that they should be able to take their exams in Dutch, even if the teaching language of a course was English.
- (4) Research masters students did not feel that being taught in English provided good preparation for an international career.
- (5) Students were not negative towards the use of English in education at Utrecht University.

(6) Productive English skills were judged lower than perceptive English skills in the self reports by students.

(7) Students' self-reported productive English skills were judged one full point lower than their self-reported productive Dutch skills, on a five-point Likert scaling.

(8) English was used extensively in the faculties of Science, Geosciences and Law, Economics and Government and these students rated their English skills as the most proficient compared to rating from other faculties.

(9) English is used extensively in the research masters courses and students enrolled in this programme perceive that their English skills are highly proficient.

(10) In terms of language policy management at Utrecht University, the following broad findings could be made:

a) The focus on internationalisation will have a dynamic influence on the language policy in teaching and learning and the language policy would need to be reviewed continuously to ensure that it is appropriate for specific educational levels and types of programmes.

b) The inclusion of opinions and needs voiced by all role-players in this process (employers in- and outside of the Netherlands, staff, students) should be included in a more systematic and consultative manner to ensure alignment of the policy with needs.

c) The focus on internationalisation might raise the need for increased awareness and attention to matters related to intercultural communication, more than attention to specific language skills development in Dutch and English.

In response to the results found while analysing the data, ten short recommendations were made for Utrecht University to consider to improve the quality of experiences of students that enrol for courses taught in English across all faculties and levels of education.

Overall, this thesis focused on Utrecht University's language policy from two different points of view. One view was the theoretical aspect of developing a language policy and the effects of language policy in practice. The second view was to study student perceptions related to language policy matters. The thesis reported on data gathered in the course 'Taalbeleid'. One

of the lasting impressions communicated in the thesis was that the drive towards internationalisation at Utrecht University will continue to have an influence on the language policy and practices at Utrecht University and that university would have to formulate a clear plan related to matters such as intercultural communication if this drive were to be successful in future.

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Wet op Hoger Onderwijs en Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek 12-05-2010  
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VSNU *Samen Internationaal* 04-05-2010  
<<http://www.vsnu.nl/beleidsterreinen/Internationaal.htm>>



## Appendix A - The Survey

The use of English and Dutch at UU

We are students of the course Taalbeleid and we are researching the use of English and Dutch at Utrecht University. Therefore, we would like to ask you a few questions about your experiences and opinions on this. The survey will take approximately 10 minutes.

Your answers will remain anonymous and will not be distributed to third parties.

Please answer these questions from the view of your current educational programme. If you are following more than one programme, please choose one and answer the questions from that point of view. If you are following a Master programme, please do not consider your Bachelor while answering these questions.

**If a question is not relevant to your situation, you do not have to answer it.**

By filling in this survey, you get a shot at winning one of our ten gift vouchers of 25 euros.

Thanks in advance for your time.

Students of the course Taalbeleid

### A Personal Information

- 1) My native language is
- English
  - Dutch
  - Other
- 2) My gender is
- male
  - female
- 3) I follow an educational programme at:
- Science
  - Veterinary Medicine
  - Humanities
  - Geosciences
  - Law, Economics and Government
  - Social and Behavioural Sciences
  - Medicine/UMC Utrecht
  - University College
  - IVLOS
  - Roosevelt Academy

4) My educational programme is called: \_\_\_\_\_

5) At the moment, I am doing:

- a bachelor study
- a pre-master study
- an academic master study
- an educative master study
- a research master study
- other

6) The teaching language of my programme is:

- Dutch
- English
- Other

7) My average mark for the course I follow is:

- lower than 6
- between 6 and 6,9
- between 7 and 7,9
- between 8 and 8,9
- 9 or higher

## **B Practice**

Below you will find some statements concerning the practical use of English and Dutch during class.

8) My classes are in English.

- Always
- Mostly
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never

9) During courses where the language of instruction is Dutch, English study material is being used.

- Always
- Mostly
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never

10) During courses where the language of instruction is English, Dutch study material is being used.

- Always
- Mostly
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never

11) Within the courses I have followed that had English as language of instruction, there has been a particular focus on improving my English skills.

- Always
- Mostly
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never

12) It has happened that a course was taught in Dutch, while the course description stated the language of instruction was English.

- Yes
- No

13) It has happened that a course, which should have been given in Dutch, was taught in English because a student did not speak Dutch.

