PrO-English?

A study into the status quo of the implementation of English at PrO-schools in the Netherlands

Lysbeth Plas

MA-thesis - Department of Applied Linguistics – Faculty of Arts
Rijksuniversiteit Groningen

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. C. L. J. de Bot
Second supervisor: Dr. H. I. Hacquebord

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Lysbeth Plas
1394282

MA-thesis Applied Linguistics
Rijksuniversiteit Groningen
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The tradition of teaching English as a foreign language outside the native English-speaking countries has been subject to tremendous change due to colonisation and, more recently, an ever-increasing development of globalisation. Although English was taught in, for example, France and the Netherlands as early as the 1500’s, the largest increase and changes evidently took place over the past century (Howatt, 1984). In all levels of today’s society, regardless of geographical location, socio-economical or societal status, the English language is present to a greater or lesser extent and continues to expand its presence nonetheless. The opinions on the global development of the high status of the English language are divergent. Some regard it as being the negative result of cultural and linguistic imperialism or Americanisation (e.g., Phillipson, 2006), whereas others prefer to look at English as merely having grown into a multinational tool without serving any particular Anglo-American interests (Fishman, Conrad & Rubal-Lopez, 1996). Regardless of the different opinions, the global growth of the English language remains an undeniable fact.

Concomitantly, the number of English language classrooms is increasing (Crystal, 1997; Graddol, 1997; Graddol & Meinhof, 1999). Worldwide, more and more people of all ages are learning the world’s current *lingua franca*, albeit on very different levels, in very different areas, and under very different circumstances. English has become part of everyday life all over the world. Learning a foreign language is no longer reserved for the intellectually or financially privileged. However, it is not self-evident either.

According to Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights every human being has the right to education (United Nations, 1948). Whether or not people actually receive the education they are entitled to is a complex matter of the social, political, economic, and religious situation in a society (Winzer, 1993). Many factors can contribute to insufficient or lack of proper education. Examples are plentiful: discrimination of girls (e.g., Afghanistan), homosexual students (e.g., Poland), or ethnic minorities such as the Roma (e.g., Slovakia), deliberate damage or destruction of educational material in conflict areas (e.g., Colombia), or neglect of children with special educational needs due to, for example, developmental disabilities (e.g., many developing countries) (Artiles & Hallahan, 1995; Amnesty International Netherlands, 2008).
Special education

Education for the ‘feebleminded’ can be traced back to Europe in the eighteenth century, when certain pioneers (e.g., Jean-Marc-Gaspard Itard and Édouard Seguin) began to make isolated efforts to educate children with special educational needs due to developmental disabilities. In 1846, Seguin published the first special education treatise called *Traitément Moral, Hygiène et Éducation des Idiots* (*The Moral Treatment, Hygiene, and Education of Idiots and Other Backward Children*) (Poon-McBrayer & Lian, 2002). The terminological development from ‘idiocy’ and ‘backwardness’ in earlier times (e.g., Seguin, 1846; Tansley & Gulliford, 1960) to these days’ more subtle ‘intellectually challenged’ coincided with an increasing international interest in the rights and education of the special educational needs (SEN) minority (for a detailed definition of the term see Chapter 2.1.4).

Over the past decennia, the slower learning pupil as well as the type, methodology, and quality of education required in teaching this target group have received increasing (academic) attention and have also been put on, for example, the European agenda. One of the items on the agenda in the globalising European society is foreign language education to learners with SEN. In 2005, the European Commission (EC) published the EU-funded study *Special Educational Needs in Europe: The Teaching and Learning of Languages – Insights and Innovation*. One of the purposes of the study is to provide a sound basis for future discussion and policy making in this area. As shall become clear, the definition of the term ‘special needs’ varies considerably across Europe, as do the educational systems. This ambiguity makes it difficult to generalise or draw from experiences elsewhere. In order to obtain more insight into the European status quo, joint efforts continue to be made across the continent.

The current study: objective, relevance, and structure

The current study is an explorative attempt to contribute to the assessment of the unknown status quo of the implementation of English as a foreign language in the curricula of schools for *praktijkonderwijs* in the Netherlands as well as the underlying concepts and opinions that have led to this status quo. The study covers one particular type of SEN education in the Netherlands: *praktijkonderwijs*, hereinafter referred to as *PrO*. PrO-schools are secondary education facilities
for pupils between the ages of 12 and 18 with an IQ between 55 and 80. According to a recent count that was done for the purpose of this study there are 166 PrO-schools in the Netherlands\(^1\).

The aim is to provide insight into the current position of English in Dutch PrO-curricula. Not only will the formal regulations and decisions be investigated; the opinions of the people in the field (i.e., the teachers and the pupils) are equally as important to provide a complete as possible picture. In addition to a theoretical background of scientific advances the practice at the grassroots level will be discussed by means of the information retrieved from teachers and pupils. To quote an interviewee in the EC’s 2005 publication: “The bridge between research and practice is like a black hole” (p. 2). I would like to clearly state that the intention of the current study is not to widen the gap between scientific research and everyday practice but, if anything, to narrow it.

The relevance of the issue on a Dutch level became especially clear at an annual conference held in April 2009 by the LWV-PrO (Landelijk Werkverband Praktijkonderwijs, the Dutch National Association of PrO), mainly through the differences that exist between schools. There are schools that already have a great deal of experience in the field of foreign language teaching to PrO-pupils whereas others have never considered it. Furthermore, the subject seems to meet an interesting spectrum of opinions among the educational practitioners (i.e., teachers, managers, curriculum designers), varying from great enthusiasm and creativity to feelings of scepticism and exaggeration. These differences confirmed the relevance of the topic as well as the conviction that this study may be of use in the process of providing more insight into an issue that is obviously very much alive within PrO.

The study is structured as follows. Chapter 2 presents a theoretical framework consisting of two parts. The first part discusses the definitions of four key terms that play a central role in the study. As there is no international consensus on the definitions of certain terms it was in some cases decided to use the definition that was deemed most appropriate in order to avoid any possible ambiguity. Naturally, these definitions are based on already existing terminology. Although the use of terminology is largely in accordance with that published by the European Platform for Dutch Education in 2002, it has been extended in cases of case-specific words and terms. The complete glossary can be found on page 100. The second part discusses academic as

\(^1\) The number is based on information provided by LWV-PrO. This list has been updated by the author. Due to, for example, mergers or other educational changes the actual number might vary to some extent.
well as empirical contributions to the fields of intellectual disabilities and foreign language teaching to people with SEN in the light of which this study was written. It consists of three commonly held beliefs regarding the issue, their history, and their relevance in the context of the study. The section is concluded with an overview of extra-linguistic advantages of foreign language learning according to academic research in this area.

Chapter 3 presents a concise history of the methodology of English teaching in PrO. The only PrO-method for English available at the present time, Edu’Actief’s *Let’s Get Started*, is also briefly discussed. Chapter 4 is a detailed description of the research method applied in the study, including a discussion of its content and procedures. In Chapter 5 the results of the study are presented, analysed, and discussed and followed by a conclusion (Chapter 6) in which all relevant aspects of the investigation are brought together.
2. BACKGROUND

2.1. Terminology

As previously pointed out, the global differences in educational systems as well as the international terminology have proven to be problematic in the past. In order to avoid any terminological ambiguity the first step is to provide conceptual definitions of the following essential terms: (1) PrO: the type of education in focus, (2) the characteristics of the pupil in focus, (3) an explanation of the term ‘intellectual disability’ and its definition within the scope of the current study, and (4) an explanation of the term SEN.

2.1.1. Praktijkonderwijs

Dutch education has long been marked by a broad range of education types that all followed their own regulations. In 1968 however, one law that included all types of education went into effect in order to stimulate articulation between the various levels (Law on Secondary Education, or ‘Mammoth Law’). Since 1998, one of the common goals of all types of education is to improve the connection to further education or the labour market, which is also why the types of education that provide for children with, for example, learning difficulties have been accommodated in the Law on Secondary Education (Eurydice Nederland, 2005). A schematic overview of the Dutch educational system as well as the articulation between levels is shown in Figure 2a.

