Internationalisation
Language Policy and Governance

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ABSTRACT

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What began as a simple inquiry into language policy (LP) and practices at the Rijksuniversiteit Groningen (RUG) hatched a much larger investigation of the practical and ideological context shaping the RUG’s drive to internationalise. To explore this macro-perspective, a series of in-depth research interviews with 10 policy makers, stakeholders and internationalisation experts was undertaken in view of the University Board’s ambition to transform the RUG into a global player, jockeying for position on the world’s most prestigious rankings. Data derived from 13.5 hours of recorded interviews was then converted into a 175 page transcript and tableau vivant from which an emergent LP could be situated. While the process is viewed as imperative, the general consensus has been shaped by a fusion of neoliberal ideologies that depict internationalisation as a goal in and of itself, yet one that permits a variety of interpretations. Financial considerations aside, it was therefore shown that an à la carte approach to internationalisation, seen here to foster uneven commitment, left a number of constituents’ ambitions for the RUG stymied. As such, an array of de facto LPs remains in force. Furthermore, although the political will to implement a bilingual LP is insufficient, it was also found that policy makers are not receptive to multilingualism as a model for LP as there was little support for the diffusion of Dutch, and plans to reduce German language provisions are in the offing. Thus, qualitative analysis of the data revealed a degree of tension, if not impasse, as, “the language question is very tricky, and that it touches the heart of the problem of internationalisation” (Participant IC3) in response to question 9.1 in a Guide to Transformation.
PREFACE

As the citizen of an officially bilingual country I have first-hand experience of politically driven language policies and their impact on a society. So, when I arrived in Groningen I came with a readiness to debate the socio-political quandaries of language; I was hungry for local discourse on language policy and practices – not just at the Rijksuniversiteit – but in the Netherlands, Europe and globally. This appetite spawned numerous language conversations in the canteen. I sampled attitudes to Mandarin as a second language; I got a taste of Frisian language rights; I picked at Dutch nonchalance with regard to their native tongue; and, of particular relevance, I was also treated to the impression that English as a minority language trumped the majority’s language – all in the name of internationalisation.

This happened when I attended a symposium on language policy for the Faculty of Arts; despite being the only foreign student in attendance, I was still the catalyst for an immediate switch from Dutch to English. Once again, I was on familiar, ideologically fertile terrain – and duly intrigued – since internationalisation is a largely top-down, institutionally-driven process with language-related consequences. I should add that the present study of the practical and ideological context shaping the RUG’s drive to further internationalise is what followed; I am convinced this context is the cradle for an emergent language policy.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to my informants; not only did they take time out of their busy schedules to be interviewed they graciously allowed me to interview them in English. I was also very fortunate to have been paired with two supervisors – one “de jure”, Nanna Haug-Hilton, the other “de facto”, Kees de Bot: Between them I had access to area specialists in sociolinguistics and language policy, as well as the guidance I needed to “harness” my ambitions for this project. Thanks also to Jeanette ten Brink for help with Dutch sources, and to my husband, Rick, for his patience and support.
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<td>RUG</td>
<td>Rijksuniversiteit Groningen</td>
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<td>LP/s</td>
<td>Language Policy/Policies</td>
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<td>LPP</td>
<td>Language Policy and Planning</td>
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<td>LG</td>
<td>Language Governance</td>
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<td>LH</td>
<td>Linguistic Hagelslag</td>
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<td>L1</td>
<td>First Language</td>
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<td>Second Language</td>
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<td>ELF</td>
<td>English as a Lingua Franca</td>
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<td>IC</td>
<td>Internationalisation (Project) Committee/member</td>
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<td>IS/s</td>
<td>International Student/Students</td>
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<td>CI</td>
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<td>Board Perspective</td>
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<td>CoE</td>
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<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
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<td>NUFFIC</td>
<td>Netherlands Organisation for International Cooperation in Higher Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>PVV</td>
<td>Partij Voor de Vrijheid</td>
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<tr>
<td>PLC</td>
<td>Politico-Linguistiquement Correct (discourse)</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation</td>
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<td>GATS</td>
<td>General Agreement on Trades and Services</td>
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The World as a Stage

The present study examines the Rijksuniversiteit Groningen’s language policy and language practices in relation to a phenomenon that is taking place in the sphere of higher education globally. Often referred to as internationalisation, this phenomenon warrants a closer look since it links domestic changes to the forces of globalisation; here, globalisation “refers to the trend of most nation-states to view themselves as part of the global world, international affairs and world markets (Shohamy, 2006, p. 37). To date, much has already been written from the bottom-up, with both lecturers’ and international students’ perspectives, since the internationalization of higher education has produced a "Bermuda Triangle of pedagogy, culture, and language” (Labi, 2011, Para. 8); thus, one of the goals for this project was to compile a top-down perspective, not so much to balance views, but to garner priorities and their effect on policy measures.

1.2 Mise en Scène

The Rijksuniversiteit Groningen (RUG) is a Dutch research university in the northerly province of Groningen. Originally a college of higher education, the university was founded in 1614, the result of “an initiative taken by the Regional Assembly of the city of Groningen and the Ommelanden” (University of Groningen, History, 2010, para. 2), hence its traditional orientation to the city and strong ties to the surrounding region. The RUG is recognised as one of the oldest universities on continental Europe, and is, in that respect, second only to Leiden in the Netherlands. With nine faculties and nine graduate schools, at the time of writing, the RUG hosts 26,500 students annually, 3,500 of whom are international students.

While it’s taken for granted that the national vernacular is also the RUG’s institutional language, with the majority of its teaching in Dutch, for the greater part of the university’s history this has not always been the case. On the RUG’s official website, the History of the University (RUG, 2010, April 28) hails the Higher Education Act of 1876 for radically improving the position of the university. This was achieved by granting the newly named Rijksuniversiteit Groningen a research function in addition to its educational duty, though more to the point, “teaching now took place in Dutch as well as in Latin” (para. 5).

Historical details such as these suggest current language policies are, in some respects, recurrent language policies, since the RUG now has 106 English-taught, internationally oriented degree programmes, a fact that is well articulated in the university’s Strategic Plan 2010-2015.
which states, “the majority of the Master’s and PhD programmes are taught in English; in addition to the essential degree programmes in Dutch, all faculties have a representative selection of English-taught Bachelor’s degree programmes on offer” (University of Groningen, 2010b, p. 13).

Meanwhile, the process of internationalisation is by no means uniform since academe around the world is affected differently by global trends; moreover, the extent to which an institution embraces these changes will depend on a number of factors (Altbach, 2004, p. 3). For example, the Netherlands, as part of the Bologna and related initiatives, has had to adjust to new degree structures and other kinds of harmonisation designed to facilitate greater mobility within a European higher education space (Altbach, 2004, p. 3).

In the RUG’s case, it too has altered its degree structures and “tuned” its system according to European guidelines, and in 2009 the university was awarded both the Diploma Supplement label and the ECTS label by the European Commission – a distinction worth mentioning since the RUG has clearly gone out of its way to be the first and only higher education institution in the Netherlands to have “properly implemented these two aspects of the Bologna agenda” (University of Groningen, 2010a, para. 1). However, there are constituents within the institution who, while applauding these structural alterations, strongly advocate a more profound transformation of the RUG’s identity, from regional Dutch university to international university.

1.3 Strategic Warnings

The Anglo-Saxon world remains dominant in terms of the internationalisation of education. (Nuffic, 2010, para. 6).

The present study began with a careful reading the RUG’s Strategic Plan 2010-2015; essentially a corporate brochure written for a corporate audience, it makes the following statement: “The 21st century has brought with it important issues which demand a significant response from any university” (University of Groningen, 2010b, p. 1). In spite of the vague, somewhat lofty tone, this position statement reads more like a warning; in fact, one doesn’t need to read between the lines to detect institutional anxiety over “changes in university funding” in this era of transparency, accountability and “increased competition between researchers for external funding” (p. 1). With a much leaner state budget, the Strategic Plan 2010-2015 points to the RUG’s “growing dependence on the successful utilisation of external funding sources,” and an urgent need to attract European Union funding which, at the current growth rate of 10% a year, “must be maintained” (p. 17).
Impending cuts and the nature of their impact is a message that runs throughout the document. Other issues: Amid these financial pressures a new role for the millennial university has emerged with higher education assuming unprecedented importance because of its centrality to the international knowledge economy (Altbach, 2004, p. 5). Some call this new economy a “soft revolution, in which knowledge is replacing physical resources as the main driver of economic growth” (Wooldridge, 2005, para. 4). Meanwhile, “we are also witnessing a simultaneous blurring of the boundaries between national economies” – economies based on knowledge-capital that “pay little heed to geographical borders” (Nuffic, 2008, para. 4).

Wooldridge (2005), reminds us that higher education, what he calls “the brains business”, had already been undergoing change for some time in OECD countries as a result of massification, or the “democratisation of higher education”; however, massification, is now a global trend accelerated by the forces of globalisation. More to the point, perhaps, is how this trend has evolved an international “market” for higher education, with increasing competition for students (p. 6). This fortuitous collision of events – dwindling state funds and a pool of international fee-paying students – has meant that for many institutions a proactive internationalisation policy is de rigueur, including for the RUG.

While attracting fee-paying students from abroad appears the most obvious means of diversifying and expanding a university’s support network, by doing so the RUG also becomes vulnerable to economic downturns as these trends curb outbound mobility drastically. Additionally, traditional “providers” of ISs, such as Malaysia, Singapore and China, are now transitioning into “recruiters”. Thus, seeking out cooperative relationships worldwide is another important survival strategy and literature produced by Nuffic tends to reiterate the same goals:

For the Netherlands, globalisation is chiefly regionalisation in the form of “Europeanisation”... It is therefore essential to establish contacts with emerging countries – not only with China and India, but also with Russia, Brazil, South Africa, Malaysia, Indonesia and other rising economies...(to) create a dense web of professional and economic networks that may prove beneficial in the future (Nuffic, 2008, para. 19).

1.4 Strategic Goals

Although due respect is given to the university’s relationship to its “environs” on page 19 in the Strategic Plan 2010-2015, that globalisation now defines the RUG’s raison d’être is made clear on the first page of its profile when it states: “Knowledge expansion and innovation will always flourish in an interdisciplinary and international environment...(t)he university of Groningen thus
educates its students to become emancipated citizens of the modern world” (University of Groningen, 2010b, p.3). Therefore, plans to further internationalise the RUG – as a necessary part of an overall strategy – are manifest in this document which summarises the institution’s accomplishments to date and schedules a list of ambitious goals.

Identified below are those strategic goals enumerated in the brochure which dovetail neatly with the internationalisation of the university:

1) Increase the international student body by 150%
2) Attract and retain high-calibre international staff - making up 20% of teaching faculty
3) Increase participation of domestic students in international exchange programmes by 50%
4) Intensify cooperative relationships worldwide
5) Produce 500 PhD degrees/year by 2015, and
6) Enhance English proficiency at the "support" level.

With regard to the position of English in education at the RUG, the Strategic Plan 2010-2015 states, “English also has a role to play at the support level and proficiency in it must be commensurate with the service being provided” (University of Groningen, 2010b, p. 13). This vague statement appears to have been crafted so as not to raise any eyebrows or indeed, to name any issues, even though the statement is pregnant with implications by virtue of what is not said out right. In fact, it works hard to downplay what is implied, considering all five other goals have foreign language requirements either directly or indirectly.

Aside from “enhancing English proficiency at the support level”, there is little else said about “language” in the RUG’s corporate brochure. One may ask, is language in an internationalising environment really that insignificant? Is this the kind of question that only applied linguists concern themselves with? Or indeed, is this an empirical question of strategic importance to internationalisation?
2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Ideology

To ignore the role of ideology, or to relegate it to the bin of extraneous variables, to fraught with ambiguity to be useful to empirical research, is to engage in ideological subterfuge of the worst sort (Ricento, 2000, p. 7).

Acknowledgement of the active role of ideology – as concept and construct - is factored into the study. One of the goals of the research instrument was to unveil persistent ideological underpinnings in relation to questions of language, internationalisation, identity and progress. In short, themes that tended to “stick together” during the study. Freeden (2003), rightly states that the term ‘ideology’ evokes strong emotional responses, despite the fact that “too many of its users have shied away from injecting it with a reasonably precise, useful, and illuminating meaning...” This maybe because ideology “suggests artificially constructed sets of ideas, somewhat removed from everyday life, are manipulated by the powers that be – and the powers that want to be” (p. 1 & p. 4).

While this study takes the position that ideology can “appropriately be described as meaning in the service of power” (Holborow, 2007, p. 52), Freeden (2003) claims we are all consumers of ideologies, whether we aware of it or not, since they enable us to map our social and political environments. Though he also cautions that “ideological maps do not represent an objective, external reality” (p. 3), rather, they are affirmed subjectively according to particular standpoints (Holborow, 2007, p. 52).

2.2 Internationalisation as Ideology

It would be difficult to hold the forces of globalisation at bay, which are defined by Altbach (2004) as, “the broad economic, technological and scientific trends that directly affect higher education and are largely inevitable”(p. 5). That said, “it is not inevitable that an institution will necessarily be overwhelmed by them or that the terms of the encounter must be dictated from afar” (p. 6); therefore, internationalisation can be identified as 1) a potent ideology used to frame coping strategies, tactics, or game-plans as a response to contemporary challenges, and 2) a process fostering transnational engagement.

Typically, the internationalisation of higher education includes specific policies and programmes that are adopted by governing bodies of universities. Oftentimes, individual departments or institutes will voluntarily develop their own strategies to either cope with or
exploit globalisation. This suggests that internationalisation accommodates a significant degree of autonomy, that institutions and systems do possess great latitude in how they deal with this new environment, and that this ensures many models for higher education in the 21st century (Altbach, 2004, p. 6).

Meanwhile, the underlying imperative is merely softened, since we are to accept that globalisation is more or less unavoidable; indeed, Altbach (2004) goes on to argue, “history shows that when universities shut themselves off from economic and societal trends they become moribund and irrelevant; European universities, for example, ignored both the Renaissance and the Industrial Revolution and ceased to be relevant” (p. 6). Although such beliefs have become common currency at all levels – and a widely held attitude uncovered in the present study – statements to this effect remain bold, somewhat contradictory claims indicating a fatalistic position vis à vis extant trends.