- Yes
- No

14) It has happened that a course, which should have been given in Dutch, was taught in English, because the teacher did not speak Dutch

- Yes
- No

15) It has happened that I did not choose to follow a particular course, because the language of instruction was English.

- Yes
- No

### **C Attitude**

Below you will find some statements concerning your attitude towards the use of English and Dutch during class.

16) Within an education programme with Dutch as the language of instruction, the language of instruction of all obligatory classes must be Dutch

Entirely disagree      0      0      0      0      0      Entirely agree

17) In my opinion, it should be possible to do exams in Dutch, even when the language of instruction is English.

Entirely disagree      0      0      0      0      0      Entirely agree

18) In my opinion, English should only be used as the instruction language if the teacher is a native speaker of English.

Entirely disagree      0      0      0      0      0      Entirely agree

19) In my opinion, English should only be used as the instruction language if there is a students in the group that does not speak Dutch

Entirely disagree      0      0      0      0      0      Entirely agree

20) In my future career, a good proficiency of English will be necessary.

Entirely disagree      0      0      0      0      0      Entirely agree

21) In my future career, a good proficiency of academic skills in Dutch will be necessary.

Entirely disagree      0      0      0      0      0      Entirely agree

22) In the Bachelor programme, Dutch should be the only language used.

Entirely disagree      0      0      0      0      0      Entirely agree

23) In the Master programme, Dutch should be the only language used.

Entirely disagree      0      0      0      0      0      Entirely agree

24) I find the use of English as the main language at the university a threat for the position of Dutch.

Entirely disagree      0      0      0      0      0      Entirely agree

25) The use of English at the university is a good preparation for an international career.

Entirely disagree      0      0      0      0      0      Entirely agree

**D Own skills**

Below you will find some statements concerning your own skills in English and Dutch.

26) I am able to follow classes in English

Entirely disagree    0    0    0    0    0    Entirely agree

27) I am able to give a presentation in English

Entirely disagree    0    0    0    0    0    Entirely agree

28) I am good at reading an English article in my field of study

Entirely disagree    0    0    0    0    0    Entirely agree

29) I am good at writing a paper in English

Entirely disagree    0    0    0    0    0    Entirely agree

30) I get better results for classes taught in English

Entirely disagree    0    0    0    0    0    Entirely agree

31) I am able to follow classes in Dutch

Entirely disagree    0    0    0    0    0    Entirely agree

32) I am able to give a presentation in Dutch

Entirely disagree    0    0    0    0    0    Entirely agree

33) I am good at reading a Dutch article in my field of study

Entirely disagree    0    0    0    0    0    Entirely agree

34) I am good at writing a paper in Dutch

Entirely disagree    0    0    0    0    0    Entirely agree

**E Teacher's skills**

Below you will find some statements concerning the skills of your teacher when they use Dutch or English during class. While answering these questions, keep in mind the last course for which these questions are relevant

35) The proficiency level of English of the teacher, who is not a native speaker of English, is good enough to teach in English

Entirely disagree      0      0      0      0      0      Entirely agree

36) The proficiency level of English of the teacher, who is not a native speaker of English, is good enough to make PowerPoints written in English

Entirely disagree      0      0      0      0      0      Entirely agree

37) The proficiency level of Dutch of the teacher, who is not a native speaker of Dutch, is good enough to teach in Dutch

Entirely disagree      0      0      0      0      0      Entirely agree

38) The proficiency level of Dutch of the teacher, who is not a native speaker of Dutch, is good enough to make PowerPoints written in Dutch

Entirely disagree      0      0      0      0      0      Entirely agree

Do you have any questions or comments?

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This is the end of the survey. Thank you for your cooperation.

If you want to get more information or if you wish to be updated on the progress of this research, please send an e-mail to [GW\\_Taalbeleid@uu.nl](mailto:GW_Taalbeleid@uu.nl)