The organisation of the education system in the Netherlands has seen many policy changes over the years, which has resulted in an overlap of different education systems: one-track (geared towards the inclusion of almost all pupils), multi-track (characterised by a multiplicity of approaches to inclusion), and two-track (involving two distinct education systems) (EC, 2005). From 1998 until 2002 a number of educational developments ultimately resulted in PrO being the first of four levels of mainstream secondary education in the Netherlands. As from 2002, PrO is thus no longer categorised as ‘special’ education as such. However, PrO-schools are segregated
schools that provide for children with SEN and are by definition not following the current trend of inclusive education.

PrO-schools are either independent schools, subdivisions of comprehensive schools that include at least the VMBO level (Voortgezet Middelbaar Beroepsonderwijs, Pre-vocational Secondary Education), or part of an educational organisation. The total number of pupils enrolled at PrO-schools was 27,078 in the academic year 2007/2008 (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2009). The total number of pupils enrolled in secondary education in 2007/2008 was 941,136. Thus, PrO-pupils comprise approximately 2.9 % of the total number of pupils enrolled in secondary education.

The official goals of PrO-schools are (a) to provide the pupil with the abilities to live independently and (b) to prepare them for a “simple position on the regional labour market” (Inspectie van het Onderwijs, 2002, p. 153). A PrO-curriculum consists of adapted theoretical subjects as well as practical training (see also Chapter 2.2.1).

PrO is considered to be eindonderwijs (final education; the last stage of the educational career), which means that pupils usually do not continue to further education. However, according to recent numbers this trend is increasing (Middelbaar Beroepsonderwijs, Vocational Education) (Sontag, Von der Fuhr & Mariën, 2008).

No official national exam is taken at the end of the PrO-school career, but pupils do receive a general certificate. They can also attain specific certificates and diplomas that qualify them for specific activities, such as the AKA-course (Arbeidsmarktgekwalificeerd Assistent; Labour market Qualified Assistant). This course is provided in cooperation with a local ROC (Regionaal OpleidingsCentrum; Regional Education Centre) on MBO level.

PrO-schools are supported by subsidies from the European Social Fund, one of the structure funds of the European Union whose aim is to guide more people to the labour market by, for example, investing in upgrading the skills of low-skilled workers and people that are at the margins of the labour market.

To sum up, PrO is a form of mainstream secondary education that caters for pupils with special educational needs. Although PrO-schools are segregated schools they are no longer categorised as ‘special’. PrO-schools prepare the pupil for a position on the regional labour market and teach them the abilities to live independently.
2.1.2. The PrO-pupil

PrO is not for everyone. In order to be admitted to a PrO-school, the pupil must meet a number of requirements. If their parents/caretakers and the competent authorities of the previous and/or future school have sufficient reason to assume that the pupil will not be able to complete education at VMBO or LWOO level (Leerwegondersteunend Onderwijs, Learning Support), they can apply for an RVC-assessment. The RVC (Regionale Verwijzingscommissie, Regional Referral Committee) then assesses the application applying the following criteria:
2. BACKGROUND

- a *motivation* based on previous experience with the pupil in the educational process
- *educational arrears*; admission to PrO requires educational arrears of three years in at least two out of the four educational disciplines of (a) comprehensive mathematics, (b) comprehensive reading, (c) technical reading, and/or (d) spelling. At least one out of the two disadvantages needs to be in the areas of comprehensive mathematics or comprehensive reading. A complete overview of the disadvantage assessment criteria is included in the Glossary
- *intelligence quotient* (IQ); admission to PrO requires an IQ between 55 and 80
- the parents’/caretakers’ opinions on the matter
- a *personality assessment* to determine any possible socio-emotional problems in relation to academic achievement (if deemed necessary)

*(Staatsblad van het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden, 2003; my translation)*

If all requirements are met, a *PrO-beschikking* (PrO-disposition) can be granted. For a complete overview of the PrO-disposition criteria see Appendix I.

To sum up, PrO-pupils are characterised by a sub-average IQ, educational arrears of at least three years (i.e., learning difficulties), and, in some cases, socio-emotional difficulties. They are considered incapable of completing education on VMBO/LWOO level *(Inspectie van het Onderwijs, 2002)*.

### 2.1.3. A range of disabilities

Many different conceptual definitions of the terms ‘learning disability’ (LD) and ‘developmental disability’ (DD) can be found in the literature, which can hinder proper understanding of the terms and their operational definitions. The importance of consensus regarding the terminological issue is stressed by Hammill (1990), who investigated and reviewed existing definitions of ‘learning disabilities’. He discusses eleven different definitions, which differ in, for instance, the assessment of underachievement (i.e., some definitions suggest that underachievement is indicated by the presence of aptitude-achievement discrepancy whereas others do not), or “the allowance for the multihandicapping nature of learning disabilities” (p. 80) (i.e., some definitions indicate that learning disabilities can coexist with other kinds of handicaps, such as mental...
retardation, whereas others state they cannot). Similarly, many definitions of one and the same concept can be found. Examples are ‘learning disorder’, ‘educable mentally impaired/disabled/retarded’, or ‘educationally challenged’, all of which generally refer to individuals with IQ scores of 50-80 who are able to learn new academic as well as vocational skills but do need special education in order to achieve these goals.

The use of these terms is time-dependent, place-dependent, and they are often used interchangeably, inconsistently, or defined rather vaguely. Moreover, differences in terminological preference can interfere in communication (Fernald, 1995). For the sake of transparency an overview of essential terms relating to respective disabilities is presented. It is not to say that these are generally accepted and therefore generalisable, but clear terminology is essential to enhance understanding of the current study.

**Developmental Disability as an umbrella term**

A DD refers to a permanent cognitive and/or physical impairment that usually occurs in the early years of life. A DD usually results in significantly reduced capacity in three or more major life activities, such as communication, learning, self care, and decision making. According to the Centre for Developmental Disability Studies at the University of Sydney, Australia (2003), DD is used as an umbrella term to refer to a range of conditions including, for instance, intellectual disability (ID), autistic spectrum disorder, and LD. Specific LDs are, for instance, dyslexia and dyscalculia. LD excludes learning problems “that are primarily the result of mental retardation” (Lerner & Kline, 2006, pp. 6-7), and includes people of at least average intelligence (i.e., IQ-achievement discrepancy). The term LD is thus not considered suitable in this context. In the same vein, language learning disability (LLD) (e.g., DiFino & Lombardino, 2004), specific language learning disability (SLLD) (De Bot, Lowie & Verspoor, 2005) or foreign language learning disability (FLLD) (e.g., Sparks, 2006), whether they exist or not, do not apply to the target group in the current study as these disabilities are not related to IQ.

**Intellectual Disability**

Intellectual disability (also ‘mental retardation’ or ‘cognitive disability’) on the other hand is a developmental disability that is characterised by a significant below-average IQ as well as limitations in the ability to function in certain areas of daily life. Children with an ID can and do
learn new skills, but they develop more slowly than children with average intelligence. Having ID does not inherently imply a specific language learning disorder. There are different degrees of ID, ranging from mild to profound (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009). The target group in the current study falls into the category ‘mild to moderate intellectual disability’.

To sum up, intellectual disability is one of a number of manifestations of developmental disability. People with ID have learning difficulties resulting from general DDs combined with a recognised low IQ. They do not necessarily have a specific LD such as dyslexia or dyscalculia, but do have special educational needs. Furthermore, they may or may not have additional difficulties, such as autistic spectrum disorder or attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (AD/HD).

2.1.4. SEN – a definition
The term ‘special educational needs’ is rather broad and does not specify exactly what they involve and in what cases they may be provided. Furthermore, the definition varies from country to country. International research (e.g., EC, 2005) shows that different countries use different conceptual definitions of the term, hence different operational definitions. The result of these disparities is reflected in the reported rates of pupils with SEN, which differ widely across European Union member states. The difference is clearly illustrated by numbers provided by Eurydice in 2002. Table 2.1 shows the percentage of pupils recognised as having special educational needs with respect to the total number of pupils in compulsory education in three European countries.

Table 2.1: Percentage of pupils with SEN in three European countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Pupils recognised as having SEN (%)</th>
<th>Pupils with SEN educated separately (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>.9</td>
<td>.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These differences suggest that any attempt to identify and describe current practice in foreign language learning and teaching “will be hindered by differences in diagnostic recognition” (EC, 2005, p. 3).