In the Netherlands, Nuffic pursues a mandate putting it very strongly in favour of internationalisation. Indeed, the agenda is crystal clear in a Renewed Urgency for Internationalisation in Higher Education (2008), the title of one of its brochures. Literature published by Nuffic actively reinforces “imperatives”, for example, “Higher education and science must continue to put their full support into internationalisation...(and) a new type of cosmopolitanism that is not a matter of choice, but a harsh necessity...(because) the Netherlands cannot afford to isolate itself” (Nuffic, 2008, paras. 54-55). Such documents are also replete with internationalisation buzz-words – (talent – knowledge – diversity – excellence) expressions that have since migrated to the RUG’s Strategic Plan 2010-2015.

In the RUG’s case, the university is presently marketing internationalisation as a well established norm, rather than a contemporary fad. Returning to the official website’s History of the University (2010) page, we read how the young University of Groningen was already “an outstanding example of an international community in the seventeenth century”, to the extent that the first Rector Magnificus, Ubbo Emmius, was German (para. 2). Reading the institutional brochure Master’s Degrees in Economics and Business 2011-2012, the legacy of this precedent is echoed:

The University of Groningen has always been an outstanding example of an international community. Almost 400 years ago, close to half the students and lecturers came from outside the Netherlands (University of Groningen, 2010a, p. 2).
While this message is aimed at prospective international students – a fiercely contested market – the cosmopolitan “welcome mat” is not unique, with rival institutions adopting similar strategies. Maastricht University, for example, distinguishes itself from the RUG, and elsewhere, by teaching more than half of its undergraduate programmes in English. Such moves are born of an aggressive language policy since the trend towards English is increasingly given to internal functions; for example, “if they are taking part in an English taught programme, tutors and students of the same L1 are expected to communicate in English; likewise, the all-Dutch Executive Board conducts its meetings in English” (Edwards, 2010, p. 20).

However, cautionary tales from Leuven, Belgium, suggest attempts to internationalise are not always matched with success; after hastily implementing the Bologna process through a greater use of English, it was found, “a language policy which departs from the conviction that the introduction of English-medium instruction will be unproblematic, will most probably not lead to the hoped for internationalisation of the university” (Sercu, 2004, p. 553).

2.2a “Verengelsing” or Quality

The importance of ranking universities worldwide is part and parcel of our market-driven times, with fierce competition between universities dictating the institutional climate. The pressure of the global rankings is implicit in the RUG’s goal to rank among the top 100 universities worldwide by 2015 in most areas of study (University of Groningen, 2010b, p. 5). By dedicating the university to this ambition, an active internationalisation policy is assumed. For example, two of the THE-QS Ranking’s six “weighted” indicators measure the proportion of international staff and students, since “research quality, teaching quality, graduate employability and international outlook are listed as the four pillars of the world class university and consequently represent the areas covered by the THE-QS Ranking” (Rauhvargers, 2011, pp. 28 & 30).

With so much emphasis on quality it is something of an irony, and a point of contention, when critics claim the quality of higher education has diminished in the Netherlands as a result of internationalisation practices. More specifically, their views need to be reconciled with the introduction of English-medium classrooms, as some consider the process of internationalisation as little more than the “Englishing” of Dutch universities: “Internationalisering is aan onze universiteiten eigenlijk niet meer dan verengelsing” [Internationalisation is actually nothing more than Englishing at our universities] (Hagers, 2009, para. 10). Likewise, Pieter Muysken (2009) of the Radboud Universiteit criticises general perceptions of English as a symbol for quality and progress since he believes,
“de werkelijkheid is anders...In plaats van symbool voor kwaliteit, staat Engels maar al te vaak voor armoë” [in practice it is otherwise...Instead of symbolising quality, English stands all too often for poverty] (paras. 4-5 & 6).

2.3 Language Policy and Planning

When choosing to explore internationalisation processes one expects to encounter dichotomous notions of national verses international. However, this is just the beginning since the Janus face of any internationalisation policy is language policy (hereafter referred to as LP); LPs are communicative policies that are made, or are implicitly acknowledged and practiced, in all societal domains (Ricento, 2009, p. 19). Conversely, language planning is “the development, implementation, and evaluation of specific LPs” (p. 18).

That said, policy is not always the output of planning since “a great deal of language policy-making goes on in a haphazard or uncoordinated way, far removed from the language planning ideal” (Hornberger, 2009, p. 25). Meanwhile, language policy and planning (LPP) has a dual focus which conceives of LPP “as a set of theories and practices for managing linguistic ecosystems” (p. 35). For the present study, LPP designates the process and the product, and is used interchangeably with LP.

At the RUG LP has become especially relevant with the advent of English medium education and the growing presence of a community of non-Dutch speaking internationals. This is because,

language planning almost always occurs in multilingual, multicultural settings in which planning for one language has repercussions on other languages and ethno linguistic groups. Decisions about which languages will be planned for what purposes ultimately reflect power relations among different groups and socio-political and economic interests (Ricento, 2009, p. 6)

LPP goals are divided in to three main areas: Status planning (about the uses of language); acquisition planning (about the users of language); and corpus planning (about language, i.e. standardisation) (Hornberger, 2009, p. 29). In sociolinguistics status is “the perceived relative value of a named language, usually related to its social utility, which encompasses its so-called market value as a mode of communication, as well as more subjective features rooted in a society’s linguistic culture” (Ricento, 2009, p. 5).
This, of course, is where ideology plays a role in the ascription and achievement of language status (p. 5). Generally speaking, ideology supports the naturalisation of unconscious beliefs and assumptions which, in turn, contribute to “hegemonic practices (that) come to be built into the institutions of society” (Tollefson, 2009, p. 47). Indeed, sometimes these are little more than “invisible” practices – widely regarded as common sense (p. 47).

2.3.a The Policy of No Language Policy

Shohamy (2006) summarises some important distinctions between LPs, with “overt” referring “to those LPs that are explicit, formalised, de jure, codified and manifest”; while “covert” describes LPs “that are implicit, informal, unstated, de facto, grass-roots and latent” (p. 50). According to Ricento (2000) formal, overt LPs are “essentially political documents (that) have been forged with compromise” (p. 7), which begs the question: Are informal, covert LPs a-political, undocumented policies emerging without consent?

Wodak (2009) cites Herbert Christ (1995, p. 75 & 1991, p. 55) when she describes LP as “every public influence on the communication radius of languages, the sum of those ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ political initiatives through which a particular language or languages is/are supported in their public validity, their functionality, and their dissemination” (p. 170). While this definition succeeds in capturing not only the breadth, but the intangibility of LP, she also goes on to remind us that LP, like all policies, is subject to conflict (p. 170), which may explain the preponderance of de facto LPs.

2.3b Officiality

According to Shohamy (2006) officiality is a “device used to grant preference to certain languages in given territories and to take the power away from other languages” (p. 61); for a higher education institution like the RUG, this can relate to the use of language in the public space, in lectures and ceremonies, as well as on official documents or the names of buildings. It should also be noted that decisions about officiality typically change over time, especially with a variety of agendas and motivations.

However, the manifestation of officiality is not always clear and “the mere act of declaring certain languages as official does not carry with it much meaning in terms of actual practice in all domains and it does not guarantee that officiality will be practiced” (Shohamy, 2006, p. 61). Conversely, by not declaring certain languages official does not imply their neglect, or lack of
official use. “Such is the case nowadays with English in many places in the world, where there is no need to declare it official for the public and government offices to realise its importance in one way or another” (p. 62).

To understand the power of de facto status, making officiality redundant, one need look no further than to a number of dominant Anglophone societies, namely the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia, where the English language has not been declared “official”. In the RUG’s case, with increased internationalisation it’s possible that officiality is more likely to be deployed as a propaganda tool (Shohamy, 2006, p. 62) to reinforce established or emerging identities, or indeed, as a means of appropriation.

2.4 Governance and Governmentality

Foucault’s theory of governmentality is a powerful antidote to “the grand narratives or sweeping epistemologies of imperialism”, because it moves away “from a focus on the state as an intentional actor that seeks to impose its will on the people, and instead draws our attention to much more localised and often contradictory operations of power” (Pennycook, 2009, pp. 64-65). In short, governmentality focuses on the multiplicity of ways in which governance is realised. It also lays bare our assumptions about supposedly more liberal forms of government, as a move away from authoritarianism “may be accompanied by increasing modes of governmentality through a greater multiplicity of modes of surveillance” (p. 64).

That “power operates at the micro-level of diverse practices, rather than in the macro-regulations of the state” (p. 64) has tremendous implications for LP in an internationalising environment, since language governance (LG), which builds on this understanding of Foucault’s governmentality, enables us to trace,

how decisions about languages and language forms across a diverse range of institutions (law, education, medicine, printing) and through a diverse range of instruments (books, regulations, exams, articles, corrections) regulate the language use, thought, and action of different people, groups, and organisations (Pennycook, 2009, p. 65).

Furthermore, by adopting this position, it becomes possible to challenge supposedly normative, critical/liberal assumptions as to what is good or best – such as mother-tongue education and policies that favour multilingualism or less-used languages; while such policy goals appear enlightened or egalitarian, we need to be aware of the governmental effects of such policies (Pennycook, 2009, p. 65).
Figure 1 A framework for language policy (Shohamy, 2006, p. 58).

Figure 2 Fishman’s framework (Shohamy, 2006, p. 53).
The model in Figure 1 proposes a framework that can be applied to our understanding of
governmentality in the formation of a de facto LP (Shohamy, 2006, p. 58). It should be noted,
however, that a de jure LP is also mediated through similar mechanisms, or policy devices.
Additionally, this model clearly expresses an overriding assumption about the importance of
ideology; here, LG is exercised through a number of practices, including education and tests
(governmentality), which also serve as conduits for ideology.

Fishman’s Framework in Figure 2 gives a hierarchical version of language policy
formation and the role of ideology emerging from, and contributing to, governmentality
(Shohamy, 2006, p. 53). Importantly, we also need to maintain distinctions because ideology
does not determine policy, it merely informs it; “nor can one derive ideology from policy;
policies are contingent, adapted to changing material conditions, (while) ideologies are more
persistent” (Ricento, 2000, p. 3).

2.4a A Dutch Analogy

An example of micro-level practices and their impact is seen in the Anglicising of the Dutch
language. Without a doubt, this is symptomatic of larger trends in popular culture, but as far as
the RUG is concerned, a uniquely Dutch analogy and a fitting metaphor to describe its LP is
Linguistic Hagelslag (LH). Hagelslag, a chocolate bread topping, in the form of “hundreds and
thousands”, is a common breakfast/snack item in the Netherlands. The analogy stems from the
extent to which English words and collocations are “sprinkled” throughout the public space. A
particularly interesting example of LH is an institutional flyer that was in recent circulation (See
Appendix). This public notice was issued by the university to Dutch speaking patrons of the
Harmonie building canteen.

Not only is this Dutch flyer “sprinkled” with English, (“the University of Groningen”,
“See you @ the C-bar”) – all subtle forms of lexical planning – explicit LP is introduced at the
bottom of the notice; here it is announced that the English term “Hospitality Services” will
replace the previously serviceable Dutch equivalent “Restauratieve Voorzieningen”. While the
example outlined here is structural by virtue of its official status, similar languaging trends, or
LH in the public space, are mostly superficial. That said, however innocuous LH may seem, in
effect “all mechanisms are forms of marketing language ideologies” (Shohamy, 2006, p. 57). For
example, the introduction of LH in this context may serve as a visible token to the
internationalisation of the university. More telling, perhaps, is the way this lexical shift has been
officiated, as it verges on the covert; why else the small print on a disposable flyer?
2.5 Standards

With regards to the Englishing – or verengelsing – of Dutch higher education, criticism is frequently directed to so called Denglish, or Dunglish, which is characterised by expressions like, “How do you underbuild that?” or ‘Which answer is not good?’. Hagers (2009) claims students at Dutch universities frequently complain about these common errors, and sarcastic remarks about the broken English of many lecturers is a regular staple in university newspapers (para. 17).

It would seem that views which propagate native-like standards are widely held; and yet, conversations revolving around standards occasionally touch upon the bottom-up preference for a European English, a kind of simplified, lowest-common-denominator English that is increasingly spoken by non-native speakers in university classrooms throughout Europe. For purists, this represents a failure, not a triumph; for pragmatists, however, a non-standard accent and/or a limited vocabulary are not disadvantages (Labi, 2011, para. 57). Indeed, between second-language users, this variety – and not the standard (native speaker) variety – is the preferred language for communication, particularly since “native speakers can be the cause of communication breakdowns, even when interlocutors and their governments have invested heavily in learning the language” (Phillipson, 2006, p. 21).

Recognition of a uniquely European English, as one of many world Englishes, presupposes the ideology “of a de-territorialised and neutralised language that belongs to nobody and therefore to everybody; as if English were not backed any longer by the world’s most powerful army and navy” (Hamel, 2005, p. 134). While this act of linguistic appropriation is supported by a growing body of literature, Nerrière’s (2007) problematic “Glob-ish” – a popular term used by this francophone to describe a 1,500 word dialect of essential English merged with the terminology of the digital age – is a useful measure to probe for emergent themes and greater accommodation of ELF:

(P)osted to Japan with IBM in the 1990s, (Nerrière) noticed that non-native English speakers in the Far East communicated in English far more successfully with their Korean and Japanese clients than British or American executives. Standard English was all very well for Anglophones, but in the developing world, this non-native “decaffeinated English”—full of simplifications like “the son of my brother” for “nephew,” or “words of honor” for “oath”—was becoming the new global phenomenon (McCrum, 2010, para. 6).
While Glob-ish represents an extreme, it continues to highlight the unavoidable question of standards, particularly where there are strong ideological mechanisms and de facto LPs which fossilise our preferences.

2.6 English as Ideology

The English language is a central theme as it represents an ideological facet of globalisation that has been created through the media, popular and elite culture, connotations of success, and of necessity (Phillipson, 2006, p. 22). As such, the process of internationalisation speaks English, the Latin of the 21st century and the preferred vehicle for communicating knowledge worldwide. Even in countries where English is not the language of higher education, as is the case in the Netherlands, it is used for instruction and for cross-border degree arrangements and other programmes (Altbach, 2004, p. 9).

Of course, an adjunct response to globalisation is resistance, particularly when there is mounting pressure to de-regulate or de-nationalise certain spheres. And since language is one of the most durable legacies of colonial and imperial expansion, the preponderance of a particular language often resurrects knee-jerk reactions of the ideological sort. Literature on the subject of global English includes vocal, ideologically-mired criticism bemoaning linguistic imperialism, which portrays language “as a neo-colonial structure threatening the world with a hegemonic object”, in this case, English” (Pennycook, 2009, p. 69). Indeed, such is the global status of English, that it has spawned a diffusion-of-English paradigm (p. 67) in which the spread of English is tied to,

an uncritical endorsement of capitalism, its science and technology, a modernisation ideology, monolingualism as a norm, ideological globalisation and internationalisation, transnationalisation, the Americanisation and homogenisation of world culture, linguistic culture and media imperialism (Tsuda, 1994, p. 274).