## Appendix B - Original Comments

Participant	1251	In mijn master zijn geen cursussen met voertaal Nederlands.
Participant	1589	Ik vind het erg storend dat bij een Engelstalig vak buitenlandse studenten die gewend zijn om in het Engels te schrijven en te spreken meer aandacht krijgen en logischerwijs betere resultaten halen. Deze studenten zouden naar mijn mening apart les moeten [krijgen].
Participant	1737	Wat een prettig initiatief, deze enquête. Het is goed dat studenten de kans krijgen om op deze manier hun mening kenbaar te maken.
Participant (international student)	1797	Expand the use of English in all of the Utrecht University and in all programmes. This will have huge economic and social benefits for the university and for the Netherlands.
Participant	1827	Ik heb sterk de indruk dat deze vragenlijst is voortgekomen uit wat gemopper onder eerste jaar. Mijn indruk is dat in de loop van de studie langzamerhand geen probleem meer vormt, en dat mensen die echt niet goed zijn in Engels door de koud wateraanpak va (quote was too long to be fully registered by CLEO)
Participant	2041	Engels college is prima, mits niveau docent goed genoeg is en mits er een reden is om het in het Engels te doen: als er een student of docent minder goed is in NL dan in EN of als de materie zich beter voor EN leent.
Participant	2067	Het ontbreekt aan vragen over studenten van het buitenland en hun vaardigheden in het Engels. Ik merk in mijn internationale studie (meerderheid is uit het buitenland) dat het Engels niveau echt HEEL ERG LAAG IS. Zo erg dat ik stukken van mijn medestudent (quote was too long to be fully registered by CLEO)
Participant	2526	Ik heb nog nooit colleges in het Engels gevolgd.
Participant	2584	Goede enquête, maar wat wordt er met de resultaten gedaan?
Participant (international student)	2789	Do not stick to Dutch Language if you want to call the Master International

Participant	2883	Was wel leuk. En win uiteraard graag een VVV bon!
Participant (international student)	3214	It is unfair that the Dutch can use their native language in exams for international master programmes
Participant (international student)	3432	I am one of foreign students of MBI (master business informatics). English is not my native language as well. Within this department, Dutch students are allowed to give their final thesis presentation in Dutch. I found this is not consequent to the course.
Participant	3501	Ik ben benieuwd naar de resultaten. Ik hoor graag van jullie. Succes



## Appendix C - Structure of the faculties

### The faculty of Science

Six departments:

- 1) Biology
- 2) Pharmaceutical Sciences
- 3) Information and Computing Sciences
- 4) Physics and Astronomy
- 5) Chemistry
- 6) Mathematics

Four schools:

- 1) Undergraduate School of Science
- 2) Graduate School of Natural Sciences
- 3) Graduate School of Life Sciences
- 4) Utrecht School of Pharmacy

### The faculty of Veterinary Sciences

Seven departments:

- 1) Animals in Science and Society
  - 2) Biochemistry and Cell Biology
  - 3) Central Laboratory Animal Research Facility
  - 4) Clinical Sciences of Companion Animals
  - 5) Equine Sciences
  - 6) Farm Animal Health
  - 7) Infectious Diseases and Immunology
- Institute for Risk Assessment Sciences and Pathobiology*

Two schools:

- 1) Bachelor School
- 2) Academic School

### The faculty of Humanities

Six departments:

- 1) Department of Dutch
- 2) Department of History and Art History
- 3) Department of Media and Culture Studies
- 4) Department of Modern Languages
- 5) Department of Philosophy
- 6) Department of Theology

Eight schools:

- 1) Dutch
- 2) History and Art History
- 3) Liberal Arts
- 4) Media and Cultural Studies
- 5) Modern Languages
- 6) Philosophy and Artificial Intelligence
- 7) Theology
- 8) Utrecht University Graduate School of Humanities

### The faculty of Geosciences

Four departments:

- 1) Department of Earth Sciences
- 2) Department of Physical Geography

Two schools:

- 1) Undergraduate school of Geosciences
- 2) Graduate school of Geosciences

- 3) Department of Innovation and Environmental Sciences
- 4) Department of Human Geography and Spatial Planning

### **The faculty of Law, Economics and Governance**

Three departments:

- Department of Law
- Department of Economics
- Department of Governance

Three schools:

- Utrecht University School of Law
- Utrecht University School of Economics
- Utrecht University School of Governance

### **The faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences**

Five departments:

- 1) Department of Interdisciplinary Social Science
- 2) Department of Cultural Anthropology and Sociology
- 3) Department of Methodology & Statistics
- 4) Department of Pedagogical and Educational Sciences
- 5) Department of Psychology

Two schools:

- 1) Undergraduate school of Social and Behavioural Sciences
- 2) Graduate school of Social and Behavioural Sciences

### **The faculty of Medicine**

Twelve divisions:

- 1) Biomedical Genetics
- 2) Heart & Lungs
- 3) Imaging
- 4) Intensive Care Centre
- 5) Internal Medicine and Dermatology
- 6) Julius Centre for Health Sciences and Primary Care
- 7) Laboratories and Pharmacy
- 8) Neurosciences
- 9) Paediatrics
- 10) Perioperative and Emergency Care
- 11) Perinatology & Gynaecology
- 12) Surgical Specialties

## Appendix D - Original Texts

### Law on Higher Education

#### Artikel 7.2:

Het onderwijs wordt gegeven en de examens worden afgenomen in het Nederlands. In afwijking van de eerste volzin kan een andere taal worden gebezigd:

- a. wanneer het een opleiding met betrekking tot die taal betreft,
- b. wanneer het onderwijs betreft dat in het kader van een gastcollege door een anderstalige docent gegeven wordt, of
- c. indien de specifieke aard, de inrichting of de kwaliteit van het onderwijs dan wel de herkomst van de studenten daartoe noodzaakt, overeenkomstig een door het instellingsbestuur vastgestelde gedragscode.

Indien het een buiten Nederland afgegeven diploma betreft, kan het instellingsbestuur bepalen dat geen examens of onderdelen daarvan worden afgelegd dan nadat ten genoegen van de desbetreffende examencommissie het bewijs is geleverd van voldoende beheersing van de Nederlandse taal voor het met vrucht kunnen volgen van het onderwijs. Het instellingsbestuur kan tevens bepalen dat betrokkene niet wordt ingeschreven zolang het in de voorgaande volzin bedoelde bewijs niet is geleverd

#### Artikel 7.28.2:

Het instellingsbestuur verleent vrijstelling van de in artikel 7.24, eerste onderscheidenlijk tweede lid, bedoelde vooropleidingseis aan de bezitter van een al dan niet in Nederland afgegeven diploma dat bij ministeriële regeling is aangemerkt als tenminste gelijkwaardig aan het in het desbetreffende lid bedoelde diploma, onverminderd het derde en vierde lid. Het instellingsbestuur kan vrijstelling verlenen van de in artikel 7.24, eerste onderscheidenlijk tweede lid, bedoelde vooropleidingseisen aan de bezitter van een al dan niet in Nederland afgegeven diploma dat niet in de in de eerste volzin genoemde ministeriële regeling is opgenomen, indien dat diploma naar het oordeel van het instellingsbestuur tenminste gelijkwaardig is aan het in artikel 7.24, eerste onderscheidenlijk tweede lidbedoelde diploma, onverminderd het derde en vierde lid. (Indien het een buiten Nederland afgegeven diploma betreft, kan het instellingsbestuur bepalen dat geen examens of onderdelen daarvan worden afgelegd dan nadat ten genoegen van de desbetreffende examencommissie het bewijs is geleverd van voldoende beheersing van de Nederlandse taal voor het met vrucht kunnen volgen van het onderwijs. Het instellingsbestuur kan tevens bepalen dat betrokkene niet wordt ingeschreven zolang het in de voorgaande volzin bedoelde bewijs niet is geleverd.)<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Only the part between the brackets is taken up in the main text

## Language Code of Conduct (LCL)

### GEDRAGSCODE TAAL UNIVERSITEIT UTRECHT

Deze Gedragscode Taal is vastgesteld op grond van artikel 7.2 sub c Wet hoger onderwijs en wetenschappelijk onderzoek (WHW).

#### Artikel 7.2 WHW - Taal

Het onderwijs wordt gegeven en de examens worden afgenomen in het Nederlands. In afwijking van de eerste volzin kan een andere taal worden gebezigd:

- a. wanneer het een opleiding met betrekking tot die taal betreft,
- b. wanneer het onderwijs betreft dat in het kader van een gastcollege door een anderstalige docent gegeven wordt, of,
- c. indien de specifieke aard, de inrichting of de kwaliteit van het onderwijs dan wel de herkomst van de studenten daartoe noodzaakt, overeenkomstig een door het instellingsbestuur vastgestelde gedragscode.