In order to avoid any misinterpretations a working definition that covers all facets of the term SEN is proposed. It is based on the definition used in the United Kingdom as amended by the 1996 Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) (European Agency for the Development of Special Needs Education (EADSNE), 2009):

Children with special educational needs require additional help in order to achieve their full educational potential. Such provision is required when a child:

- has significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of his/her age; or
- has a disability which either prevents or hinders him or her from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided in schools, within the area of the local authority concerned, for children of his/her age.


The Act specifically states that “giftedness and high ability are not included within the definition of special educational needs”. Although, in my opinion, this broad definition of SEN should not discriminate between the different kinds of exceptional children, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss this matter in detail.

Examples of frequently mentioned manifestations of SEN in daily life include:

- difficulties relating to reading, writing, mathematics, and/or understanding information
- difficulties relating to expressing oneself and/or understanding what others are saying
- social difficulties (e.g., in making friends or relating to adults)
- behavioural difficulties
- organisational difficulties
- sensory or physical needs that may prevent him/her from using certain educational facilities
Examples of educational measures that may be taken include:

- individual guidance and support throughout the entire scholastic career
- use of appropriate teaching methods at pupil’s own level
- possibility to adapt material if necessary (e.g., learning rate)

In combination with the previously discussed definition of (a) the characteristics of the pupil in focus, and (b) the nature of the pupil’s disabilities, this definition should provide a clear idea of the educational circumstances of the target group.
2.2. The Dutch situation

The learning of foreign languages is included in the curriculum of compulsory education in all European countries. Provision for teaching languages to students with special needs varies considerably. To date, this is an area in which there has been relatively little sharing of experience on good practice, at either policy or classroom level, in Europe.

EC, 2005, p. 6

In the Netherlands, the learning of foreign languages is indeed included by law in the curriculum of all levels of compulsory secondary education (i.e., VMBO, HAVO, and VWO (Voorbereidend Wetenschappelijk Onderwijs, Pre-University Education) with the exception of PrO.

PrO-curricula consist of a theoretical part and a practical part. The theoretical part consists of adapted education based on the common core goals of the BaVo (Basisvorming, Basic Education), whose content is similar for pupils at all levels of LSE education. The BaVo was officially abolished in 2006 in order to give schools more freedom in designing their LSE curricula, but curricula dated before 2006 are still in use. There are also schools that have never officially adopted the BaVo core goals. These subjects are the AVO-subjects (Algemene Vorming, General Education) and are categorised in the following five leerlijnen (learning areas): (1) Dutch, (2) calculation/mathematics, (3) Information and Communication Technology (ICT), (4) social and cultural orientation, and (5) career and practical orientation. Over the past decade, Dutch educational publisher Edu’Actief designed material in these learning areas especially for PrO (PrOmotie). Physical education, personality training, and the training of social skills are also integrated into the curriculum.

The practical part of the curriculum is dedicated to preparation for placement on the regional labour market (Wet op het Voortgezet Onderwijs, 2008). The subjects are usually categorised into four sectors (i.e., technology, service provision/economics, care and well-being, and ‘green’); the specific subjects are determined by the competent authorities of the school after consultation with the local authorities, who, in turn, include employers on the regional labour market (Eurydice, 2008).

With regard to the teaching of English, PrO-schools are free to decide whether or not they include the subject in their curriculum. In contrast to foreign language education at the other levels it is not regulated by law, which may seem rather odd considering the current governmental interest in
and recent focus on the teaching of modern foreign languages in secondary education (Council of Europe, 1998; EC, 2005; Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschappen, 2006; De Graaff & Tuin, 2009). However, taking into account the traditionally most commonly held beliefs about the abilities of pupils with ID as well as common reactions from teachers to new educational developments it may not be so surprising. The fact that foreign languages are not traditionally included in the PrO-curriculum could very well be a result of the following three historically explicable arguments: (1) “One language is difficult enough”, (2) “They won’t need it anyway”, and (3) teacher reservations.

2.2.1. “One language is difficult enough.”

It is a generally accepted fact that people with ID usually have difficulties mastering their mother tongue. During the course of the current investigation, the most frequently heard argument against teaching English (or any other foreign language) to PrO-pupils was that “it is difficult enough to teach them Dutch”. Furthermore, these pupils are often characterised by poor retention, concentration, and listening skills (Salters, Neil & Wright, 1998). This understandably leads to the question of whether adding to their linguistic confusion by introducing another language is desirable.

Solid arguments in favour of this view can be found in the literature. PrO-pupils have an IQ between 55 and 80, which is significantly below average. It is generally acknowledged that intelligence and working memory (WM), which is considered to be an important part of an individual’s language aptitude, are highly correlated (Juffs, n.d.; Conway, Kane & Engle, 2003; Pickering & Gathercole, 2004; Oberauer, Schulze, Wilhelm & Süß, 2005; Maehler & Schuchardt, 2009). The latter study by Maehler and Schuchardt on the role of intelligence in working memory performance shows that there seems to be an overall working memory deficit in children with subnormal intelligence. The most severe deficit was located in the phonological loop which is the working memory component that preserves verbal material in phonological form for brief periods of time (Baddeley, 2007). The capacity of the phonological loop is important for one key aspect of foreign language learning: vocabulary acquisition (Gathercole & Pickering, 2001). In the same vein, a study by Dufva and Voeten (1999) of 160 Finnish children and their L1 (first language) (Finnish) and FL (foreign language) (English) skills shows that proficiency in L1 literacy skills as
well as phonological memory are highly significant for L2 (second language) and FL learning. The ‘predictive’ role of the L1 for the achievement in an L2/FL is also suggested by Robertson (2000), who claims that knowledge of the L1 may aid acquisition of an L2/FL because both processes require the same tasks (e.g., becoming familiar with the “sounds and appearance of a language”) (p. 62).

This is only a small selection out of a substantial body of evidence that convincingly suggests that mastering a first language poses a problem for people with ID, including PrO-pupils. Consequently, teaching them a foreign language could be considered as overestimating them. In a PrO-context, these ideas may have led to the belief that time that might be devoted to English could be better employed in other areas of the curriculum. In other words, that teaching English is a waste of time.

This is especially relevant in the case of pupils with a non-Dutch background at PrO-schools (non-native pupil population). They do not always master the Dutch language (yet) and may therefore not benefit from an additional language in the curriculum. Research has been done into the native and non-native pupil population at secondary education facilities in the Netherlands (Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschappen, 2004). The results show that, especially in the bigger cities, non-native pupils are overrepresented at VMBO/LWOO level and PrO: 60% of all pupils attend education on VMBO level, 80% of which are non-native. The issue is acknowledged in the international literature as well, for example by Cummins (1984): “[...] disproportionate numbers of immigrant and minority language children “deported” into special education classes and vocational streams in many countries” (p. 1). One of the reasons for this overrepresentation on a Dutch level are the educational arrears these pupils often have, particularly where Dutch language proficiency is concerned. A justifiable argument against the teaching of English to children whose native language and ‘home language’ is not Dutch or Frisian is that it may be too demanding given the pupil’s limited cognitive abilities. It should, however, be noted that educational arrears in non-native pupils are not necessarily related to a sub-average IQ. Although the issue is beyond the scope of the current study, the linguistic and cultural diversity in PrO-classrooms is obviously relevant in foreign language teaching at PrO-schools.
Opposing views – Multiple Intelligences

Although our knowledge of intelligence and the role it plays in language learning is far from complete, it is sufficient to assume beyond any reasonable doubt that the IQ and WM factors play an important role in an individual’s foreign language learning. PrO-pupils will therefore never gain the same proficiency level in English in a classroom setting as ‘normally’ developing children might. However, this interpretation of intelligence only includes the concept of intelligence as measured in a standardised intelligence test, such as the tests used by the RVCs in the Netherlands (Centrale Financiën Instellingen, 2009). Although the outcome of such a test does give information about an individual’s general academic abilities, it is perhaps somewhat limited and dated to exclusively consider this one number and draw irreversible curricular conclusions from it. The EC states the following in the prologue to its 2005 publication: “[Exclusion from learning foreign languages] may have been a valid response in certain cases. Alternatively, we can suggest that it may have been valid if expressed at a time when our understanding of cognition and second language learning was less advances as now” (p. 1). Similarly, Sparks (2006) claims on the basis of his research that “IQ tests are not useful in determining a student’s “potential” for FL achievement” (p. 552).