Having styled himself as a champion for linguistic rights, Phillipson (2008) reveals a deep suspicion, if not fundamental abhorrence, of globalisation when he likens global English to a lingua-frankenstina that interlocks with and perpetuates exploitive economic/material systems, structures, institutions, and US empire (p. 265). However, “this viewpoint underestimates the dynamics of language and the roles of speakers in its making” (Holborow, 2007, p. 55). And though it’s all well and good to defend the right for everyone to speak their own language, this “battle does not necessarily challenge the global elites who ride the tiger of world English
today ... (since) opposition to the system and contesting dominant ideology takes different forms worldwide and is not dependent on using a particular language” (p. 55).

It would seem, then, that any discussion of globalisation and higher education and the preponderance of English cannot avoid the deep inequalities and structural dependencies that are part of the world system (Altbach, 2004, p. 8). Thus, where English is used as a gate-keeping tool there is, from some quarters, a tendency to criticise its agents for this linguistic monopoly which not only affects education policy, but the work of students and scholars (p.10).

Without denying the benefits of a common intellectual and scientific language, some argue a loss of domain through the diglossic division of academic labour has led to the reduced linguistic capital of nations (Altbach, 2004, p. 10). This ideological sore-point has prompted a number of European states to commission defensive language policies. For example, in the Netherlands the Nederlandse Taalunie proclaimed that “it is essential that the Dutch language can remain a ‘full-scale’ language (and that) the first and foremost challenged is to see that Dutch (remains) a language of instruction in higher education” (Phillipson, 2006, p. 26). Meanwhile, domain loss is a point of contention for certain, more nationalistic parties in the Netherlands, who fear the Dutch language will be reduced to a farmers’ dialect:

“De PVV vreest dat het Nederlands in het hoger onderwijs “verwordt tot een boerendialect” (NRC, 2009, April 8, para. 1).

2.7 Protectionism or Nationalism?

The internationalisation of higher education – as a response to globalisation and domestic pressures – has its share of distinguished critics with legitimate concerns that cannot be dismissed as fear mongering; moreover, global English, widely viewed as the handmaiden of internationalisation, has also become a target for their criticism. Nonetheless, while “some express fear that one language, namely English, will take over and dominate other languages creating a monolingual code,” Shohamy (2006) argues “there is no convincing evidence for that phenomenon; rather a multi-code variety of national and local languages along with English is likely to become the dominant pattern” – a pattern that will be entirely context-dependent and vary from one locale to another (p. 13). It has also been shown that, “unlike a national language, a world language seems not to displace other languages” (p. 14).

Calvet (2000) raises some interesting points about the defenders of “small”, rapidly disappearing languages – the scholars, journalists and bureaucrats who wield “discours Politico-
Linguistiquement Correct” (PLC), who incite emotion and evoke sentimentalism whilst exalting the virtues of plurilingualism – a theme which, “apparait étrangement le plus souvent sous la plume de monolingues locuteurs de langues hyper ou supercentrales, et se retrouve dans l’idéologie quasi officielle de l’UNESCO, de l’Union Européenne, etc” [strangely, appears most often in the writings of monolingual speakers of hyper or super-central languages, and is found in the quasi-official ideologies of UNESCO and the European Union] (p. 51). Moreover, Calvet (2000) suggests such posturing in the literature camouflages another programme:

Mais, en lisant de plus près ce discours nous trouvons un tout autre thème: derrière la défense des “petites” langues se profile l’opposition à la domination de l’anglais de la part des locuteurs de langues supercentrales (les locuteurs des langues minoritaires ont un tout autre rapport à l’anglais dont la domination pourrait, au contraire, préserver leurs langues) (p. 51).

[However, a closer reading of this rhetoric reveals a different theme entirely: behind the defence of "small" languages rallies the opposition to the dominance of English by speakers of “super-central” languages (while, speakers of minority languages have a completely different rapport with English as its domination has, in fact, the capacity to preserve their languages]

Here Calvet makes reference to a global linguistic order, with super-central used to describe the “monuments”, such as state languages, with English as a lingua franca the hyper language. Nevertheless, PLC discourse assumes ipso facto equality between all languages – a sentiment enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights (UNESCO, 1996) – and the ideology of multilingualism works to propagate this principle.

Millar (2005) states: “At the heart of nationalism, or, more correctly, a sense of large-scale group identity, are often shared historical, cultural (and) linguistic features” (p. 10). While this is a familiar view of what constitutes a nation, we still need to acknowledge the reality of the nation-state and the robust ideology that undergirds it as “a received category” (Ricento, 2006, p. 6). At the same time, competing ideologies present the 18th century European conception of the nation state in current arrangements, as both limited and limiting, if not completely inadequate,
Globalisation as an ideological framework has become something of a catch-all to describe the marriage of the local with the supranational. While globalisation is seen to have diminished the role of the state and given greater importance to international organisations such as the World Bank and the UN, it hasn’t rendered the nation state obsolete. Rather less compatible with nationalism is Europeanisation; indeed, not only do the EU and EC serve as examples of governmentality through the multiplication of government and bureaucracy, these institutions put enormous pressure on the integrity of the nation state.

2.8 Multilingualism as Ideology

Europeanisation – a blanket term which defines the EU Commission’s mandate and ideological disposition – is also a vehicle for internationalisation, with unification on a number of structural levels the objective. It should be pointed out, however, that unification is a top-down process and a strong ideological lure is needed to sustain rationale. Furthermore, Europeanisation as an ideology “works” to unravel received notions of the nation state, including the “national language” paradigm, since language policy is one of many strategies used for transnational governance.

For example, in the preceding section it was suggested that pluralingualism, or the defence of “small” languages, can be deployed as a counter-ideology to Global English, and a mask for equally ideological, nationalist agendas. In Europe, multilingualism as ideology has backing on a supranational level, though it could be argued here that “linguistic diversity”, as part of Europeanisation, fosters a number of complex “divide and conquer” scenarios, all the while appearing protectionist in the name of equality. With that said, Ricento (2000) considers it naive to view such LPs cum ideologies as either repressive or liberating, when an LP may serve different political interests simultaneously (p. 3).

In terms of LP, articles and communiqués on the internationalisation of higher education are oftentimes conspicuously silent when it comes to language, almost hesitating, is would seem, to acknowledge the elephant in the room; a good example of this is the Bergen Communiqué (2005). With Europeanisation, however, the elephant cannot be ignored. In fact, “language policy is considered ‘explosive’ by French members of the European Parliament (while) the German Head of Mission at the European Commission considers it ‘the most emotional issue in the EU’”, (Phillipson, 2006, p. 16 & p. 23).
Indeed, “the issue of linguistic hierarchies that exist de facto is so politically sensitive that it has never been squarely addressed” (Phillipson, 2009, p. 356). Thus, policy documents and communiqués frequently contain ritual recognition of the importance of European heritage and cultural diversity with the promotion of multilingualism and the preservation of indigenous languages made explicit, if not binding. And yet, in spite of its formidable translation and interpretation apparatus, it’s something of an irony that the working practices of the Commission strengthens this de facto hierarchy of languages, paving the way for English as a “lingua europea” by default (2006, p. 16 & p. 23).

Again, Phillipson (2008) is as scathing in his view of Europeanisation, as he is of globalisation – seeing the European project as “a variant of global Americanisation” – and criticising its LPs for paying only lip-service, since “the position is far from clear, not least because language policy tends to be left to nationalist and market forces” (p. 253).

2.9 Internationalisation and the Neoliberal Economy

As shown, the tendency to assign a market share to major languages is a contributing factor to their de facto hierarchy and reflects a shift in cultural values – with market thinking the residual effect of a global outlook, since “the ideology of the global market insinuates itself everywhere” (Holborow, 2007, p. 51). Moreover, the discourse of modern day neo-liberalism is so pervasive, some have ascribed it to the “inmaterial production of capitalism”, the diffusion of which demonstrates how language and ideology interconnect to create norms – free market norms that have acquired “the status of unassailable scientific theory” (p. 51 & P. 58).

At a macro-level, international reports...chime thick and fast with assumed notions about the need to deregulate, to open up state companies and services to market competition, to pursue further trade liberalisation. At a micro-level, almost every company website, mission statement and strategic plan pronounces that ‘demand’ and ‘competition’ are synonymous with efficiency, cost-effectiveness and ‘best practice’ (Holborow, 2007, p. 51).

This brings us to yet another ideological contest: The triumph of a neoliberal market economy and its pressure on education as a public good. While neo-liberalism is recognised as a coherent ideology, it is described as:

A theory of political and economic practices that proposes that human well being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterised by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade (Harvey, 2005, p.2).
Though Chomsky (1999) is far less generous when he sums it up as being,

an array of market oriented principles designed by the government of the United States and
the international financial institutions that it largely dominates...The basic rules, in brief,
are: liberalise trade and finance, let markets set price...end inflation...privatise. The
Government should ‘get out of the way’ (p. 19).

Clearly, with university boards and whole faculties wielding neoliberal discourse, one
naturally wonders to what extent the academy must conform itself to a sustainable business
model, or justify its activities to stakeholders. Despite assurances to the contrary, Phillipson
(2006) identifies three global trends in higher education: “The attack on the public university as
a public good; the combined effect of GATS...decreeing that education is a commodity and
corporations converting this claim into reality; and eLearning as a facilitator of these processes”
(p. 23). Needless to say, he is also critical of the Bologna Process, portraying it as a backdoor to
market forces (p. 13).

To pre-empt such concerns, the Strategic Plan 2010-2015 very subtly affirms the RUG’s
not-for-profit mandate and commitment to education as a public good, by stating: “The
University considers that its engagement in (public research) is an important social responsibility
which follows from its primary concern with teaching and research, and its financial
participation in such activities is subordinate to those interests” (University of Groningen, 2010b,
p. 17).

2.10 Project Questions

To recap: With the University Board’s stated ambition to transform the RUG into a global player,
the project aimed to study the role of language in the practical and ideological context shaping
the RUG’s internationalisation policy, with a focus on governance, or the top-down planning
processes involved. Although the purpose of a qualitative study is often exploratory, there were a
number of specific questions bounded by a set of interrelated themes which revolved around
internationalisation strategies and LP – particularly with regard to status planning, though
questions that touched upon acquisition planning and standards were also addressed. These,
together with ideologically framed questions used to gauge the fluidity of attitudes, formed the
thrust of this research.
3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 The Sample

The RUG’s Internationalisation Project Committee (IC) was made up of six non-partisan individuals drawn from different areas of the university; they did not represent faculties as such, but were known to have considerable experience in the area of internationalisation. The IC had been charged with articulating a vision and formulating a strategy to be adopted by the Board of the University. Therefore, to better inform a top-down, macro-perspective, a series of one-off, in-depth research interviews was undertaken with members of the IC as they also happened to be in the last stages in their preparation of a policy document on internationalisation.

Dörnyei (2007) aptly describes the typical qualitative interview as “a one-to-one ‘professional conversation’ that has a structure and a purpose to obtain descriptions of the life world of the interviewee with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena” (p. 134). However, in order to balance the views, or avoid “elite” bias, peripheral sampling – including people from outside the original focus of the study – is strongly endorsed by Miles and Huberman (1994), not least because one can learn so much, or obtain comparative and contrasting information, but for “de-centering” the researcher from a particular way of viewing the data (p. 34 & p. 266).

For this reason the sample was drawn evenly between two groups: Five IC members, and five non-IC members whose relationship to the IC and its deliberations remained peripheral – but whose positions and experience qualified them as informed stakeholders. It should also be noted that two of the non-IC members of the sample were recruited as leads, having come highly recommended by a member of the IC.

3.2 The Qualitative Study

As the study attempts to situate the micro-processing of global-macro trends within an institutional agenda, Dörnyei (2007) affirms the value of qualitative research for making sense of highly complex situations; at the same time, there is a real danger for researchers in general to produce reduced and simplified interpretations that distort the bigger picture; (therefore), the participant sensitivity of qualitative research is very helpful in deciding what aspects of the data require special attention...That is, the groundedness of qualitative research helps to distinguish real phenomena from intellectual fabrications (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 39).
Bearing this in mind, the scope of the topic was retained, particularly since qualitative studies are also very useful for developing hypothesis, confirming and testing existing theories, or, in cases where none exists, building theories from scratch (Miles & Huberman, 1994, pp. 91–90). Although there was no working hypothesis as such, and while “there is merit in open-mindedness and willingness to enter a research setting looking for questions as well as answers,” it would have been unwise to approach the chosen constituency – all very busy people – “without some idea of what (one is) looking for, and foolish to make that quest explicit” (Wolcott, 1982, p. 157).

Meanwhile, Miles and Huberman (1994), remind us that qualitative studies are fundamentally interpretive since “the researcher is essentially the main measurement device” (p. 7); and because qualitative research utilizes relatively limited standardized instrumentation or analytical procedures, it’s important to bear in mind that there are always several alternative interpretations possible for each data set (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 38).

3.3 Recruitment

Once the names of the members of the IC had been confirmed, recruitment was accomplished using a formula letter (Appendix) sent electronically with a personal solicitation directed to the individual or their secretary; the subject line read – *Invitation to Participate*. The aim of the letter was manifold and designed to brief the participant on:

- purpose of interview;
- subject and scope of interview;
- length of interview;
- audio-recording and transcription of interview;
- confidentiality of interview

3.4 The Research Instrument

According to Miles and Huberman (1994), when a researcher knows what they are after, they need to plan in advance how to collect the information since unfocussed interview schedules collect too much superfluous information, and the “overload of data will compromise the efficiency and power of the analysis” (p. 35). During the planning and writing stage of the interview guide, the most important task was to create an instrument with sufficient breadth – to cover a multitude of interrelated topics, and depth – to cull revealing answers and insightful responses.
To begin with, the image of a deep sea dragnet was used as a metaphor for the research instrument; meanwhile, that of an inverted pyramid served as the blueprint for its structure since the content was organised around themes, i.e. international rating systems for universities, and flowed from the more general to the specific in nine progressively sequenced stages with each stage representing a numerically coded section. Sections were defined by a series of related questions, and these also flowed from general to specific. The resultant nine-page Guide to Transformation comprised a total of 54 coded questions, with each question corresponding to one of nine coded sections – an essential organisational step considering the volume of data the instrument was designed to yield.