#### Preambule

De Universiteit Utrecht heeft een internationaal karakter, wat onder meer tot uitdrukking komt in:

- de inrichting van haar onderwijs in een undergraduatefase en een graduatefase, in overeenstemming met de internationale praktijk;
- het wereldwijd werven van studenten voor bepaalde bachelor- en masteropleidingen;
- het streven naar een internationale aansluiting van, en mobiliteit binnen bachelor- en masteropleidingen;
- het streven naar een internationale aansluiting van masteropleidingen op promotietrajecten;
- het stimuleren van studenten en docenten van de Universiteit Utrecht om internationale ervaringen op te doen aan universiteiten in Europa en de rest van de wereld en van studenten en docenten van elders om in Utrecht dergelijke ervaring op te doen.

Gezien het bovenstaande verzorgt de Universiteit enkele bacheloropleidingen en een groot aantal masteropleidingen in andere talen dan de Nederlandse taal (hierna: "vreemde talen"), indien dit het internationale karakter van de Universiteit Utrecht bevordert.

Deze gedragscode vormt een uitwerking van de Richtlijn Uitvoering Bachelor-Master.

#### Artikel 1

De decaan kan bepalen dat een of meer bachelor- en/of masteropleidingen binnen zijn faculteit geheel of gedeeltelijk worden verzorgd in een vreemde taal op de volgende gronden:

- a. Er is sprake van een situatie als bedoeld in artikel 7.2 aanhef, onder sub a en/of b WHW.
- b. Indien de specifieke aard, de inrichting of de kwaliteit van het onderwijs, dan wel de herkomst van de studenten daartoe noodzaakt, overeenkomstig het internationale

karakter van de Universiteit Utrecht zoals omschreven in de preambule van deze gedragscode.

#### Artikel 2

Indien het onderwijs van een bachelor- of masteropleiding geheel of gedeeltelijk wordt verzorgd in een vreemde taal regelt de onderwijs- en examenregeling van deze opleiding het volgende:

- a. de taal of talen waarin het onderwijs wordt verzorgd;
- b. de vooropleidingseisen voor de bachelor- of masteropleiding, of bepaalde onderdelen daarvan, die verband houden met de verzorging van deze opleiding in de vreemde taal, met inachtneming van artikel 5;
- c. de wijze waarop deze vooropleidingseisen die verband houden met de verzorging van de bachelor- of masteropleiding in de vreemde taal worden getoetst.

#### Artikel 3

Indien een bachelor- of masteropleiding merendeels in een vreemde taal wordt verzorgd dienen het studentenstatuut en de onderwijs- en examenregeling van deze opleiding zowel in deze taal als in de Nederlandse taal beschikbaar te zijn.

#### Artikel 4

Lid 1 Het geheel of gedeeltelijk verzorgen van een bachelor- of masteropleiding in een vreemde taal leidt niet tot een verhoging van het aantal studiepunten van deze opleiding.

Lid 2 Wijziging van de taal van een bachelor- of masteropleiding vindt op een tijdstip plaats waarop deze wijziging de belangen van de studenten van deze opleiding niet onevenredig schaadt.

#### Artikel 5

De vooropleidingseisen voor een bacheloropleiding, die verband houden met de hele of gedeeltelijke verzorging van deze bacheloropleiding in een vreemde taal, zijn niet zwaarder dan de wettelijk bepaalde vooropleidingseisen voor deze bacheloropleiding.