The theory that intelligence is not a ‘unitary concept’ (Bogaards, 1996) but consists of multiple intelligences is known as the Multiple Intelligence Theory (MIT) (Gardner, 1983), and has gained in popularity over recent years. According to Bogaards (1996), intelligence can take on many different forms, which should “warn us against reducing the concept of intelligence to theoretical or abstract intelligence of the kind most usually measured in intelligence tests” (p. 2).

In regard to language learning, he claims that language, as an instrument of communication, depends more on the “practical, tangible, and social aspects of intelligence” (p. 3). Gardner (1983) distinguishes the following six intelligences in his theory: (1) linguistic, (2) musical, (3) logical-mathematical, (4) spatial, (5) bodily-kinaesthetic, and (6) intra-/interpersonal. Multiple intelligences are, by definition, expressed in multiple learning styles. In Gardner’s view, a child who, for instance, masters multiplication easily is not necessarily more intelligent overall than a child who struggles to do so. The EC’s 2005 publication has adopted this theory and claims that “foreign language learning may be one of those subjects which is particularly significant in terms of diverse individual learning styles” (p.1).
Gardner’s concept of intelligence has also met with criticism (e.g., Sternberg, 1985, 1988; Rost, 2008). It is claimed that Gardner does not define ‘intelligence’ at all, but merely uses it as a synonym for ‘ability’. Sternberg (1988) calls MIT “a theory of talents, not one of intelligences” (p. 42).

Despite all of the criticism the educational implications of MIT (both methodological and curricular) could potentially be very useful in real-life classroom settings. In fact, an example of what could be seen as an implementation of the theory is already being used in many mainstream as well as segregated schools in the form of competency-based learning and individual learning paths, or their Dutch equivalent: the IOP (Individueel Ontwikkelingsplan, Personal Development Plan) (Universitair Medisch Centrum Groningen, n.d.; EC, 2005). Competency-based learning is an individually oriented learning style that builds on pupils’ competences that can be developed so as to teach them the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to deal with specific situations (Stichting Leerplanontwikkeling (SLO), 2003). In a PrO-context, these situations revolve around work, everyday life, and recreation. IOPs allow the learner to develop an individualised plan in which his special skills, which may differ from the ‘norm’, are recognised. This can potentially offer great benefits to the SEN learner: the IOP allows any learner with any set of skills to work according to a plan that maximises their potential. Additionally, it can bring specific skills to a (future) employer’s attention whereas traditional qualifications may disguise or deny such recognition.

In an educational context the application of MIT would thus be a matter of uncovering a pupil’s strengths and weaknesses and using this knowledge as a starting point for a tailor-made curriculum, which is what many PrO-schools are currently striving to do. The focus in many a PrO-school’s mission is overtly on the pupils’ abilities rather than their disabilities, which can be seen in certain schools’ ‘slogans’:

De Bolster (Groningen)  “Laat zien wat jij kunt”  Show what you can do
MaXx (Neede)  “Maak werk van je talent”  Work your talent
Singelland (Drachten)  “Talent in ontwikkeling”  Talent in development

In this reasoning, teaching a foreign language (English) in PrO-education would fit in the current focus on pupils’ strengths and abilities. If a pupil shows language aptitude and motivation, learning English could be an enrichment of the curriculum.
Opposing views – Cummins’ Interdependence Theory
As was shown in the previous section on the role of working memory in language learning, the ‘predictive’ role of the L1 plays an important role in many people’s perceptions of what PrO-pupils will be able to achieve in another language. However, this argument could also be reversed: if the L1 can influence an L2 or FL, could the L2 or FL also influence the L1? In other words, are they interdependent?

Cummins (1979, 1991) hypothesises that they are. Firstly, he differentiates between social and academic language acquisition. Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) are language skills that are needed to interact socially with other people in day-to-day language, and are embedded in a meaningful social context. These skills are not very demanding cognitively and do not require specialised language. Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) on the other hand refers to formal learning, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing about content and subject areas. CALP is more demanding cognitively as it also requires metalinguistic skills. The distinction Cummins makes between social and academic language skills is essential in a PrO-context. He claims that, “with the exception of severely retarded and autistic children, everybody acquires BICS in a first language, regardless of IQ or academic aptitude” (Cummins, 2001, p. 112).

Secondly, Cummins has advanced the theory that there is a common underlying proficiency (the CUP-model) that determines an individual’s performance on cognitive/academic tasks such as reading in both L1 and L2 (Harley, Allen, Cummins & Swain, 1990). Both languages can contribute to, use, and access this so-called central processing system. This interdependence hypothesis is illustrated in Figure 2b.
Cummins’ dual iceberg model represents the two languages as seemingly isolated icebergs above the surface. However, underneath exists one system that both languages have in common. In other words, the languages an individual ‘contains’ are interdependent and can thus influence each other. In the context of English education for PrO-pupils the initial reaction might be that the relatively poor command of Dutch will negatively influence the acquisition of English. However, learning a ‘new’ language may also positively influence the development of Dutch skills as well as the development of English skills.

Thus, although PrO-pupils will never be fluent where the higher academic skills in any language are concerned due to their cognitive abilities, it should be clear that there is no ‘medical’ reason (i.e., evidence related to any deficiency within the individual) they would not be able to learn basic skills in English. Methodology obviously plays an important role in teaching this target group; a grammatical approach such as the ‘grammar-translation’ approach (Krashen, 1982) is not desirable as it is very cognitively demanding. However, by using appropriate methodology and focusing on each pupil’s developable competences foreign language skills can, according to the evidence presented above, certainly be achieved.
2.2.2. “They won’t need it anyway.”

A second frequently heard argument against the teaching of English to PrO-pupils is that “they won’t need it in their future anyway”. This argument is related to many PrO-pupils’ social contexts (Bogaards, 1996) as well as their expected future careers.

The mission of PrO-schools is to provide the pupils for whom PrO is the educative 'end station' with a position on the regional labour market. Examples are positions in the hotel and catering industry (e.g., dish washing, lunch/dinner duty), homes for the elderly (e.g., cleaning, working in the linen-room), at car service stations (e.g., washing cars, replacing tyres), or at metallurgical concerns (e.g., cutting metal, working at the conveyor belt). Such jobs do not typically involve the use of English as they occur in an overall Dutch environment. From this point of view the status of English is not very high and the language will not be present in the pupils’ daily lives to that great an extent. Consequently, learning English at school may be regarded by teachers, parents, and pupils alike as ‘irrelevant’ or ‘unnecessary’ (Bogaards, 1996), which are evaluations that do not promote or stimulate the learning of any foreign language. With their future careers in mind, preparing PrO-pupils for vocational work might therefore seem more desirable and thus receive priority.

Empirical research seems to support this feeling of irrelevance. A 1992 consultation report regarding the teaching of modern languages performed by the Northern Ireland Curriculum Council (NICC), for example, found that many teachers felt that “modern languages had little relevance for pupils with moderate learning difficulties” (Salters et al., 1998, p. 365). Similar reactions can be found in the results of surveys conducted by the EC (2005) in many European countries.

A different point of view can, however, offer different insights. Firstly, the pupil’s social context is directly linked to the status of English, which plays a special role in the current discussion about teaching foreign languages to people with SEN. Much of the debate takes place in native English-speaking countries such as the United States and Great Britain. The target languages in those countries are, for example, Spanish or French. However, the societal status of these languages is different from the status of English in the Netherlands. Apart from the fact that English is being used and incorporated in the Dutch language to an increasing extent (Braanker, 2007), it is also undeniably omnipresent in young people’s day-to-day life. Television, the
internet, instant messaging/chat, and short message service (SMS) are an integrated part of daily life for the vast majority of this age group. The status of English among young people in the Netherlands, especially teenagers, is high (Gerritsen, 2005). This status does not discriminate between different types of pupils. PrO-pupils’ social context can thus be assumed to involve a great deal of English, both in and out of school, consciously and subconsciously (i.e., whether they are aware of a word/phrase being English or not). Children in this age group typically tend to turn to their peer groups rather than their parents or teachers for their values (Bogaards, 1996). In the case of English it can be assumed that if anything, knowing English is perceived as a status symbol. Although pupils with ID are often characterised by low motivation (Salters et al., 1998), this seems hardly relevant in the relationship between the English language and Dutch pupils. On the contrary, the high status of English will most likely result in high motivation amongst PrO-pupils, which is widely considered to be one of the determinants for FL learning success (De Bot, Lowie & Verspoor, 2005). Therefore, it “will be important to consider young people’s views in this area and to examine the ways in which ideas are transmitted within peer groups (Bogaards, 1996, p. 4).