During the interview, important points made by the informant – points that would also emerge from the transcript – were jotted onto space between questions throughout the guide. These abridged versions of the data included impressions, as well as leads. The guide was successfully piloted twice, and the data collected from these pilot interviews formed a part of the study.

3.5 Data Collection

By using a tightly framed, open-ended line of questioning with plenty of room for probes, obstacles were rarely encountered, and few, if any, adjustments were needed. Technically speaking, qualitative research instrumentation can "be modified steadily to explore new leads, address a revised research question, or interview a new class of informant" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 38). However, there was little deviation from the guide with the exception of two instances which do not impact the results in terms of reliability or validity.

First, three of the five participants from the non-IC-members group were interviewed using the IG more selectively. For example, the best part of section 3 on the specific mandate/workings of the IC was not used in the interview with BP10; likewise for SL5 and SP9, sections 3 (above) and 4 on international university rankings were also dropped as these were deemed (and confirmed by the participants) non-applicable with respect to their official capacities.

Second, it should be noted that while each interview was scheduled to take an hour, on one or two occasions it became necessary to skip questions because time had run out. Missing data as a result of decisions made “on the fly” always leaves room for regret; however, this was overwhelmingly compensated for by those participants who willingly carried the interview over the allotted hour. And finally, where a number of off-the-record exchanges took place either
during or after the interview, their content was not included for analysis. Interviews generally took anything from 48 minutes to one hour and 48 minutes; in total, 13.5 hours of audio-recorded interview data was obtained.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS
Coding Informant Data

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<tr>
<th>Identification</th>
<th>Role/Professional Title</th>
<th>Length of Interview</th>
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<td>P1</td>
<td>Vice Dean of Research</td>
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Table 1 List of participants
3.6 Coding and Transcription

Despite the small sample (N=10), transcription of the data remained a labour-intensive process resulting in a 64,331 word, 175 page document. This was organised into colour-coded dossiers corresponding to each of the nine sections of the interview guide. Having data organised thematically made comparison of responses across each question, and between questions, entirely manageable.

Meanwhile, the personal identity of the informant was safeguarded from a wider reading audience by assigning abbreviated codes delineating function (IC members/non-members). Similarly, where quotations or extracts of text are included in the analysis, any reference to the speaker’s gender is deliberately obscured. At the same time, professional titles are available on a key – see Table 1 List of Participants – in the event that such data is a potentially significant variable during analysis. Coding also permits both researcher and reader to locate the original context of a particular quote in the Guide to Transformation found in the Appendix.

3.7 Ethics and Caveats

Since qualitative data analysis is more than a technical matter, one cannot stress the importance of ethics enough. In fact, “any qualitative researcher who is not asleep ponders moral and ethical questions” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 288). Specific examples in relation to the recruitment phase of a study include non-coercive soliciting of participants, and obtaining consent to record the interview; for the present study, intentions were articulated in the formula letter Invitation to Participate, and permission to record confirmed prior to beginning each interview.

During the data collection phase, the interviewer risks the validity of the data should they alter their line of questioning beyond normal probing, particularly where there are opportunities to generate a “meatier” response. And finally, when it comes to the report phase, remaining faithful to the data is imperative, not only to safeguard the validity/reliability of the research, but to protect the informant, especially when strong personal opinions – opinions that could easily be misinterpreted out of context – are expressed. This is achieved by either referencing or adhering to the original context, and by reducing the data without obscuring or distorting intended meaning.

In terms of conduct, at least from a theoretical standpoint, the researcher needs to adopt a sufficiently removed “stance” in order to guard against any bias or effects. However, as careful as the interviewer is to distance themselves from the process, it’s probably more realistic to
cultivate a holistic approach when interacting with the informants and the data. By using Flinders’ (1992) model of four ethical frameworks according to phase in Figure 3, the marriage of four apparently disparate approaches, i.e. from purely Utilitarian to strongly Ecological, offer the researcher sufficient leeway, and structure, to guide their conduct, build rapport, and frame their research (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 290).

**Ethical Frameworks and Aspects of Research (Flinders, 1992)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recruitment</th>
<th>informed Consent</th>
<th>reciprocity</th>
<th>collaboration</th>
<th>cultural sensitivity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fieldwork</td>
<td>avoidance of harm</td>
<td>avoidance of wrong</td>
<td>avoidance of imposition</td>
<td>avoidance of detachment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting</td>
<td>confidentiality</td>
<td>fairness</td>
<td>confirmation</td>
<td>responsive communication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Figure 3 Ethical frameworks and aspects of research](image)

In this way the interviewer always has the latitude to use a personally congenial way of asking and sequencing the questions, and to segment them appropriately (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 37). In other words, the process becomes less contrived, and evolves into something approximating a dialogue or conversation. All the while, neutrality, which is paramount, remains uncompromised. That said, qualitative data is also the product of the interplay of numerous variables, including the researcher,

and the words we attach to fieldwork experiences are inevitably framed by our implicit concepts. (Furthermore), what may be generated as “data” is affected by what is considered “writable” or “readable”... Similarly, transcription of tapes can be done in many ways that will produce rather different texts (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 9).

This last point needs to be reinforced as it has particular relevance for the study. Transcribing audio data is a process that requires many intricate decisions involving continuous judgments on punctuation and editing, though only where necessary and always with a feather light touch. To complicate matters further, the incorporation of non-verbal cues such as “pregnant” silences, or tonal cues – including sarcasm and impatience – will almost certainly have an additive or subtractive effect on the final analysis. It should be noted, however, that communicative elements such as these are not accounted for in the present study.
3.8 Deconstruction Theory

The analytic approach used to interpret the data is derived from a largely deconstructionist theory, as described by Feldman (1995), since deconstruction “forces one to confront the ideology of the culture, to look through the holes in it, and to see how it differs from what it purports to be” (p. 62). Because language and ideology are of particular interest to sociolinguists, a search for the dominant ideology, as well as alternative frames that could be used for interpretation, is accomplished by examining a text, conversation, or event for multiple meanings, implicit or otherwise (p. 5).

Generally speaking, dominant ideologies are “taken for granted categories”, or common dichotomies, such as public and private, us and them, good and bad (Feldman, 1995, p. 5 & p. 62). In qualitative research a number of dichotomies could be said to influence the researcher/participant relationship. For example, the following world views were identified as having potential effects on the interview: Insider – outsider; international/foreign/”their” students – Dutch/home/ “our” students; Dutch speaker – non-Dutch speaker; native-English speaker – non-native English speaker; male – female; political – apolitical; big language – small language, etc.

Of course, deconstruction theory rests on several key assumptions; mainly, that “ideology imposes limits on what can and cannot be said (and) that most authors write and actors act from within an ideology”. Therefore, as an analytical tool, deconstruction aims to expose ideological limits, to see words in context, and “to examine the effects of changing contexts on meaning” (Feldman, 1995, p. 51). As a technique, deconstruction involves “ways of looking”, or “moves”, which include, but are not confined to, looking at what is said or not said (p. 51). Meanwhile, dismantling dichotomies, or analysing disruptions – in the form of jokes, slips or asides – can sometimes “reveal the possibility of other meanings and the instability of the dominant ideology” (p. 5).

2.9 Analysis

Figure 4 supplies a visual adapted from Miles and Huberman (1994) that depicts the sequencing of data processing for qualitative research; oftentimes these steps will occur simultaneously because data analysis is very much an ongoing, reflective endeavour, and all decisions, such as which chunks to code, are analytic choices (p. 11). Data reduction refers to the process of “selecting, focussing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data” (p. 10) for display.
This process is fraught with decisions on the format (direct quotes – global ratings – close-up detail – paraphrase), as well as the content, since the conclusions drawn from display formats “can never be better than the quality of the data entered” (p. 241).

Figure 4 Data analysis flow model

Four display formats were used to present the data for this study. Traditionally, qualitative data is displayed for analysis by selecting extracts from transcripts and documenting these sequentially; this is called extended text. However, this type of display is also known for being somewhat cumbersome as it’s hard to structure. Moreover, to rely on this form of analysis exclusively can overload the researcher’s information processing capabilities, and because it is difficult to look at more than two or three variables at once, this lack of efficiency makes it easy “to jump to hasty, partial, unfounded conclusions” where vivid information becomes drastically over weighted (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 11).

For quantitative projects, SPSS and other statistical packages do a good job of describing the data simultaneously with histograms and other visuals. Displaying qualitative data simultaneously, while much more involved, can also be accomplished. In addition to creating pie charts using MS Excel software, there are two major formats available for displaying reduced data: Matrices, which are defined by rows and columns, and networks, which have a series of nodes with links between them. “The data entries are also multiform: Short blocks of text, quotes, phrases, ratings, abbreviations, symbolic figures, labelled lines and arrows, and so on (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 93).
Each of the network displays found in this study was produced using Freeplane 1.1.3 Mind Mapping, open-source software. Networks and matrices are very useful for noting recurring patterns, themes, or *gestalts* (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 246). Networks also help the analyst to focus on several variables at once, particularly since they can hold “a great deal of readily analysable information” (p. 94). A matrix – basically the crossing of two lists for the partitioning of variables – permits “exploratory eyeballing” and causal explanation, while a “conceptually clustered” matrix enables the researcher to generate meaning more easily by clustering research questions and combining items that “belong together”, either conceptually or empirically (p. 93 & p. 127). A variety of matrices were used for this study.

Finally, the third stream of analysis – conclusion drawing and verification – begins with noting regularities, patterns and explanations; however,

(t)he competent researcher holds these conclusions lightly, maintaining openness and scepticism, but the conclusions are still there, inchoate and vague at first, then increasingly explicit and grounded...Verification may be as brief as a fleeting second thought crossing the analyst’s mind during writing, with a short excursion back to field notes, or it may be thorough and elaborate, with extensive efforts to replicate a finding in another data set (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 11).

### 3.10 Report Structure

Qualitative studies cannot always be conformed to the conventional reporting structures of quantitative studies. For example, it was found the Results and Discussion sections, normally separate, needed to be combined for the present study under the heading Results and Analysis. This is because the data – and hence the findings – are largely text-based. Therefore, some discussion is needed to contextualise these data whilst providing further rationale for their analysis; in other words, connections to theory are frequently made on the spot with reference to the literature.

Finally, the data were assigned one of three themes and ordered sequentially to mirror their introduction in the literature: Internationalisation, language policy, and ideological themes. “Family” headings and sub-headings were used to connect themes in the Literature Review to themes in the Results and Analysis section.
4 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Internationalisation Themes

Early in the interview, participants’ sentiment regarding internationalisation was established. Table 2 summarises the main themes derived from each of the informants for 2.6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.6</th>
<th>By not internationalising are there risks?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>there’s no avoidance, I mean you have to – you’ll be reduced to a provincial university</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>yes, we will be a very regional university surviving on bachelor-based programmes – we will not be research-based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC3</td>
<td>If we don’t attract students from a world market then in 10 years we will be a nice, regional bachelor university – that is not the ambition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC4</td>
<td>we have no choice actually – because if you want to be a player, you must develop a real international policy and outlook (1.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL5</td>
<td>yeah – in the end you will only be a provincial university, a local university</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC6</td>
<td>absolutely – you cannot stay in the top 100-150 and still be Dutch, or even regional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC7</td>
<td>we have to be large enough...because there will be a sort of shake out of universities in Europe...and when (you) don’t have ISs and staff you’re not playing in a large field (2.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC8</td>
<td>we become a regional bachelor university - if we don’t pay any attention to internationalisation (it) will be a kind of downward spiral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP9</td>
<td>it’s a little bit how you define internationalising...(but) I think we would miss a lot – we would isolate the university, we would isolate ourselves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BP10</td>
<td>the main risk is the public funding will be reduced...(faculties that have a low number of students in bachelor programmes need to internationalise 2.7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 Matrix for 2.6

From the data, it would appear that all of the informants consider internationalisation a necessary choice – that it is unavoidable without incurring negative consequences in the long term. For a number of respondents – 1C4, 1C6, and IC7 – internationalisation is also driven by the RUG’s wider ambitions to become a global player with rank; only BP10 cites financial concerns. However, the financial benefits of internationalisation are named elsewhere in the data:

Not that their tuition will produce our gain directly...but the finance model in the Netherlands is based on student numbers (P2: 2.4)
And that’s one reason why we are trying to attract non-EU students, because they bring in money, five-million Euros already. These are additional revenues (IC6: 4.7)

Similarly, the need to establish international networks from the ground up, as stressed in the Nuffic (2008) recommendations (para. 19), was also acknowledged:

It’s a strategy to have these agreements with places that will be important in the future (IC4: 2.1)

The next two quotes support Altbach’s (2004) claim that internationalisation accommodates considerable autonomy (p. 6). That the process is a choice requiring some initiative and public consensus is also indicated:

First we have to find out what we want and then sell that to the rest of the university (IC3: 9.1)

The problem with this university is that it’s a regional university and it wants to be an international player... Our advice will be, if you really want to be an international player, you have to choose to become an international university (IC4: 1.3)

Here IC4 alludes to a regional-international dichotomy, though what specifically characterises a regional university remains unspecified. Also building on the preceding remark, the belief that people can be converted to internationalisation as an ideology also emerged from the data:

It is a mentality in the end and that you can change (IC4: 2.7)

It may be a bit of a professional bias for me, but internationalisation is the solution to all our problems. It’s also the cause of many of our problems. Unfortunately (IC3: 9.0)

4.1a “Verengelsing” and Quality

Among the reasons for internationalising a number of priorities predominate. For example, while it is taken for granted that science is an international endeavour, with research becoming increasingly collaborative, in the RUG’s case there are a number of tailored arguments in favour of internationalisation with “survival” (IC3: 2.2) and fear of becoming “second tier” (IC7: 2.2) emerging as important drivers.