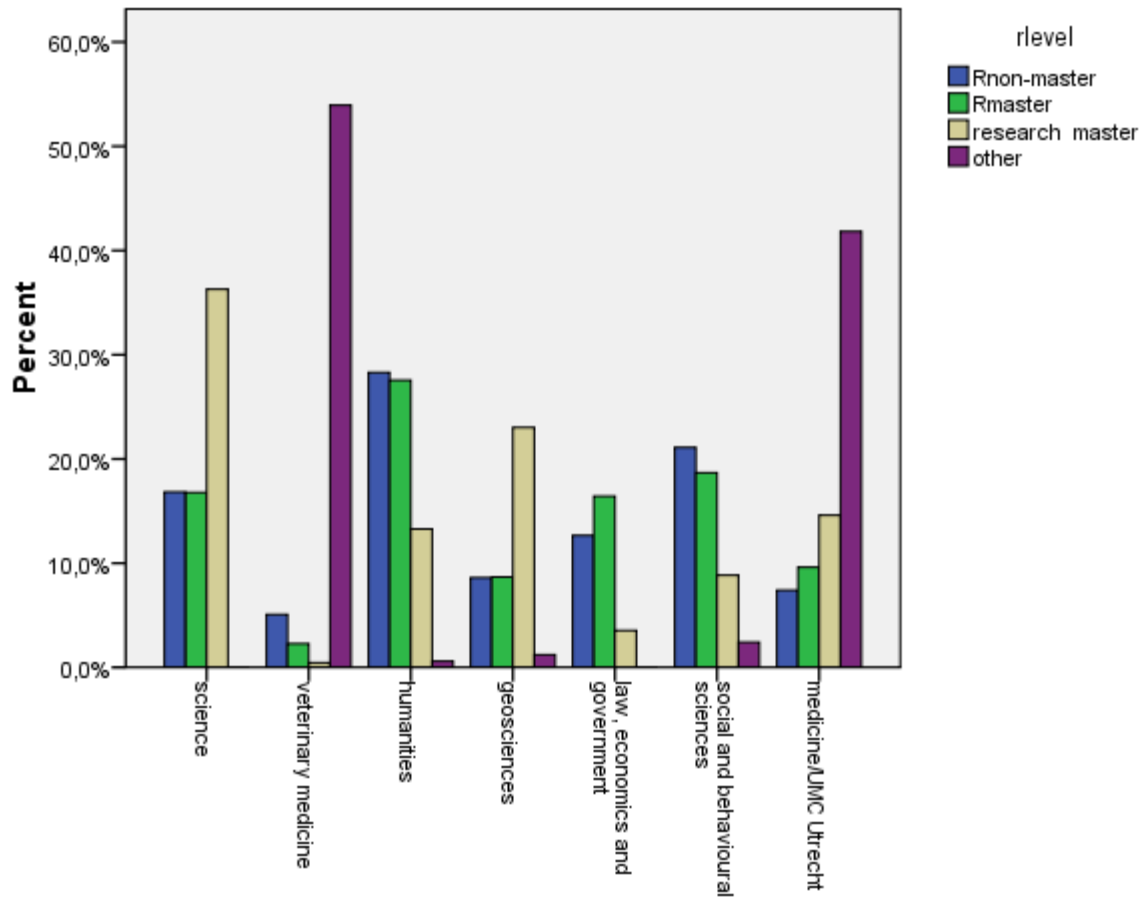
#### Artikel 6

De decaan draagt binnen zijn faculteit zorg voor een passend taalniveau van de medewerkers die belast zijn met het verzorgen van een bachelor- of masteropleiding in een vreemde taal.

*Vastgesteld door het college van bestuur van de Universiteit Utrecht op 20 januari 2004.*

## Appendix E - Graph Distribution Level of Education by Faculty

The distribution of levels of education amongst the participants of the different faculties is significant: ( $\chi^2 = 950$ ;  $df = 18$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ).



## Appendix F - Cross Tabulations

Switch: TL English, taught Dutch	Science		Veterinary Medicine		Humanities		Geosciences		Law, Economics and Government		Social Sciences		Medicine	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
No	326	86.9	150	94.9	469	88.0	151	72.9	230	92.7	367	92.4	231	97.1
Yes	49	13.1	8	5.1	64	12	56	27.1	18	7.3	30	7.6	7	2.9
Total	375	100	158	100	533	100	207	100	248	100	397	100	238	100

Table 1: frequencies and percentages grouped by faculty (TL English, but taught in Dutch)

Switch: Student	Science		Veterinary Medicine		Humanities		Geosciences		Law, Economics and Government		Social Sciences		Medicine	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
No	258	67.7	124	77	445	83.6	151	72.9	235	94.4	365	92.2	217	89.7
Yes	123	32.2	37	23.0	87	16.4	56	27.1	14	5.6	31	7.8	35	10.3
Total	381	100	161	100	532	100	207	100	249	100	369	100	242	100

Table 2: frequencies and percentages grouped by faculty (TL Dutch, but taught in English because of student)

Switch: Teacher	Science		Veterinary Medicine		Humanities		Geosciences		Law, Economics and Government		Social Sciences		Medicine	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
No	233	61.5	29	17.7	382	71.5	183	88.4	226	90.4	324	81.8	181	76.1
Yes	146	38,5	135	82,3	152	28,5	24	11,6	24	9,6	72	18,2	57	23,9
Total	379	100	164	100	534	100	207	100	250	100	396	100	238	100

Table 3: frequencies and percentages grouped by faculty (TL Dutch, but taught in English because of teacher)