Secondly, it is not unlikely that the positions that PrO-pupils are most likely to hold in their future will require certain knowledge of the English language. Taking the latter’s increasing popularity into consideration, this requirement may be even more valid in the near future. Basic knowledge may in some positions be desirable, such as in the hotel/catering and the tourism industries. Furthermore, the number of non-Dutch speakers in the Netherlands is increasing as well. It is not unlikely that PrO-pupils will be working with people whose Dutch is not sufficient; English may in these cases be of help.

Thirdly, pupils who continue their education at MBO level but have little to no working knowledge of English will undoubtedly encounter difficulties. The MBO level presupposes a certain level of proficiency and if this requirement is not met by the former PrO-pupil, a gap might arise between them and their fellow class members who do possess the necessary English knowledge. This could put former PrO-pupils at a significant disadvantage at both the social and the academic level. With an increased trend of moving on to further education, ‘filling the gap’ could very well be or become the responsibility of PrO-schools. Elaborating on the MBO-issue is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, taking a closer look at the potential problems that may arise is recommended.
2.2.3. Teacher reservations

Foreign language education for children with SEN is a relatively young field of research. It has only been since the past two decades that a clear trend “to promote societal inclusion and participation, and to combat exclusion for people with disabilities” can be seen (Stevens & Marsh, 2005, p. 110). This interest has come at the same time as advances in multimedia applications (EC, 2005). It is a field in which there has been relatively little sharing of experience, at either policy or classroom level, in Europe as well as in the Netherlands. Therefore, it is scarcely surprising that the rapidly succeeding new ideas and technologies in the educational field are met with reservations and resistance among the people who have to bring them into practice.

In the case of teaching English, PrO-teachers (i.e., AVO-teachers) are required to have sufficient knowledge of the language as well as knowledge of current practice in FL teaching, as the latter obviously requires a specific methodology. The question of what to teach these pupils, and how, can be daunting and is not an easy query.

The 1992 study conducted by the NICC in Ireland (Salters et al., 1998) and the 2005 report conducted by the EC show that insufficient knowledge of any language under consideration seems to be one of the teachers’ major hindrances. The results of the NICC survey showed a “lack of modern language teachers in special schools” (p. 365). The study by the EC claims that one of the outcomes of interviews and correspondence “with a wide range of stakeholders” (p. 4) was that there might be a transitional problem: “[...] whilst recognizing the need to offer foreign languages to all young people, teachers consider that they lack the knowledge and skills to do it” (p. 4).

Furthermore, the skills that are necessary to implement English in a modern classroom are demanding in the sense that they require a certain degree of working knowledge in the field of ICT. There may be teachers who are not confident about their ICT skills, and/or not interested in improving them. The role of ICT should not be underestimated; the advances in multimedia applications partly instigated the discussion of the matter approximately two decades ago. Potential hard- and software particularly appropriate for specific types of SEN learners can offer a learning environment that centres on individualised learning paths (EC, 2005; Stevens & Marsh, 2005). In their UK-based investigation, Stevens and Marsh confirmed that teachers found that lack of knowledge about potential applicable technologies, “alongside lack of equipment or
technical support, often hinders access to learning languages” (p. 111). Although this study was conducted in the United Kingdom, it is not unlikely to be relevant in the Dutch situation as well. There has not been any research done in this area in the Netherlands, but personal communication during the seven months time-frame leading up to this study leads to believe that teacher insecurity and lack of proper teaching materials and/or knowledge (whether or not in cooperation with one another) might in fact play a role in the status quo of foreign language teaching in PrO.

Without any direction or guidelines it can indeed be difficult to implement the teaching of English in the curriculum, as guidelines set goals and provide assistance. The goals and guidelines regarding modern foreign language teaching in educational settings in today’s Europe are established per country. However, under the terms of the European Union an increasing number of countries now base their language learning goals on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). The CEFR was first published in 2001 (the European Year of Languages) by the Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe and describes (1) the competences necessary for communication, (2) the related knowledge and skills, and (3) the situations and domains of communication in an accessible manner. It defines levels of attainment in different aspects of its descriptive schemes and facilitates a clear definition of teaching and learning objectives and methods and provides the necessary tools for assessment of proficiency (Council of Europe, 1998).

Such a framework could be the first step towards a more centralised database of knowledge and current practice in all areas of language learning and teaching, whether on the European or a specific country’s level. Sufficient, expert, and easily accessible information available to practitioners at the grassroots level could lower the threshold for those who need help or inspiration. Similarly, it could be an easy way for teachers to share information about good and bad practice, teacher training, and advice related to both English teaching and related issues such as ICT. In the Netherlands, there are frequent meetings and biannual conferences as well as mailing lists that cover the entire country and allow teachers to exchange ideas and experiences. These examples of frequent communication are an essential step in the process towards a consolidation of knowledge: a centralised database. It could be especially relevant in the relatively young field of teaching foreign languages at the PrO-level. To some this may sound too
ambitious or unrealistic. However, if the quality of PrO-education is to be secured, updated, and improved, these teacher skills (language, ICT) are indispensible.

2.3. Extra-linguistic advantages of foreign language learning

Some theorists and researchers (e.g., Hawkins, 1983; Lantolf, 2000; Archibald, Roy, Harmel & Jesney, 2004) emphasise that, in addition to linguistic gains, there are other areas that could benefit from the process of second language acquisition. In the case of PrO-pupils this is particularly relevant in three areas: (1) non-linguistic skills, (2) self-esteem, and (3) linguistic and cultural awareness. Although these areas are all directly or indirectly related (i.e., they work together within one individual), they will be discussed separately to clarify their specific content.

2.3.1. Non-linguistic skills

In spite of the encouragement offered by research in SLA [second language acquisition] and by surveys of good practice, the question remains: given that many SEN pupils will achieve only very low levels of competence in a foreign language […] – is the result worth the effort?

Salters et al., 1998, p. 370.

This is a question that PrO-teachers may justifiably raise. In terms of linguistic skills, PrO-pupils will never gain a high proficiency level in the English language. However, if gaining linguistic skills equals success and the latter is measured only in terms of how much English the pupil retains, other skills are being overlooked. Examples are observational skills, memory training, the development of social skills (Salters et al., 1998), attention skills (Abutalebi, Tettamanti & Perani, 2009), and divergent thinking (Archibald et al., 2004). PrO-pupils could potentially benefit from these skills in other areas of the curriculum (cross-curricular/interdisciplinary benefits) (e.g., the more practical subjects, such as work practice in a restaurant or a nursing home) as well as in real life. They transcend the non-scholastic skills and prepare for ‘life in the real world’, which is the general PrO-school ambition. These skills, among others, play a central role in the currently...
2. BACKGROUND

popular IOPs, competency-based learning, the European Language Portfolio (Expertisecentrum MVT, 2008), and the EC’s Lifelong Learning Programmes.

2.3.2. Self-esteem

Learning a language can enhance the self-esteem of SEN pupils simply because being excluded from it is often perceived as a mark of failure and rejection.

Salters et al., 1998, p. 370.

Learner self-confidence is generally accepted as one of the pillars of education. It is also considered a major issue in the foreign language classroom. Experienced teachers in SEN language learning classrooms have cited, in the spirit of Jean-Baptiste Molière, that ‘it is not only for what we do that we are held responsible, but also for what we do not do’. In other words, they understand the possible impact of being denied something that is self-evident for peers at different schools, which can have a direct effect on the PrO-learner’s confidence.

Personal communication as well as target group research (e.g., examination of public Hyves\(^2\)-posts) throughout the months leading up to the current study has led me to believe that there are PrO-pupils who feel as if they are not attending a ‘real’ or ‘normal’ school (KPC Groep, 2002). They sometimes feel as if they are not taken seriously and do not like being excluded from activities that their peers at other schools are engaging in. Learning English is a relevant example of such exclusion if it is not offered at school, as it is a language that plays an important role in youth culture. To deny PrO-pupils access to prevailing youth cultures by excluding them from foreign language learning “may actively erode their self-confidence” (EC, 2005, p. 83). As cited in Salters et al. (1998), Collins claims that “reinforcement of basic and yet often essential social skills can be of particular benefit to special needs pupils and can act as a source of personal confidence and independence building” (p. 370). In other words, if these pupils develop skills in a foreign language, they will experience this as a success, which may improve their self-image.