That internationalisation can help raise the university’s profile was also cited due to the RUG’s relative isolation in the North, its underdeveloped international reputation, and the fact that the RUG needs to work harder to differenciate itself since all Dutch universities “more or less have the same policy” (IC8: 2.2). One informant pointed out how internationalisation is key to attracting and retaining ambitious professors:
(They) prefer to work at a university that’s an international player, so it has to do with image. It has to do with prestige, and careers (IC4: 1.3)

That new, presumably higher standards are introduced, simply by opening the door to increased competition at home, also emerged from the data:

*ISs have absolutely no problem with selective admission. If you tell them we have a thousand applicants and (we select) the fifty best, they’re happy with that...*  
*We had some complaints from Dutch students, saying that working together with ISs might reflect negatively on their performance* (IC3: 9.1)  
*The main idea is that in order to increase quality – let’s just focus on students – then why would you limit yourself to national borders when looking for talent?* (BP10: 2.2)

Here the assumption is that quality can be derived from competition between students, perhaps to offset the Dutch un-capped system which is based on merit, not quotas. That said, while the pursuit of quality is broadly acknowledged, one informant was reluctant to endorse the validity of this expectation:

*There’s the general feeling that internationalisation will enhance the quality; whether that is necessarily true is another issue* (P1: 2.4)  
The following quote suggests internationalisation is expected to enhance institutional quality:

*I personally think that internationalisation should be aimed to make our university better* (IC8: 2.1)  
Particularly when market standards are treated as benchmarks:

*By making it more selective, more expensive – and that is something that we also learn from ISs – if they pay 11 thousand for a master and they are confronted with a course that is crap, or is poorly organised, they will sometimes be quite vocal about it. For Dutch scholarship students with a very low fee, we could say you get what you pay for. But we can no longer say this...Yeah, commodification usually has a negative connotation, but this doesn’t* (IC3: 9.1)  

In terms of rationale, a link between quality and global university rankings was also established:

*The most important thing is to be high in the rankings and everything is sort of related to that* (P1: 1.3)  
Support for Altbach’s (2004, p.6) claims can be said to reside in the following quotes where it also emerged that global rankings have been designated the arbitrator of quality out of choice rather than necessity:
Well, you can measure the quality of the university in many different ways, but we have adopted, our Board of Directors has adopted our position in the rankings as leading (IC8: 2.1)

Currently the central theme is becoming top quality, and that is more or less operationalised by aiming to become one of the top 100 global universities in the important rankings (IC3: 1.3)

Where English standards and the issue of quality come into play – at least in terms of the proficiency level of students and people “at the support level” – these are wrinkles that, with time, are expected to be ironed out:

Enhance English proficiency at the support level? Well, this is just an ongoing process (IC7: 1.4)

4.1b Language as Strategy

The contracted network display in Figure 5 gives a snapshot of the informants’ responses to question 5.1, including some opening gambits.

Figure 5 Contracted network display for 5.1

Similarly, Figure 6 expands on the responses gathered for 5.1. Respondents who voice their expectations have been identified with a cloud.
5.1 How important is the role of language in the RuG’s strategic goals

- P1 - it’s not spelled out in any detail
  - you would hope the IC does something about that

- IC3 - pretty important
  - basically your entire organization needs to be accessible to non-Dutch speakers

- SL5 - very important
  - it’s the way of communicating - but I would also say it’s your culture
  - we are at the point of deciding our institutional language - whether it be Dutch and English (as it is now) or English

- IC7 - very important
  - how important it is - and how important it should be
  - it should be more important than it is now

- SP9 - well there’s two answers
  - it’s not thought through
  - even the people in the canteen, at the counters, in reception and the secretaries - everyone should have a certain level of English to communicate

- P2 - much more than now
  - you have to be able to communicate and of course it’s better if people speak more languages

- IC4 - crucial
  - but we still have a way to go - it takes time to introduce English as the first language of the university (what should be the case)

- IC6 - it is of strategic importance
  - when we talk about language

- IC6 - still a lot of ambiguity
  - you should educate your teaching and support staff so they can address foreign students correctly

- IC8 - if you want to be an international university
  - the international language of science is now English

- BP10 - it’s a key issue
Although the Strategic Plan 2020-2015 downplays the centrality of language by relegating it to the support level, at least with regards the RUG’s internationalisation goals, responses gathered for 5.1 overwhelmingly confirm the importance of language. In fact, one informant has no illusions about the strategic role of language:

*But it has everything to do with the fact that you actually teach in English* (IC4: 1.4)

However, if the following comments made during interviews are any indication, it would appear the RUG’s ambitious goals obscure a complex environment burdened by language-related-challenges, both logistically

*We have to translate more and more because we are not yet ready to communicate fully in English. So, we have to spend a lot of money on translation* (IC7: 2.4)

*I say you can get by in English without too many problems. But outside of the university and sometimes in the services parts of the university, like the canteens, you might run into problems* (IC3: 5.3)

And culturally:

*The Dutch are afraid of losing their culture by implementing the Anglo-Saxon way of organising universities – and the use of the language is a key element of that culture* (BP10: 7.6)

Meanwhile, for some lecturers, teaching in English can have negative repercussions professionally:

*So we first gave people a test and if people failed then we gave them a sort of crash course in English* (BP: 1.4)

*If we test people on their language skills, (it’s important to be) very, very careful on how to proceed... Because people feel offended, threatened* (SP9: 5.2)

*Of course, this is about credibility. Suddenly you are not as intelligent as you know you are. And you make a little bit of a childish impression on your students* (IC6: 7.3)
5.4 Are you aware of any language related policies at the RuG?

P1 - well it's hard to say if the university offers courses on publishing in English, that in a way is a LP issue

P1 - it was decided that there should be more courses taught in English so there was an active policy to enhance (teachers') proficiency

IC3 - we should have we are trying to give some basic outlines for that in the new (strategic) plan

IC3 - unless there are really serious reasons not to do it I think that every degree programme from the university needs to be offered in English

SL5 - on the website there's a Dutch flag and a UK flag if you click on the UK flag you can get all the information in English not all pages are translated into English...

SL5 - if it's in Dutch only it will have statements in English that it regards something Dutch and it's not relevant to the English students all the information at a corporate level should be in both languages except for the information about Dutch taught degree programmes

IC7 - we have a LP for our website another LP is that all official letters from the Board to staff about personnel matters are in both languages

IC7 - this is not really a strict rule I think there's an internationalisation policy - but no LP not one consistent policy which everyone is aware of which everyone has contributed to

SP9 - no *** was part of a memo on LP - this is the only formal document that I know of

P2 - but I've never heard of any other the official policy here is to offer more and more English taught courses - also in typical Dutch programmes

IC4 - it's a question of still trying to bargain in a masters you're required to speak (English) again but in the middle there's nothing because you can do it in Dutch

IC4 - it's silly it should be known that says lecturers have to master their English - that they should be encouraged to be tested and take courses

IC6 - that's a good question as far as the research is concerned - it's bilingual what you apply to the university you cannot apply to the medical faculty

IC6 - there's at least one document - I think we offer courses in Dutch for foreign students

IC8 - no - not within the UMCG

BP10 - not a specific policy

Figure 7 Expanded network display for 5.4
4.2 Language Policy Themes

Figure 7 supplies an extended network display of the results gathered for question 5.4 of the interview guide which probed for specifics with regard to recognised or recognisable LPs at the RUG. The network conveys a number of outcomes. Meanwhile, what is understood by “language related policies” is also given; this may account for the lack of consistency among responses. For example, a number of the informants name tangible examples of LP, while others merely speculate or offer opinions.

Of the responses, three have been clouded: These identify informants who claim no LP exists. SP9’s response was further highlighted: Not only is explicit LP called for, this informant expects LP to be the product of a collaboration – drawn from consensus – and not necessarily a top-down initiative, but one that is co-owned by the entire academic community. On the other hand, some members of the IC see top-down LP initiatives being necessary:

In my view (LP) should be decided at the university level (IC4: 5.6)

I would say that this is something we have to decide on at central level and then, sure, as usual there will be some differences between faculties and how far they need to go (IC3: 5.6)

Questions 5.5 and 5.7 of the interview guide are also specific to LP. To express the distribution of opinions, responses are reduced for display using pie charts in Figures 8 and 9. The following pie chart gives an overview of the results obtained for 5.5.

5.5 Should a language policy be made explicit or remain discretionary?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explicit</th>
<th>Discretionary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 8 Pie chart for 5.5
Similarly, the proceeding pie chart expresses the balance of opinions gathered in response to 5.7.

![Pie chart for 5.7](image)

**Figure 9** Pie chart for 5.7

In juxtaposing responses to both questions, there appears to be some tension with Figure 8 showing almost 40% of the respondents preferring discretionary LPs, while 60% of the informants believe LP should be explicit.

Meanwhile, Figure 9 gives evidence that 90% is convinced an “officially bilingual” RUG – whatever that entails – would cause tension.

*If it’s official, if you have the obligation, then there’s more tension. But if you say laissez-faire then it means less tension, at least among the people who are speaking Dutch. There’s another side, from the perspective of international staff and students, they will have more problems and more tension with a laissez-faire policy (SL5: 5.7)*

Judging from the responses in Figure 9, official bilingualism, offered during the interview as an example of explicit LP, would be a complicating measure. Nevertheless, throughout the interviews many of the informants used the term very freely as a descriptor, suggesting this option was “on the table”.

*There’s a transition going on – the (RUG) is moving towards being a bilingual university. That takes time (IC3: 2.7)*

*The proposal that we are going to make, I suppose, is that it has to be bilingual (IC4: 5.7)*

*We do have English-taught programmes right now, but our organisation is not a fully bilingual organisation yet (SL5: 5.5)*
There were even passing allusions to a new linguistic order:

*Let’s just shift and consider this university as an international university where English is the main language...Others were okay with that, they said let’s make the change, you can’t just go half way, you have to make the whole step (IC6: 5.7)*

### 4.2a Discretionary LP

The following comment names an implicit LP, and serves as an example of language ecology, or practice at the RUG:

*Within the university people immediately switch to English if you are a foreigner (IC4: 5.3)*

Another extract from the data contextualises this LP, hereafter referred to as discretionary LP since it relies on personal judgement and face-to-face sorting. When this is not possible – such as in the example below – other indicators are used to determine language use:

*(Secretaries) should respond in English from the moment they realise they have an Anglophone...Well that’s one thing we didn’t mention – about telephone calls. But this is a really important thing. We have many telephone calls from abroad of course, but I’m not sure how (secretaries) react when they’re hesitating – is it English or Dutch they should speak? I would say, when they hesitate, try in English, not Dutch. Switch to English... Which reminds me that our automatic voicemail is only in Dutch... (IC7: 9.1)*

In the example above, the informant comes to something of a realisation that a discretionary LP might need better regulation and support. Finally, it was illuminating to have discretionary LP articulated in writing during correspondence with one of the informants, details of which are provided in Section 5.2.

### 3.2b Appropriation – Status Planning

The instrumentality of languages and their roles were factored into the study by openly eliciting what had not emerged from the interview incidentally. The range of opinions and attitudes varied and tended to reflect the position of the informant with respect to their work and/or their experience with internationalisation.

Figures 10 and 11 supply expanded network displays of the results gathered for questions 6.1 and 7.1. These were parallel open questions which probed for definitions. Here, the terms chosen by informants to describe the “status” of Dutch and English at the RUG are treated as indicators.
Definitions for Dutch are at times “overshadowed” or obscured by prevailing notions of English encroaching on Dutch territory, i.e. “English is way more important than Dutch – anything to do with Dutch is undervalued” (SP9: 6.1).

Furthermore, a number of the descriptors are hedged through the use of time sensitive language. The examples of this predictive form of languaging have been underscored and clouded to the left of the split network display in Figure 10.

However, most of the informants use clear, unambiguous terms to describe the status of Dutch at the RUG:

*Official language x3; language of science; language of the RUG; main language; working language; standard language; dominant language; natural language.*

It is also worth noting how three of the informants have chosen the descriptor “official”, a move which carries a number of implications as noted in Section 2.3b.
7.1 What is the current status of English at the RuG?

P1 - It's a tool
- the main vehicle to attract foreign students
- the second language for teaching

IC3 - I don't think there is a current formal status
- I'm not sure it is the official second language of the university

SL5 - We don't communicate in it unless we have to
- it's developing

IC7 - Undecided
- it's also ambiguous - would that suggest Dutch and English are on par?

SP9 - It has a status
- our president has his weblog all in English
- information which has a certain status is delivered in English

P2 - The main language used for international students

IC4 - It's still not sufficiently developed
- we really need more English taught courses
- the quality needs more improvement

IC6 - English is the working language
- in a research context where international staff are involved
- (for) English-taught programmes

IC8 - This is already a very English-minded faculty
- it's used to collaborating with researchers from abroad
- half of our population of PhD students speak English
- for research papers and articles

BP10 - 30% is in English
- if you look at internationalisation of faculties and the language spoken at the coffee corner
- at the faculty of sciences, more

BP10 - About 20%

Figure 11 Expanded network display for 7.1
In Figure 11, the network display for 7.1 highlights the descriptors for English with light clouds. Only one example of time sensitive languaging emerged from the data – this is indicated with a dark cloud.

*Tool; vehicle; second language; main language for ISs; working language; foreign language; status-ed.*

Unlike the descriptors used for Dutch, what is given for English appears hesitant, if not obscure. This trend reflects current language policy, discussed at length in Section 5. Only two of the informants unambiguously acknowledge its undecided status.

Of note is the language of appropriation surrounding English; here, as elsewhere, English is designated as a tool to be manipulated and exploited. In fact, appropriation emerged as a theme during interviews:

*You can already see it with regard to the young generation, they think they speak good English – which is not true – but for them, English has become, in a natural way, their second language anyway (IC4: 6.4)*

*I think that you can keep up the values and norms that you had, and still use English as an instrument to speed up internationalisation (BP10: 7.6)*

*It looks like an instrument, but it’s a fundamental concept within the entire internationalisation of institutions I think. I mean, it’s not just about language, because language also shapes how you think (IC3: 9.1)*

### 3.2c Standards

The argument in favour of a “European English” or even “Glob-ish” is a tenuous one. However, because it touches upon issues of appropriation, informants’ opinions were requested:

*Yeah, my predecessor [name given], he always talked about broken English. Broken English is the language of science (BP10: 7.4)*

For some, the utility of a simplified code cannot be denied; but as the informants weighed their thoughts on the subject, a distinctive set of fault lines began to emerge:

*For me it’s easier to communicate with another person who is not a native English speaker...It’s also easier for me to communicate with someone from the US than with someone from the UK, because (UK) English is much more idiomatic (IC6: 7.4)*

**UK English is too specific**...So you will need a type of English that can be understood by Chinese students, German students, African students...I’m not sure, but it’s a more
international type of English than UK English...And they (ISs) have been taught another type of English (SL5: 7.4)

So, yeah, maybe European English as the lingua franca and a means of communication is not that bad. **Of course you can use language in a very elegant and precise way, but is it actually picked up by yours students? I wonder** (IC4: 7.3)

*My level is not going up when I communicate with other Dutch people in English because then you get Dunglish, what I sometimes call the backpacker-English* (P2: 7.2)

For one member of the IC, however, discussions of this sort are merely academic and cannot be taken seriously, not least because it may be easily misconstrued:

*If you are really honest, you couldn’t put that forward as a goal* (IC6: 7.4)

Current themes also emerged from issues of competence and intelligibility. Below, two IC members supply their expectations of international students:

*I would rather be a bit lenient with the exact disciplinary background of the students than their English language proficiency* (IC3: 7.4)

*As the Director of the Graduate School...I really want all the incoming PhD students to be fluent in English or fluent enough to go into a scientific conversation* (IC8: 7.3)

Similarly, concerns were echoed during interviews over the English language proficiency in Dutch students. The following quote draws a specific example of this.