\(^2\) Hyves is a popular Dutch social networking site (cf. Facebook and MySpace).
It is needless to say that it is important for teachers to be aware of the sometimes low self-esteem in PrO-pupils (Rubio, 2007), and to adapt the teaching methodology to this specific kind of learner. It is a known fact that language learning classrooms can cause anxiety in learners (e.g., Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986; Rubio, 2007) and a constant feeling of failure would, of course, have an adverse effect. For more information about methodology, see Chapter 3.

2.3.3. Linguistic and cultural awareness

To deny them access to other languages and worlds may deprive them of strategies they could use to compensate for their problems.

EC, 2005, p. 44.

Although this statement can be perceived as rather blunt, ‘access to other languages and worlds’, that is, awareness of other languages and insight into other cultures, are areas in which foreign language learning might make a unique contribution to any individual’s education. In the words of philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein: “The limits of my language are the limits of my world” (Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, 1921). In this context this quote may sound fairly grandiloquent, but it also represents a commonly held claim, namely that studying languages “helps develop cross-cultural understanding, including positive attitudes toward other cultures and lessened ethnocentrism” (Schulz, 2007, p. 9).

Language learning is in essence a social activity since a language’s main purpose is to communicate with others. This is especially relevant in the PrO-case considering the pupils’ limited cognitive abilities: the focus in language teaching on a PrO-level will primarily be on a communicative approach and meaningful interaction and not on learning grammatical constructs and other cognitively demanding tasks. Considering meaningful communication as a central function of language (Cummins, 1984), culture is inevitably involved: speakers of different languages bring with them different cultural backgrounds. As such, language and culture are inextricably linked (Schulz, 2007). According to Brody (2003) “it is impossible to deal with second language education without taking culture into account” (p. 37).
Of course, multicultural matters are already integrated in PrO-curricula in subjects such as social and cultural orientation. It could be argued to keep the multicultural aspects within these subjects. However, language learning adds another dimension to pupils’ cultural awareness by learning through a medium rather than about it. In their 1994 study, Oxford and Shearin call foreign language learning “a vehicle to cultural awareness” (p. 24). Pupils learn that people in other countries may say and do different things in certain situations and have different customs. Learning these is not only enriching, it can also prove to be essential in preventing unnecessarily uncomfortable situations (e.g., in many cultures, reducing the directness that the Dutch are often accused of is generally well-appreciated). Ethnographic communication research has demonstrated that speech has its own culture-specific constructions and routines (e.g., Mitchell & Myles, 2004). By learning the correct phrases and expressions, pupils will be equipped to handle accordingly as they know the appropriate way of expressing themselves, which could in its turn also enhance their self-esteem.

Everybody’s world is becoming larger in the very concrete sense that we meet more foreign people on the streets and travel to foreign countries more frequently. The process of internationalisation does not discriminate between ‘types’ of human beings. Therefore, there is no reason for excluding certain groups in society from broadening their world, especially those whose world is considered to be smaller than others’ due to their intellectual abilities.
3. **ENGLISH TEACHING METHODOLOGY IN PrO**

3.1. A concise history

Particularly since PrO became a part of mainstream secondary education in 1998, time and effort have been put into the development of appropriate teaching materials for the AVO subjects. This resulted anno 2001 in the publication of five learning areas (*PrOmotie*) developed especially for PrO by educational publisher Edu’Actief (see Chapter 3.2). They are currently well-established in most PrO-curricula. In 2006, a learning area for English was added: *Let’s Get Started*.

Until recently, PrO could not draw from any guidelines or regulations where the teaching of English was concerned. There was no information regarding teaching methodology and curricular content due to lack of (centralised) knowledge about and experience with this particular target group. Without a basis it can be hard to bring into action any potential ideas, regardless of the amount of goodwill behind them. Similarly, inaction can in its turn complicate the establishment of essential guidelines based on, for example, good practice and a centralised knowledge base. Once this vicious circle has started it can be difficult to break out of.

However, teaching English at PrO has been a vexed question for well over a decade. Under the auspices of LWV-PrO, the Referentiegroep Praktijkonderwijs in de Steigers (RefGroup PrOIDS) (Reference Group PrO Under Construction) published *Praktijkonderwijs en de Streefdoelen* (*PrO and its Target Goals*) in 2004. In this report, the implementation of the five established learning areas is discussed, as well as their development with regard to content and adaptation to the IOPs. Teaching English is mentioned as a possibility:

> English is currently not a part of the PrO-curriculum. However, there are pupils who are motivated to learn English. Schools can consider offering English as an optional subject or a workshop.

RefGroup PrOIDS, 2004, p. 11 (my translation)
The target goals are summarised as follows (my translation):

- The pupil becomes familiar with the sounds of the English language by listening to spoken and sung texts which are geared to his level and interests.
- The pupil is able to use simple vernacular language to give an impression of his daily life.
- The pupil is able to produce standard sentences so that he can manage in communicative situations in, for example, the supermarket, and to ask for information or help.
- The pupil is able to maintain informal contact by means of e-mails, letters, or chatting.

In 2004, this was the only ‘top-down’ information available regarding the teaching of English. There was no method, and although alternative VMBO or LWOO methods could be used if so desired, there are no specific data as to the frequency with which it was done, and how it was received by the pupils.

In 2005, SLO (the Netherlands Institute for Curriculum Development) in cooperation with LWV-PrO and RefGroup PrOIDS published the report *I love English*, an advising content proposal concerning the teaching of English at PrO-schools. The report states that this particular field is in need of support with regard to content as well as didactics in the teaching activities of English, “even though the subject, being non-compulsory, seemed to have low priority” (p. 5). The non-compulsory nature of English is emphasised throughout the entire report, which is merely intended for advisory purposes.

In accordance with the current trend, *I love English* uses competency-based learning as a starting point. The PrO-pupil should develop linguistic, social, and communicative competences (a) in situations that are important to him/her and (b) on a level appropriate to him/her (SLO, 2005). One of the main issues in foreign language teaching to this target group is to truly include the pupil in the language learning process so that they are not “pedagogically side-lined” and only physically present (EC, 2005, p. 5). *I love English* provides an appropriate illustration of how to realise pedagogical inclusion by working with competences: “The question is not when to practice the future tense, but what the pupil needs to order a coffee” (p. 13; my translation).
A much elaborated and operationalised version of the main goals as published by RefGroup PrOIDS in 2004 can be found in the 2005 report. The construction of the content basis is summarised below.

The main goal is for the pupil to become able to manage linguistically in a number of communicative situations, such as informal conversations with peers or asking for information or directions. All skills (i.e., listening, reading, discourse, and writing) are to be considered coherently, with an emphasis on listening and vocabulary building. Examples of such language learning tasks are screening English texts for information regarding a pupil’s specific interest or reading English texts about a topic that is currently being discussed in another subject so that maximum coherence is ensured. Each of the learning tasks should focus on the pupil’s direct environment, which is categorised into two main domains: (1) daily life (e.g., hobbies, music, sports), and (2) work (using the pupil’s sector of choice as a starting point). In terms of methodology this involves tasks that have an immediate affiliation with one or more of these environments.

The content of the goals are recorded in the Language Profiles. The Language Profiles describe in concrete terms what a learner should be able to do in six particular stages of the language learning process. They are used in the Netherlands so as to have a common national standard for assessment in different educational levels and to facilitate the development of teaching materials (NaB-MVT, 2004). The Language Profiles are based on the levels formulated by the CEFR3 (see Chapter 2.2.1.3) and adapted to the Dutch situation4 by the Nationaal Bureau Moderne Vreemde Talen (NaB-MVT) (National Bureau of Modern Foreign Languages). The Framework provides a common basis for the “elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe” (Council of Europe, 2001).

Both versions use can-do-statements for six specific cumulative learning stages per skill and sub-skill. Can-do-statements show a continuous development of a learner’s skills. Figure 3a shows the six levels of proficiency as formulated by the CEFR.

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3 The complete international version of the Language Profiles can be found online at http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/Linguistic/CADRE_EN.asp.

4 The complete Dutch version of the taalprofielen can be found online at http://www.nabmvt.nl/publicaties/00012/
Figure 3a: Six levels of proficiency and their descriptions
Source: Council of Europe

In a PrO-context the aspired level is A1:

Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.


The goals are further specified per sub-skill, which gives a concrete idea of what the pupil should be able to do and the tasks that are necessary to achieve these goals:

- **Listening**
  I can recognise familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.
Reading
I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues.

Speaking
I can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help me formulate what I am trying to say. I can ask and answer simple questions in areas of immediate need or on familiar topics.
I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know.

Writing
I can write a short, simple postcard, for example sending holiday greetings. I can fill in forms with personal details, for example entering my name, nationality and address on a hotel registration form.

Source: Council of Europe, 1998

CEFR’s goal description is especially relevant in the AKA-course, which aims at integrating the English language in every aspect of the course by means of a Language Portfolio. The AKA Qualification Dossier requires English language proficiency at the A1-level. The dossier uses six steps (i.e., planning, execution, reflection, editing, conclusion, assessment) in which the can-do-statements can easily be incorporated.
Based on the before-mentioned reports Edu’Actief developed a learning area for English for PrO in 2006: Let's Get Started. The method connects to the other PrOmotive learning areas in that the topics (e.g., recreation, society) and the oral and social skills are applied similarly. There are possibilities for differentiation in level of difficulty and learning rate. There are workbooks, a CD-ROM, and online exercises available. The method can cover three grades and consists of three phases (i.e., three separate workbooks).

The tasks are to a large extent integrated in meaningful communicative situations. The learning material is very graphic and colourful. Not only do certain icons tell the pupil what is about to be discussed, there are also many separate text fields and text balloons that give additional information or a summary of what has recently been discussed. At the beginning of each chapter a summary of the following topics is given so that the pupil can prepare himself and start considering what might be interesting to learn or tell others regarding that particular topic. The topics stay close to the pupil’s personal experiences. Examples are parties, fashion, music, dating, and dealing with money.

It is beyond the scope of the current study to analyse and discuss the method. It is, however, an area in which further research is desirable, for example where the reception of Let's Get Started and the effectiveness of the methodology is concerned (see Chapter Reflections, limitations, and suggestions for further research).
THE STUDY

4. METHOD

4.1. Introduction

No nation-wide research in the field of English education at PrO-schools has previously been done. The only relevant information available at the present time is the known fact that some schools teach English and some do not, and the number of schools that have ordered educational publisher Edu’Actief’s PrOmotie-method Let’s Get Started. According to an estimation provided by a representative of Edu’Actief (personal communication, November 2009) there are approximately 160 customers nationally. These customers include not only PrO-schools but also VMBO-schools, MBO-facilities, educational consultancies, and bookstores. In other words, this number does not provide any information regarding, for example, the total number of PrO-schools that offer English, any alternative methods that might be used, or the opinions of both teachers and pupils about the teaching and learning of English.

In short, the lack of a centralised knowledge base to build upon requires the current investigation to start from the very beginning. As the matter covers the entire country and involves two different levels (i.e., PrO-practitioners and –pupils) the method of choice in both cases is a questionnaire. Two questionnaires are designed to cover the different levels involved, thus generating a complete as possible overall picture of the situation: (1) an AVO-teacher/School Management questionnaire, and (2) a pupil questionnaire.

The aim is to create a complete as possible representation of the status quo by means of contacting as many PrO-schools and –pupils as possible. Questionnaires are a relatively quick and easy means of gathering a large amount of ‘widespread’ information. They enable the researcher to obtain facts and figures for statistical analysis (quantitative information) whilst respondents have the opportunity to share their insights into the matter through, for example, open-ended questions (qualitative information) (Dörnyei, 2003).
As is the case with any research method, questionnaires have their limitations. Examples are the relative simplicity and superficiality of answers and the impossibility of estimating response size to a request per e-mail. However, this research method is the logical option for the current large-scale research purposes. Furthermore, in order to maximise the reliability of the results an attempt was made to ask straightforward questions with little chance of misinterpretation.

4.2. AVO/School Management Questionnaire (TSMQ)

4.2.1. Content
An 11- to 15-item questionnaire was designed using the online questionnaire software provided by SurveyMonkey. The number of questions has been limited to a maximum of 15 questions in order to prevent the questionnaire from being too demanding. Complete anonymity was guaranteed; although respondents were required to fill out the name and location of their school for administrative purposes, none of the published information is linked to a specific school and no names are mentioned.

The questionnaire was available in print as well as online. Both versions were identical. As there was no way of knowing which staff member/s would respond, the questionnaire was divided into three sections: (1) a general section, (2) an AVO-section, and (3) a School Management section. The questions in the general section were answered by all respondents. The last question of the general section referred to the respondent’s position held within the school (i.e., (1) AVO-teacher or (2) School Management), after which they were automatically redirected to the appropriate section. Naturally, the sections that were automatically skipped in the online version were included in the printed version. The printed questionnaire contained clear instructions in which the respondent was requested to skip the irrelevant questions. Table 4.1 shows a concise summary of the questions in the general section.

---

See www.surveymonkey.com
Table 4.1: Content and type of questions asked in TSMQ – general section

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Content</th>
<th>Question Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Name school</td>
<td>Open Question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. City/town school</td>
<td>Open Question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Part of comprehensive school</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Denomination</td>
<td>Multiple Choice +a (5 options)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Mother Tongue</td>
<td>Open Question (numeric)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated percentage of pupils with Dutch as mother tongue</td>
<td>Open Question (numeric)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated percentage of pupils with language other than Dutch as mother tongue</td>
<td>Open Question (numeric)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. List a maximum of 5 largest native language groups</td>
<td>Open Question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Position held within school</td>
<td>Multiple Choice (2 options)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*a Possibility for respondent’s commentary

The first question of both the AVO-teachers’ and the School Management’s sections refers to whether or not English is taught at the school. The criterion is the inclusion of English for an \( x \) number of hours in the school’s curriculum, which the respondent is asked to further specify in a matrix (see Table 4.2). They are then redirected to the next section based on their answer (Yes or No).

Table 4.2: Template of matrix English NO/YES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English NO</th>
<th>English YES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower Secondary Education (LSE) – <em>Onderbouw</em> (groups 1 + 2)</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Secondary Education (HSE) – <em>Bovenbouw</em> (groups 3 and up)</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2.1.1. AVO-teachers – Qualitative
This section contains the more qualitative questions specifically aimed at AVO-teachers. AVO-teachers at schools that do teach English are asked about the implementation of the subject and the method(s) used. AVO-teachers at schools that do not teach English are asked about pupil indications, the future of English at school, and their English skills. The questions are summarised in Table 4.3.

4.2.1.2. School Management – Qualitative
This section contains the more qualitative questions specifically aimed at members of the school management. Management members at schools that do teach English are asked about the introduction of and reasons for the implementation of English. Management members at schools that do not teach English are asked whether or not the topic has been discussed within the school and possible plans for the future. The questions are summarised in Table 4.4.

Table 4.3: Content and type of questions AVO-teachers: English YES/NO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English YES</th>
<th>Question Content</th>
<th>Question Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Type of implementation</td>
<td>Multiple Choice + (3 options)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Method used</td>
<td>Open Question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Use of Let’s Get Started</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let’s Get Started YES</td>
<td>1. Rate experience with method</td>
<td>Multiple Choice + (5 options)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Rate pupils’ experience with method</td>
<td>Multiple Choice (4 options)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English NO</td>
<td>1. Pupil indications re. English</td>
<td>Multiple Choice (3 options)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Concrete plans re. the implementation of English</td>
<td>Multiple Choice (3 options)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Teachers’ English skills</td>
<td>Multiple Choice (3 options)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.4: Content and type of questions School Management: English YES/NO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English YES</th>
<th>Question Content</th>
<th>Question Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Time of introduction English</td>
<td>Multiple Choice + (4 options)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Reason for introduction</td>
<td>Open Question</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English NO</th>
<th>Question Content</th>
<th>Question Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Reason for not introducing</td>
<td>Multiple Choice + (6 options, more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English</td>
<td>than one allowed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Five-year prediction</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Explanation of previous</td>
<td>Open Question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>answer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Completing all questions was compulsory and continuing the questionnaire after skipping a question was not possible.

The questionnaire in its entirety can be found in Appendix II.