> What I’ve noticed here is that Dutch students overestimate themselves, overrate their English language skills, because just as we have requirements for incoming exchange students, a lot of our partners have English language requirements for our students. We tell them that they have to do a test and they say – yeah, yeah, there’s time, I won’t have a problem with this test, I can do it a week before I leave. And then they do it and they fail. They come to us shocked – I have a problem – and we say – this is not our problem, this is your problem (IC3: 7.6)

Figure 12 Excerpt for 7.6

Worth noting is how the solution to this problem is withheld: While the university provides courses for its staff, clearly the RUG’s mandate does not include language support for students.

Figure 13 displays the spectrum of opinions generated by question 7.4. Minority points of view are enclosed with a cloud; these are contrasted with majority views that favour high standards. Here, what constitutes a high standard is also presented with some latitude.
7.4 By promoting accessibility and mobility should a decrease in English language standards among students and staff be accommodated?
Questions relating to proficiency and fluency also raised the spectre of written standards:

*I don’t know if it’s in writing, but the language centre has the explicit task to use UK English as the standard form of English* (SL5: 7.4)

And yet, the following extract – coming from the Support Perspective – makes it clear there are a number of myths circulating when it comes to standards:

*I don’t mind if it’s American English or British English, I don’t care. As long as it’s consistent and clear and without mistakes, without spelling mistakes* (SP9: 7.5)

4.2d Linguistic Apartheid

The following extract from the data encapsulates one position on an issue raised by nearly all of the participants:

*But the problem of course is that you create a sort of apartheid...Maybe it’s too paternalistic to say – you, you international students don’t have to be bothered with democratic issues and councils and so on, we’ll have a committee for international students where you can deal with your international problems* (IC7: 7.3)

Attitudes to this LP were elicited in 6.2 of the interview guide. Participants were shown a text and asked to give their opinion of it. The text, a mass-email addressed to all domestic and international students enrolled in the Faculty of Arts, was chosen for the study as an example of a laissez-faire LP inhibiting the full integration of international students at the university.

Both Dutch and the English versions invite prospective candidates interested in becoming student representatives on the Faculty Council to submit their CV. However, the English version – about a third of the original Dutch message in terms of length – is not a translation, but an apology of sorts:

“Unfortunately all the meetings and reports of the faculty council are in Dutch. If you would like to apply to the faculty council it is advisable that you are proficient in Dutch” (see Addendum for complete text).

The following sentiments were expressed with regard to the wording of the English version.

*You wonder why, I mean what are you doing to change this situation if it’s unfortunate? Unfortunate for whom?* (SL5: 6.2)

*Also, the word “unfortunately” – if you think it’s unfortunate, why don’t you change it? You are in the position, as the Faculty Board, to change this.* (IC7: 6.2)
## 6.2 Matrix of Attitudes to de Facto Language Policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informant</th>
<th>Initial Reaction to Letter</th>
<th>Explanation, if Offered</th>
<th>Solution, if Proposed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>P1</strong> 6.2</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>I find it strange</td>
<td>It’s a fact. If you cannot read the documents or take part in the discussions, what can you represent? (ISs) are excluded - but they only have a role to play when they have proficiency in Dutch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P2</strong> 6.2</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>They felt obliged</td>
<td>They are not inviting any ISs to apply, they just want to discourage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IC4</strong> 6.2</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>Yeah - it has to change</td>
<td>It’s just a question of time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SL5</strong> 6.2</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>The fundamental situation that lies underneath is not good</td>
<td>The message in itself is a fair message, it represents the current situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IC6</strong> 6.2</td>
<td>SO</td>
<td>This is absolutely wrong - you cannot pretend to be an international university</td>
<td>ISs should have the same possibilities - the councils will have to produce documents in English, and perhaps convene in English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IC7</strong> 6.2</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>The question is whether this is the right thing</td>
<td>It’s a fair description of the situation right now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SP9</strong> 6.2</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>A draft on the LP of the arts faculty (states) we should still consider Dutch the first language</td>
<td>It’s sort of an evidence - I think this is not an international university - it’s like the university hasn’t made up its mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BP10</strong> 6.2</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>Yeah - that’s foolish</td>
<td>If you advertise like this you have to at least offer to do the official documents in English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**KEY**
- **N** = neutral
- **O** = opposed
- **SO** = strongly opposed

Table 3 Conceptually clustered matrix for 6.2
The conceptually clustered matrix in Table 3 distributes the eight opinions gathered for this question as follows: Non-IC members = 5, IC members = 3.

Because there is some reluctance to pass judgement or state a position, four of the eight responses are designated as having N = neutral attitudes; it was found that these informants preferred to comment or speculate, often sidestepping any tendency toward bias. While the other four responses are easily identified as either O = opposed, or SO = strongly opposed, the N = neutral respondents are perhaps the most interesting to look at.

The reduced data is displayed using a matrix that was organised according to inherent structures embedded within the responses; these typically began with an initial reaction and concluded with something of an explanation and/or a solution. Of interest are the two non-IC members identified as O. Similarly, one IC-member is identified as being N. In fact, this position corresponds with sentiments gathered very early in the interview when this particular IC member self-identified as “one of the defenders of Dutch language”:

*I understand perfectly well that we have to deal with this language problem, and to see how we can use English more...But I’m not the one who says, Dutch language, Dutch university, forget it, we are an international university. I think for being accepted, for all those home students from the region...and also for political language policy reasons, cultural reasons, we have to be careful... (IC7: 3.5 – Does the IC differ on policy issues?)

By putting the N response in a larger context, the limiting factors can also be said to derive from pragmatism; some indication of this is given by another IC colleague:

[Name given] agreed that all important information for ISs and staff has to be in English... (But) they were really opposed to saying that English would be – let’s say – the first language... (Because) we are living in a Dutch environment where Dutch is the main and official language and many people would feel unhappy with English as a foreign language. It would also handicap, or disable, a number of people that are not fluent. I think those are the arguments, political and emotional arguments (IC6: 5.7)

4.3 Ideological Themes

4.3a English as Ideology

*We need one language and that’s English. The game is over (IC6: 6.5)

*It makes it real to people if you suddenly say – no, we have to do everything in English (IC3: 9.1)

Figures 14 and 15 display compact and expanded networks of the responses generated from 7.7.
The compact network display in Figure 14 effectively conveys the general reaction to this question – a sense of it being somehow redundant in this context with the undisputed position of English a foregone conclusion.

Figure 15 Expanded network display for 7.7
The expanded network display in Figure 15 contextualises a number of rhetorical views (clouded) that reiterate – or refer to – ideologically grounded notions. Some of these views are particularly strong; conversely, where alternatives are suggested, there is a degree of hesitation and uncertainty.

The de facto international hierarchy of languages with reference to a “contest” for linguistic hegemony emerges as a theme in these data when IC6 uses the metaphor of a game. The contemporary pre-eminence of China as a rising economic power is also acknowledged with the comment “it will not be Chinese”, said here to pre-empt any fishing for suitable alternatives to English.

4.3b National Equations

Questions 2.6 and 2.7 explore the interplay between national sentiment and internationalisation. While the propositions are speculative, these parallel questions attempt to gain an appreciation for the ideological constraints operating at an institutional level.

To express the distribution of opinions for question 2.7, responses are reduced for display using a pie chart in Figure 16.

![Pie chart for 2.7](image)

2.7 If a colleague said that the RUG is too "Dutch" to be an international university, how would you respond?

- yes
- no

Figure 16 Pie chart for 2.7

Next, Figure 17 supplies data from 2.6 using an expanded network display; these data express a more complex picture, as the question appears to be a somewhat divisive topic. Within the display, those responses which deny any subtractive effect have been clouded. The two dark clouds (BP1O and SL5) highlight responses which dismiss the relevance of the question.
Figure 17 Expanded network display for 2.6
Not only do the responses for 2.6 reveal very broad interpretations of national versus international, this particular display is notable for its contrasts when comments from SP9 are compared with those of BP10. Meanwhile, comments from P1 and IC6, among others, convey the belief that internationalisation is not a subtractive process.

With regard to question 2.7, the pie chart in Figure 9 shows an explicit bias, especially when the two naysayers (IC6 and IC8) are quoted; their responses, while defensive, do imply, “that we still have a long way to go” (IC8: 2.7).

*I think that we can be an international university. Yeah (IC8: 2.7)*

*I think that we are more Dutch than we think, that our internationalisation is not as far as we sometimes pretend it is, but I don’t believe we are Dutch in such a way that we can’t be international (IC6: 2.7)*

Meanwhile, another informant defends the RUG by reversing the question:

*But is it different from Amsterdam or Leiden? I wonder. I would get the same feeling in those universities (IC4: 2.7)*

However, the following quote is far more indicative of prevailing attitudes:

*To be a true international university you have to give up more Dutch traditions and more Dutch language than I think we do now (IC7: 2.7)*

To express the distribution of opinions for questions 5.2, responses are reduced for display using a pie chart in Figure 18.

```
5.2 Is language a politically sensitive issue at the RUG?

- Yes
- No

70%
30%
```

Figure 18 Pie chart for 5.2

While the display indicates that 70% of the responses were affirmative, here many of the
informants cited an increase in national sentiment as the cause and that this could have some impact on internationalisation policy.

*If we really go for an English language university, or an international university, what will it mean for, let’s say, the political support? Because we now have a government which is very much opposed to foreigners* (IC8: 8.2)

During interviews a number of informants revealed concerns. Their observations reflect a degree of anxiety about the effects of internationalisation, with language being the harbinger of change:

*For many people it’s work, it’s frightening, it’s straining, it takes a lot of energy... We have to take that into account, that not everyone is enthusiastic about internationalisation; it changes the culture and mentality of your university, it changes your environment* (IC6: 2.4)

*I notice that there are many colleagues who fear the English, still fear the day that they will have to write their emails in English* (IC7: 9.1)

Informant SP9 expresses a number of convictions that purport a relationship between language, nation and identity:

*Because if we abandon the Dutch culture and language we are not international – we’re English. We don’t want to be English, we want to be Dutch – I would want us to be a Dutch university with an open mind to all international relations* (SP9: 2.6)

Of note, multiculturalism and multilingualism are very subtly endorsed as an alternative to how internationalisation is currently envisioned. The following quote could also be interpreted on more than one level according to Calvet’s (2000) premise as outlined in Section 2.7 with regard to PLC; here institutional support for multilingualism is called for:

*For some people it would create tension because they would say, why should we be bilingual, we are a Dutch university... But I don’t think bilingual, I think multilingualism, or pluralingualism, is more what we need. Of course English is very important, but also other languages* (SP9: 5.7)

A reduction of the responses gleaned from question 8.1 is displayed using a pie chart in Figure 19. Here, the balance of opinions suggests that less than half of the informants view institutional multilingualism as a viable counter-measure to global English, or indeed, as an example of what constitutes an internationalised environment. That said, 20% believe that such a goal holds merit, though not in practical terms:

*I think it’s too late...It would be wise to do so, but I’m not sure we will manage anymore given the limited time available* (IC4: 8.1)
4.3c Multilingualism as Ideology

What’s really a myth is that we (the Dutch) are very good at foreign languages (IC6: 2.1)

Multilingualism as an ideology was incorporated into the study as an emergent theme, though mostly to test attitudes. The following excerpts from the data suggest multilingualism is broadly acknowledged for its good:

But also promoting multilingualism, promoting that it is of value...Then it could be really an advantage and we could be – it could become all vivid! And then we could become a really international university (SP9 – 6.3)

However, similarities can only be drawn to a point as opinions diverge in terms of commitment:

I would encourage people to have the politeness and the eagerness to learn other languages, but that is for different purposes (IC6: 6.5)

And rationale:

We are too confident in our reliance on English (P2: 8.1)

I mean I’m very much in favour of multilingualism in the sense that you master more than two languages...but I feel slightly uneasy when these kinds of things get pushed (P1: 6.5)

To gauge the strength of multilingualism as ideology, the study focussed on key or contending languages including questions 8.2 for German and 8.3 for Chinese. The expanded network display in Figure 20 presents the gamut of opinions and attitudes gathered for 8.2.
Figure 20 Expanded network display for 8.2
The case for German is particularly interesting; not only does it bring the European context into play – but arguments, both for and against it, are mired in pragmatism:

I can understand that kind of thinking – the Germans are our biggest trade partner, so why not focus a bit more on them? Now, my general idea is that the Germans are usually quite fluent in English. So English would be good too (IC3: 8.3)

It should also be noted that German students continue to outnumber other nationalities at the RUG. For this reason, and judging by the following quote, these students are not seen to contribute to the internationalisation of the RUG in a way that other foreign students do:

Psychology has this problem. They attract many students from Germany. But do all these Germans (make it) an international programme? (P2: 2.8)

With regard to German, further observations were made that warrant fuller treatment; these are discussed in Section 5.

Questions 6.3 and 7.2 elicited predictions for the roles of Dutch and English at the RUG. These were combined with predictions for the emergent role of Chinese as a foreign language, and juxtaposed using a conceptually clustered matrix of the reduced data in Table 4.

The matrix displays a contest of predictions drawn from the data. With the exception of those responses which serve to project preferences rather than predict outcomes (in italics), the major tendencies are summarized along the bottom.

According to several informants, the roles for English and Dutch are stabilizing in the future; in other words, it can be inferred from the data that their roles are not expected to increase. More striking, perhaps, is that six of the informants expect a decrease for the role of Dutch, while no decrease for the role of English is expected; rather, six informants anticipate an increase.

On the other hand, predictions for the future role of Mandarin Chinese are optimistic, though not dramatically so; while it is not expected to play a significant role in higher education or research, its value as a vehicle for cultural exchange is freely acknowledged:

Um...I’m not sure whether we should open up a full academic programme in Chinese. You can do that at Leiden (BP10: 8.4)

We’ve opened a Confucius Institute here, and the basic idea of the CI is that non-Chinese students learn about the Chinese language and culture before they go to China...you know there will be a big boost in the number of students who go to China (BP10: 8.1)
Matrix of Predictions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>6.3 Role of Dutch at the RUG</th>
<th>7.2 Role of English at the RUG</th>
<th>8.3 Role of Chinese at the RUG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>IC Members</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC3</td>
<td>When (English) isn’t necessary, you can speak Dutch</td>
<td><em>We should change our name to the University of Groningen</em></td>
<td>It might bring a competitive advantage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC4</td>
<td>It will become less important</td>
<td><em>We have to go in that direction</em></td>
<td>Chinese Government PR - but it plays a role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC6</td>
<td>There will be hardly any situation that you are just among Dutch</td>
<td>It will be the normal working language</td>
<td><em>(The Chinese) are learning English</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC7</td>
<td>As a Dutch firm that has been taken over by a large international firm</td>
<td>It will be more and more important</td>
<td>It’ll become a secondary school subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC8</td>
<td><em>We should be a bilingual university</em></td>
<td><em>It’s not an issue here (medical research)</em></td>
<td>Maybe in 50 years - I don’t think China will rule the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-members</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>It’ll remain more or less as it is now</td>
<td>It’ll grow - but not dramatically</td>
<td>It’ll grow - but it won’t take over English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>It will not be completely lost</td>
<td>It will become more of a lingua franca - but not among the Dutch</td>
<td><em>I don’t know</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL5</td>
<td>Dutch (translations) will become shorter and more direct</td>
<td>It’ll increase toward being a bilingual university</td>
<td>It’s not relevant for our university</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP9</td>
<td>There really would be a threat to Dutch (if no one thinks about it)</td>
<td>It will still grow and increase</td>
<td><em>I don’t see a huge demand for courses</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BP10</td>
<td>It will decrease if you count the number of words produced/used</td>
<td>It’s steadily increasing</td>
<td>It will increase</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sum of Predictions</th>
<th>Decreasing – 6</th>
<th>Increasing – 6</th>
<th>Increasing – 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stabilizing – 3</td>
<td>Stabilizing – 2</td>
<td>Stabilizing – 2</td>
<td>Not Increasing – 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projecting – 1</td>
<td>Projecting – 2</td>
<td>Projecting – 2</td>
<td>No Prediction – 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 Conceptually clustered matrix for 6.3, 7.2 and 8.3
As is the case elsewhere in the data, some informants found it expedient to discuss an emerging role for Chinese in relation to English.

*So they have made a choice: They do not expect us to learn Chinese, they are learning English (IC6: 8.4)*

In fact, the extended commentary below reveals how IC8 was only really concerned with, or prepared to make, predictions for Chinese English standards:

*The remarkable thing is the Chinese of the next generation are quite good in English...they have access to internet and international media, there are even English universities in China now...Most of the younger Chinese speak better than their supervisors and mentors in the past, so it’s a problem that will be dealt with mainly in China (1C8: 8.4)*

### 4.3d Dutch

The network display in Figure 21 supplies reduced data gathered for question 6.5. These data have been split – pro (right) and con (left) – to see which sentiments predominate.

Figure 21 Split network display for 6.5
As Dutch L1 stakeholders, informants’ attitudes to Dutch as a language of wider communication and a vehicle for higher education in Europe were elicited. On balance there is little support for the diffusion of Dutch, as the total number of suggestions on how this can be achieved attests. In fact, the following rhetorical themes, which also prevail in the data display, express observations and opinions that were echoed during interviews:

*I think that both top-down and bottom-up there is this new awareness that people will never use Dutch* (P2: 1.2)

*In English and in Dutch, or only in English – I don’t care – but if you’re an international university it’s impossible to ask international staff and students to learn Dutch* (IC6: 2.1)

*That was the reason to start this English language bachelor...because it was really a bridge too far, to first teach these Saudi Arabian students Dutch, and then continue in the Dutch curriculum* (IC8: 5.4)

Although two informants believe Dutch is threatened – either as a language of science (P1: 6.1) or in its position as the main language of the RUG (SP9: 6.3) – the following extracts supply something of the conviction that Dutch is too challenging to learn, or to put it less delicately, not worth the effort:

*I’ve even said it myself, don’t waste your time learning Dutch, it’s complicated, focus on English because that’s what you need* (IC3: 6.3)

*We offer them a course called survival Dutch, but that’s really just to order a beer in a pub, or something like that* (IC8: 8.1)

*Either they learn Dutch – which is difficult when you are only here for a short period of time – or you speak English. I’m not sure how this will end up* (IC7: 2.4)

**4.3e Internationalisation and the Neoliberal Economy**

The following quotes serve as examples of neoliberal discourse, peppered throughout much of the commentary on internationalisation:

*Yeah, if you look at market shares for languages, then English, Spanish, and Chinese are quite dominant* (BP10: 8.1)

*Also in terms of marketing, having better conversion rates in recruiting ISs* (IC7: 3.4)

*(Internationalisation) needs to be sold to the university – but it needs to be sold to individuals because in the end they will ask – what’s in it for me?* (IC3: 3.4)

*Both costs and benefits (of internationalisation) are not always monetary* (IC3: 4.7)
Attitudes to some of the perceived dangers of opening up internationally were solicited with questions 4.7, 4.8, and 4.9, a three pronged approach.

The matrix in Table 3 displays reduced data gathered in response to question 4.7; here, the informants’ positions on universities and profit are supplied.

**4.7 Should universities be profitable?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informant</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Maybe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC3</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC6</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC7</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC8</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BP10</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 Matrix for 4.7

In Figure 22 the network display of responses to question 4.8 express general praise for the Bologna Process. Although three of the informants tempered their positions with qualified negatives (highlighted in cloud) these comments do not cancel the positives.

Figure 22 Expanded network display for 4.8
For question 4.9, the quote shown in Figure 23 was taken from Phillipson’s (2006) hard-line position implicating the Bologna Process in the demise of higher education as a public good (p. 13) and shown to informants for commenting. An extended text survey of the responses gathered for 4.9 follows:

“International commodification pressures challenge the status of education as a public good”.

Figure 23 Quote used for 4.9

The first response contextualises IC6’s reasons for straddling two positions on the matrix in Table 5. Not only does IC6 disagree with Phillipson, for this IC member the dichotomous nature of the two systems – public and private – cannot be reconciled:

I’m not very impressed, because the implicit assumption is that if it’s a public good then it’s better. But we now know that that’s not the case. The world’s top universities are all private; there’s not one top world university which is a public university...But public means at the same time, limited: We are good, but we will never be top, there will never be a top university coming from the public sector because you can’t just mix the two systems (IC6: 4.9)

Similarly, several other informants disputed Phillipson’s argument on differing grounds:

We are not anywhere near market oriented product development where you might run the risk of commoditisation... I mean, taking the wishes of the international market into account does not necessarily lead to low quality programs. But I think that we are only starting to think about this kind of stuff (IC3: 4.9)

This is not in the mindset of continental European people... He (Phillipson) must have come from an English, a British background

When we started this tuning process in 2000, I came across these kinds of statements often... (Academics) said what are you doing by harmonising? You are killing diversity. This is market thinking (IC4: 4.9)

Meanwhile, two informants accepted Phillipson’s argument, though for reasons which could be interpreted as contradictory:

You know, if one of the countries says we want to privatize our system, that (move) could lead to a kind of rat-race to the bottom in terms of quality (BP: 4.9)

In a sense he is right because education is not as innocent as it used to be – now education is following guidelines, international developments, economic constraints... We don’t
change our educational programmes according to what is best for the students but what is best for, let’s say the institution, or the university... To mention an example, if you have a bachelor in mathematics and you want to attract foreign students you have to do this in English and, well, is that good for the Dutch students? (IC8: 4.9)

Another informant articulated both real and potentially negative consequences arising from a market-driven model for higher education and research:

If (higher education) was privately funded all research in the humanities would disappear (P2: 4.7)

Finally, while the complexity of the issue was acknowledged by the informants, not one of them deviated from their original endorsement of the Bologna Process in Figure 22.
5 DISCUSSION

5.1 Internationalisation Themes: Eyes on the Big Picture

Shifting priorities and differing perspectives that do not always support a collective vision were encountered. For example, by fusing the internationalisation goals that pertain to ‘numbers’, as outlined in Section 1.4, we not only see variations of the same theme, but some very different interpretations that could result in conflicting strategies. The following quotes provide rationale for an increase:

*I’m convinced that volume is important. Of course, quality is also important, but you need a certain critical mass to get to this point where you can have a truly international organisation (IC3: 2.3)*

*It makes a difference if you have to select the best one out of three students or out of 300 students (IC8: 2.3)*

Meanwhile, others are not convinced. Here, several informants ponder alternatives to the “hassle” that comes with numbers:

*Yeah, I’m not so interested in numbers...it’s more the quality of the students coming into Groningen (BP: 1.4)*

*If you bring in two – only two – Nobel prize winners with their networks, you are not reaching your goal of 20% (foreign) teaching faculty, but you will be rising enormously in the rankings and you will be attractive to the most talented students (IC8: 1.4)*

*They recently hired a non-Dutch secretary, and that completely changed the dynamics in the secretarial office because everyone had to speak English. It’s a very small thing, but it has major consequences (IC3: 2.3)*

It’s an academic question: Does the university want to support a critical mass – thereby changing the “culture” and demographic of the RUG? Or, will two Nobel Prize winners and an English speaking secretary suffice? Saturation or high-profile selection, these two very different scenarios are implicit in the above quotes. Comments such as these are indicative of informants’ preferences, especially since the second scenario would, in theory, be less disruptive. If, indeed, the second position reflects prevailing institutional sentiment, it’s likely to determine the “depth” of internationalisation possible at the RUG.

Without a doubt, quality emerges as an important motivator in the data; however, it is worth noting that informants do not align themselves with Dutch critics’ views on “verenengelsing” as a serious detriment to quality. Even so, the data reveal that IC members are cognisant of the
internationalisation-related complications and tensions in their midst; it is also clear they have chosen instead to focus on the “big picture”. This stands for the RUG’s University Board as well, and almost certainly accounts for their conspicuous silence on language matters in the Strategic Plan 2010-2015 as noted in Section 1.4. For these constituencies, quality control is a concept that has been largely formalised through the Bologna Process, but measured in response to the global rankings.

That IC3 on 7.6, and IC8 on 8.4, made it clear that students’ English standards are to be dealt with externally, it would seem that policy makers are reluctant to dirty their hands with the everyday reality of “verengelsing”. However, new approaches to teaching and learning in order to adapt to Labi’s (2011) “Bermuda Triangle” of language, pedagogy, and culture (Para. 8) have been successfully implemented; for example, it’s been found that interactivity can safeguard the quality of education in classrooms mostly comprised of L2 speakers. No doubt such findings contribute to policy makers’ long term confidence, though experts also argue for a solid language policy if universities want to become more international (Hagers, 2009, para. 23).

5.2 Language Policy Themes: Observing the Status Quo

While proponents of an explicit LP believe clarity lends credence or gives due recognition to language related norms and/or requirements, many advocates would also argue that an explicit LP can open a Pandora’s Box to further complications. Whatever the policy, explicit or implicit, each “choice” bears consequences and unless there is sufficient political will to back policy, the status quo is destined to prevail. In the RUG’s case, the results described in Figures 7, 8, and 9 all more or less confirm an “active” de facto policy best summarises the current status quo.

Moreover, the discretionary nature of the RUG’s de facto LP was brought to light when an informant unwittingly furnished the study with written proof of an implicit LP. One practice that is observed at the RUG stems from the reasonable assumption that if someone is a Dutch speaker, or if they have a Dutch name, they are automatically addressed in Dutch. Purely out of convention, then, one of the participants in the study sent an email message stating “I’ll respond in English, although your name suggests you’re Dutch” (See Appendix). While this sorting happens face to face on a daily basis – a taken-for-granted factor that undergirds de facto LPs – it was illuminating to see this LP articulated in writing, and confirmed during interviews. However, to classify discretionary LP as a LG mechanism, one which perpetuates agendas – hidden or otherwise – hardly seems plausible; at the same time, it is precisely this common sense element which typically belies hegemonic practices in governmentality.
5.3 Ideological Themes: Sending the Right Message

That institutional multilingualism was shown to enjoy very limited support also indicates its weakness as an ideology in an internationalising academic environment. This trend could be the result of increasing pressure to accommodate bilingualism; at least, this is the overall impression supplied by the matrix of predictions and the network displays for languages other than English. However, languages themselves are important bearers of ideologies as the following example of current LP at the RUG will attest.

On the RUG’s official website there are two national flags, usually found somewhere along the horizontal menu bar at the top of the page; the first is a Dutch flag – the portal to Dutch pages; the other, a UK flag, is the portal to English pages. While these national flags aim to project a bilingual image, the symbolism also provides a snapshot of the RUG’s cultural and institutional ideology. Disregarding the UK flag – which in itself sends a strong message to the international community of Anglophones – there is no sign of a German flag.

Its inconspicuous absence is not for a lack of German pages on the website either. What the community of German speakers find instead is the word “studienbewerber” and a hyperlink. Of course, this is just a small LP decision, but how was it arrived at? After all, students coming from neighbouring Germany are a regular staple for the university; as the largest group of European students, they also represent a necessary revenue stream for the RUG since their tuition is heavily subsidised by the government.

Although the importance of German and Germany is freely acknowledged, there is neither the will nor the interest to foster a greater role for this particular language. One informant made reference to future LP decisions that are now in the works; indeed, the future does not bode well for German, at least at the RUG:

*We have a German prospective student portal on the website, maybe you’ve noticed – studienbewerber – it’s just in German. Yeah, we’re now discussing whether we should...diminue this portal, and make it smaller in German because what we see is that many faculties have problems in dealing with Dutch, English, and German...Not only that, they don’t have the right competencies in German, but also it’s a matter of time. So we may decide to do even less in German on the website (IC7: 8.1)*

Clearly, from a planner’s perspective, certain practices are difficult to sustain without adequate resources or support. In fact, the purpose of the German pages is far from clear; are they meant to delay the transition to Dutch or English for prospective German students? If the
network display for 8.2 in Figure 20 is anything to go by, it would appear that a proficiency in English – and the eventual acquisition of Dutch – diminishes any real need for German, not least because German has no teaching function at the RUG. What is likely is that these pages mark a special relationship between the RUG and German students; as such, they are a token of former LP that is being made increasingly redundant by the kind of internationalisation that speaks English. At the very least, this remains the unspoken message.

The official standing of Dutch at the RUG was emphasised by a number of informants in response to 6.5, but can nationalist tendencies strengthen and preserve its present and future role? The data – derived as they are from different arguments – demonstrate something of an attitudinal divide between pragmatists who consider Dutch a medium-sized community language of little interest to the outside world, and promoters/protectors – individuals who, for very different reasons, uphold the cultural value of Dutch, at least for the European community. This distinction is made by SP9 and presented in the split network display for 6.5 in Figure 21, where German students’ eagerness to learn Dutch is contrasted with Saudi Arabian students’ apathy.

Looking again at the split network display for 6.5, IC4 was difficult to place, being neither for, against, or indifferent to the promotion of Dutch in a European context. From a deconstructionist perspective, this particular informant, whose response has been clouded for easier identification in Figure 21, appears somewhat reticent. Any personal conviction was buried; instead, competing practices and/or policies were named. Furthermore, that “official” EC policy on multilingualism cannot be reconciled to stronger, de facto, international practices, i.e. English as a lingua franca, was very clearly expressed, which also brings to light “the instability” of this dominant ideology (Feldman, 1995, p. 5).

Moreover, by stating “we are obliged” within the larger context of this quotation, it’s possible to detect a certain cynicism over the futility of implementing top-down, supranational LPs. Of note, this IC member also happens to be a European expert, having worked very closely with the Commission to produce literature and “tuning” guidelines for institutions adopting Bologna initiatives. In this particular case, the informant’s background not only helps to contextualise their response, it adds another dimension entirely, alluding as it does to the underlying – and irreconcilable – conflict that de facto LPs keep in check at supranational levels. This is a state of affairs that Phillipson (2009) highlights in his criticism (p. 356).
CONCLUSION

The dominant academic line on these matters espouses what I call a liberal laissez-faire attitude. Based on a mixture of general political liberalism and more specific academic apoliticism – a view that academic work should somehow remain neutral – this approach will either deny ideological implications of the global spread of English, or suggest that they are not our concern (Pennycook, 2000, p. 109).

In the preceding quote, the author condemns the academic community for maintaining a principled indifference to the socio-economic and ideological trends that are accompanying a language shift in certain domains today, a shift that has no doubt been accelerated by technology and globalisation. And yet, the accusation is unwarranted because political activism is not the purview of a research university. Indeed, arguments couched in PLC discourse frequently need debunking only because they represent ideologies, and cannot claim some overarching morality for their justification. If anything, a macro-longitudinal perspective is useful here, since the RUG as an institution has always adapted in order to stay relevant. Moreover, by doing so it has grown its mandate and increased in stature over the course of its 400 year history, but with language subordinate to these outcomes.

6.1 Impasse

*What I do notice is that the language question is very tricky and that it touches the heart of the problem of internationalisation* (IC3: 9.1)

Visions of transformation notwithstanding, if analysis of the data has yielded an overriding theme it would have to be impasse, at least as far as internationalisation and the language question is concerned. Furthermore, the latest round of government budget cuts is now cited as potential roadblocks – halting an aggressive programme of internationalisation:

*The financial climate has changed. We are less optimistic than we were* (IC4: 1.4)

While financial considerations will almost certainly impact the goals of the IC in practical terms, an underlying impasse with regard to LPP represents a far greater obstacle to the RUG’s ambitious transformation. The limiting factors at work are manifold. To begin with, one informant points to a divergence in terms of what is said and done at decision making levels:

*The University Board is not really clear about what they want. They say, we are going to internationalise – we want to be an international university – but they forget what that means for LP... They say, people should have this level, or students that level, but they don’t think about what that means in the way of language provision. And these courses –*
should the university give language courses for free to students? No – there’s no money...
It’s not consistent. There’s no consistency (SP10: 1.3)

Meanwhile, there are bastions of resistance to change:

There are still large parts of this organisation that have no interest and no dealing with
the international context whatsoever (IC3: 2.7)

There’s a lot of emotion, and it’s about cultural values, the feeling of people – are we still
at home? (IC6:5.1)

Therefore, some prefer not to risk conflict or disaffection:

There is no yes or no on this question; there are opportunities to make LP more explicit,
but there are some things that I imagine could be or should be discretionary, just to avoid
this reluctance (P2: 5.5)

To be honest, I don’t know how this will end with our community language (IC7: 2.4)

6.2 Toward a win-win Strategy

Internationalisation is a powerful ideology that competes and coalesces with other contemporary
ideologies; these influence the culture of the RUG and work implicitly – or explicitly – to inform
LP and LG. It was also found that the role of language in the practical and ideological context
shaping the RUG’s internationalisation policy remains a subordinate one, in spite of – or perhaps,
because of – its transformative capacity. Indeed, that LP can open the door to conflict needs to
be recognised as an important limiting factor (Wodak, 2009, p. 170).

More specifically, the impasse described above should prompt concern that unless the IC
is able to straddle the fault-lines indefinitely, the “cost” of transforming the RUG into a global
player may alienate a number of constituencies at the university. Perhaps compromise will give
way to a mature hybrid ideology that not only reflects, but enhances Dutch cosmopolitanism and
collective identity. One can only speculate, but while the RUG negotiates a place for itself on the
world stage, I would like to offer this portrait of a Dutch research university as a record and a
document of extant trends in microcosm, the long term outcome of which has yet to be
determined.

In the meantime, comparative studies are strongly recommended. For example, studies that
combine statistical and qualitative analyses should be undertaken between internationalising
research institutions both nationally and internationally. Similarly, research that focuses on LPs
and governmentality at international organisations, such as the CoE or NATO, is bound to yield
data of relevance to academics across disciplines as well as to policy makers.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


**APPENDIX**

**Internationalisation, Language Policy and Governance**

**Invitation to Participate**

**Background:**
As an international student of Applied Linguistics, I’ve chosen to research developments which affect existing language policies (implicit or explicit) and come to a greater understanding of strategic planning processes in view of the RUG’s ambitious programme of internationalisation.

My MA thesis will focus on the recorded transcripts of interviews with staff and policy makers involved in these processes, specifically, members of the Internationalisation Committee. These data will be used to create a record and a document that provides local insight into a much larger contemporary phenomenon.

**Re anonymity:**
I will only refer to interviewees by their professional titles and/or a coding pseudonym if I quote them directly. As an informant, your perspective and the opinions that you share during the interview will form the core of this qualitative study.

**Method:**
Out of respect for your busy schedule, my goal is to keep the interview within a 60 minute timeframe. I have composed a semi-structured interview guide using open-ended questions designed to elicit your views and opinions on a range subjects, both general and specific.

To give you an idea of what to expect, the main topics are listed below:

- Internationalising the RUG
- Internationalisation policy planning
- University ranking systems
- Language policy at the RUG
- Languages at the RUG

Thank you for your time and assistance,

Rebecca Stoffer
beccares@gmail.com
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1.1 How long have you been with the RUG or in Dutch academia?

1.2 What are some of the biggest changes you have seen in Dutch higher education?

1.3 In your own words, what is the present political climate at RUG?

1.4 How realistic are the following ambitions as set out in Strategic Plan 2010-2015?

   1) Increase the international student body by 150%;
   2) Attract and retain high-calibre international staff - making up 20% of teaching faculty;
   3) Increase participation of domestic students in international exchange programmes to 50%;
   4) Intensify cooperative relationships worldwide;
   5) Produce 500 PhD degrees/year by 2015; and,
   6) Enhance English proficiency at the "support" level.

2.1 For you, what does internationalisation entail?

2.2 What are some factors behind the RUG’s decision to further internationalise?

2.3 The RUG has many foreign students, PhDs and staff. So why more?

2.4 What are the disadvantages of internationalisation for the RUG?

2.5 By not internationalising, are there risks?

2.6 Does internationalisation require de-nationalisation?

2.7 If a colleague said that the RUG is too “Dutch” to be an international university, how would you respond?

3.1 Why has an Internationalisation (Project) Committee (IC) been established?

3.2 What, specifically, does the IC do?

3.3 What are the working languages of the Committee?
3.4 What, in your opinion, are the most important issues?

3.5 Does the IC differ on policy issues?

3.6 In what way is the RUG challenged when it comes to *internationalisation*?

3.7 How might the RUG overcome these challenges?

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<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>What do you think of international rating systems for universities?</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>According to the <em>Strategic Plan 2010-2015</em>, the RUG strives to rank among the top 100 universities worldwide. Which rating system should this plan be referring to?</td>
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<td>4.3</td>
<td>In an article published in the Economist in 2005, it was argued that: “The most significant development in higher education is the emergence of a super-league of global universities (that) regard the whole world as their stage” (What would it take for the RUG to join this super league?)</td>
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<td>4.4</td>
<td>(Have you studied) other institutions of higher education (national, European or international) as examples for the RUG?</td>
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<td>4.5</td>
<td>To your knowledge, is there a model university for the RUG to emulate?</td>
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<td>4.6</td>
<td>Which institutions represent the RUG’s immediate competitors?</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>Should universities be profitable?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>Do you endorse the Bologna Process as a positive development?</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>Please comment on the following quote: “International commodification pressures challenge the status of education as a public good” (Phillipson, 2006, p 13)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>How important is the role of language in the RUG’s strategic goals?</td>
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<td>5.2</td>
<td>As a consequence of <em>internationalisation</em>, is language a politically sensitive issue?</td>
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<td>5.3</td>
<td>If you had to describe the language situation at the RUG to a colleague from China, what would you say?</td>
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<td>5.4</td>
<td>Are you aware of any language related policies at the RUG?</td>
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<td>5.5</td>
<td>Should a language policy be made explicit or remain discretionary?</td>
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5.6 Should a language policy be determined by individual faculties?

5.7 Which scenario would create more tension at the RUG: Official bilingualism or a Laissez-faire language policy?

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<td>6.1</td>
<td>What is the current status of Dutch at the RUG?</td>
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<td>6.2</td>
<td>Please give your opinion of this document addressed to all students, including international students. (See Figure **)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>Given the impetus to further internationalise, what are your predictions for the role of Dutch at the RUG?</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>Given both national and international trends in higher education, what are your predictions for the role of Dutch in higher education in the Netherlands?</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>How can Dutch as a language of higher education be promoted in Europe?</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>What is the current status of English at the RUG</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>Given plans to further internationalise the RUG, what are your predictions for the role of English?</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>Are you currently aware of any specific language problems?</td>
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<td>7.4</td>
<td>By promoting (the Bologna principles of) accessibility and mobility, should a decrease in English language standards among students and staff be expected? ** Or accommodated?</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>Do English language standards at the RUG need better regulation/support?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>Might the “Anglicising” of Dutch universities generate negative publicity and an eventual backlash?</td>
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<td>7.7</td>
<td>To your knowledge, have alternatives to greater reliance on English been explored? (for internationalisation)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>Should the role for other languages be enhanced?</td>
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<tr>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>Please comment on the following quote:</td>
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“More attention should be paid to the importance of the German language and culture for the Netherlands and for Groningen in particular. ‘The Netherlands is missing out on billions of Euros every year, in part due to miscommunication with German trade partners.’”

8.3 What are your predictions about the future of Chinese as a foreign language?

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Close of interview

9.0 How else might the RUG raise its national and international profile?

9.1 What should I have asked you that I didn’t think to ask?
Rebecca,

I'll respond in English, although your name suggests you're Dutch.

I'm glad to be interviewed about the university's language policy (and also glad to help you with your thesis).

If you suggest a couple of dates/times for an interview, I can pick one that's convenient for me. May I propose that the interview is held at my office (in the Academy Building complex)? I'll give you more precise directions later.

Greetings,

Jan Wolthuis

Note: If you need more persons from the central office to interview, I can suggest some other people ....
Opening C-BAR

De eerste echte coffee bar binnen de deuren van de Rijksuniversiteit Groningen is een feit: de C-BAR. Dit willen we vieren en daarom willen we iedereen op donderdag 10 maart vanaf 15.00 uur uitnodigen om een heerlijk vers kopje koffie met ons te komen drinken.

De C-BAR bevindt zich in het Harmoniegebouw (Oude Kijk in ’t Jatstraat 26) op de eerste etage van het restaurant.

see you @ C-BAR

Per 1 maart wordt de naam Restauratieve Voorzieningen gewijzigd in Hospitality Services
Gezocht: studentleden voor de Faculteitsraad Letteren
LET-STU-ALL@list.RUG.nl
25-02-11 12:14

For English, please scroll down

Gezocht: nieuwe studentleden voor de Faculteitsraad Letteren
Voor komend studiejaar is de studentenfractie van de Faculteit der Letteren op zoek naar nieuwe kandidaten die de stem van de student in de Faculteitsraad willen laten horen.

Wat?
De Faculteitsraad Letteren is hét orgaan dat het Faculteitsbestuur adviseert en informeert over zaken die spelen binnen de Faculteit der Letteren en is daarmee een belangrijk medezeggenschapsorgaan. In de raad zitten personeelsleden en studenten. Als lid van deze raad krijg je stukken te lezen over onder andere de begroting, promoties, studieprogramma’s, het bindend studieadvies en de brede labels. Verder krijg je inzicht in de veranderingen die eraan staan te komen in de Bachelor- en Masterprogramma’s. Meestal heeft de raad een adviserende functie, maar in bepaalde gevallen ook instemmingsrecht. De werkzaamheden zijn goed naast je studie te doen, het kost zo’n 5 uur per week. Overigens krijg je er een vergoeding voor en staat het goed op je cv.

Waarom?
De komende jaren wordt de inspraak van de studentenvertegenwoordiging belangrijker nu de faculteit financieel in zwaar weer komt en er stevig bezuinigd moet worden. De twee fracties die nu in de raad zitten hebben daarom besloten om samen te gaan om een nieuw en positief geluid te laten horen. Het wordt een nieuwe, sterke en eensgezinde studentenfractie die een frisse wind wil laten waaien door de Faculteit.

Interesse?
Lijkt het je leuk om de Letterenstudenten te vertegenwoordigen in de Faculteitsraad? Stuur dan voor 7 maart een e-mail met je motivatie en cv naar fraadletteren@gmail.com.

Groeten namens beide fracties,

Lijst LiLA
SFL

Voor meer informatie:
www.lijstlila.nl
www.sflgroningen.nl

---------------------------------------

English version
Dear student,
The faculty council is looking for new students to advise and inform the faculty board and to represent the Arts students in the council. Unfortunately all the meetings and reports of the faculty council are in Dutch. If you would like to apply to the faculty council it is advisable that you are proficient in Dutch. You can apply by sending an email with a cover letter and your resume to fraadletteren@gmail.com.

Yours sincerely,

On behalf of both student parties,

SFL & LiLA
www.lijstlila.nl
www.sflgroningen.nl