**4.2.2. Procedure**

A trial was performed using two printed versions of the questionnaire. One member of a school management and one AVO-teacher were requested to fill out the respective sections of the questionnaire. Sessions lasted for approximately 8 minutes. The online version was expected to cost less time. When no problems were encountered the questionnaire was considered valid for use.

The printed versions were handed out at the annual LWV-PrO conference in Arnhem in April 2009 and sent back to the author by mail within six weeks. The answers were then manually processed by entering them into the online version of the questionnaire on SurveyMonkey.

In order to obtain the largest possible response an e-mail database was set up (a) by browsing the schools’ websites and (b) through personal communication. E-mails with a request to follow the prompts and fill out the online questionnaire were then sent to every PrO-school in the Netherlands whose e-mail address had been added to the database. Over the following six weeks a reminder was sent every two weeks to each school that had not yet responded. The deadline was set nine weeks after the first questionnaires were sent out.
4.3. Pupil Questionnaire ($PQ$)

4.3.1. Content

An 11- to 15-item questionnaire was designed using the online questionnaire software provided by SurveyMonkey. Taking the target group into consideration, the questionnaire was kept short and concise. Furthermore, it included elaborate instructions and language use was adapted to the target group (e.g., the use of clear symbols when extra attention was required). Complete anonymity was guaranteed.

The questionnaire was available in print as well as online. Both versions were identical with the exception of two questions relating to going abroad that were deleted before analysis. In order to facilitate the answering of the printed questionnaire it was decided to design two different questionnaires for both pupil categories (i.e., those who do receive English education and those who do not).

The online version automatically redirected the respondent to the appropriate questions. Naturally, the sections that were automatically skipped in the online version were included in the printed version. Therefore, the printed questionnaire contained clear instructions in which the respondent was requested to skip the irrelevant questions.

Thus, three versions of the pupil questionnaire were provided: (1) an online questionnaire, (2) a questionnaire in print for pupils at schools that offer English, and (3) a questionnaire in print for pupils at schools that do not offer English. Table 4.5 shows a concise summary of the questions in the pupil questionnaire. The previously mentioned questions regarding going abroad are not included. Both printed questionnaires can be found in Appendix IIIa+b.
## Table 4.5: Content and type of questions asked in PQ

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Question Content</th>
<th>Question Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- General Information</td>
<td>1. Group/class</td>
<td>Multiple Choice (3 options)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. City/town school</td>
<td>Open Question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Age</td>
<td>Open Question (numeric)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Sex</td>
<td>Multiple Choice (2 options)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Post-school plans</td>
<td>Open Question (optional)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- English YES</td>
<td>1. Rate English class</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Explanation of previous answer</td>
<td>Open Question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Activities during class</td>
<td>Multiple Choice (4 options, more than one allowed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Type of education</td>
<td>Multiple Choice (3 options)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Progress</td>
<td>Multiple Choice (3 options)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Importance of knowing English</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Explanation of previous answer</td>
<td>Multiple Choice + (4/5 options depending on previous answer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8. Additional commentary</td>
<td>Open Question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- English NO</td>
<td>1. Wish to learn English at school</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Current knowledge of English</td>
<td>Multiple Choice (4 options)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Importance of knowing English</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Explanation of previous answer</td>
<td>Multiple Choice + (4/5 options depending on previous answer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Additional commentary</td>
<td>Open Question</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.3.2. Procedure

A trial was performed at a PrO-school in Groningen. 51 pupils were asked to fill out a printed version of the questionnaire. It is important to note that this questionnaire comprised only one of two versions (i.e., the *English NO* version). However, when no problems were encountered the questionnaires were sent out.

A letter was sent to the AVO-teachers at a selection of 34 PrO-schools. It contained (a) a request to let a minimum of 10 pupils fill out the questionnaire, (b) a manual for the completion of the online version, (c) a manual for the completion of the printed version, and (d) the two
available printed versions (English YES and English NO). Thus, the schools could choose whichever method they preferred. The printed versions were sent back to the author and then manually processed by entering the answers into SurveyMonkey. The questionnaires that were completed online went directly into SurveyMonkey’s database. The deadline for the completion of the online questionnaire / return of the completed questionnaires by mail was set 20 days after the request was sent out.

The selection of schools was made based on seven criteria in order to ensure a representative distribution. They are summarised in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Selection of schools: criteria, descriptions, and frequency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Freq.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Response to TSMQ</td>
<td>Only schools who responded were eligible</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Region</td>
<td>Equal regional distribution of schools</td>
<td>$N_{region} = 17$</td>
<td>2 schools in each region$^a$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Denomination</td>
<td>Distribution of denominations</td>
<td>Public:</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Catholic:</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Prot.-Christ.:</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reform.:</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other:</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. School type</td>
<td>Distribution of school types</td>
<td>Independent:</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Part of CS:</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Part of EF:</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. English</td>
<td>Distribution of YES/NO</td>
<td>$English YES$: 24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$English NO$: 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Pupil population</td>
<td>Distribution of pupil populations</td>
<td>&lt; 70 % NL: 19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; 30% NL: 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30-70% NL: 12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Location</td>
<td>Distribution of locations</td>
<td>Randstad:</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cities &gt; 100.000 inh.</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Towns &lt; 100.000 inh.</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$^a$An overview of all 17 regions can be found in Appendix IV
5. RESULTS

5.1. Results of the TSMQ

5.1.1. Introduction
To facilitate insight in the results there are two issues that need to be addressed. Firstly, a number of schools have more than one representative \( (N = 8) \), which obviously will affect the outcome of the analysis. To avoid any bias, the mean of both answers was calculated where possible. In all other cases the answers were compared. If they matched, the answer was considered accurate and thus used in the analyses. If they did not match, the data for that particular school was not used in analyses. Secondly, the 93 valid questionnaires contained a number of incomplete copies \( (N = 3) \). In all three cases the omitted part included the last question of the questionnaire regarding the use of PrO-method Let’s Get Started. The answers to the remaining part of the questionnaire were used in analyses. Therefore, the number of responses may vary per analysis, which is also clearly indicated.

The results of the TSMQ are structured as follows. Firstly, an overview of the descriptive statistics is presented. Secondly, comparative analyses are presented. The schools are divided into two groups depending on whether or not they teach English: English YES and English NO. Both groups are presented separately. Thirdly, statistical analyses are done in order to uncover potential associations between factors relating to the teaching and learning of English.

5.1.2. Descriptive statistics

Respondents
The total number of valid questionnaires is 93 (see Table 5.1). They represent 93 PrO-practitioners, 57 of whom are AVO-teachers and 36 of whom are members of a school management.
Table 5.1: Number of respondents and valid questionnaires

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Number of valid questionnaires</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In print</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Schools

All 17 regions were represented in the outcomes of the questionnaire. The total number of schools represented in the study is 85, which is 51.2% of the total number of PrO-schools in the Netherlands. Table 5.2 shows a categorisation of the schools by location, denomination, and school type. It is important to keep in mind that the numbers under Total are reported numbers based on information gathered from the internet. As the information was not always clear, the real numbers may vary. The numbers under Q are based on the outcomes of the questionnaire.

Mother tongues and language groups

All 85 schools were categorised according to the estimated percentage of pupils with Dutch and/or Frisian as their mother tongue and those with a language other than Dutch and/or Frisian as their mother tongue as provided by the respondents. Figure 5a shows the distribution of the schools according to these criteria. Respondents were then required to list a maximum of five language groups at the school in order of frequency, of which the first (i.e., the largest language group) was obligatory. 69.8% of these schools list Dutch as the largest language group present at the school. Figures 5b to 5d show the distribution of the three largest language groups at PrO-schools in the Netherlands.
## 5. Results

Table 5.2: PrO-schools in the Netherlands categorised by location, denomination, and school type: reported national totals and totals based on outcome of the questionnaire (’Q’)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% of total</th>
<th>Q</th>
<th>% of total</th>
<th>% of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-schools-</td>
<td></td>
<td>-schools-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randstad</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cities &gt; 100,000 inh.</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towns &lt; 100,000 inh.</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>68.0</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>68.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>166</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>51.2</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Denomination</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public (non-rel.)</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>42.8</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>47.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant-Christian</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reformational</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>166</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>51.2</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School type</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent school</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>50.6</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>49.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subdivision of CS(^a)</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>45.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part of EO(^b)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>166</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>51.2</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) Comprehensive school

\(^b\) Educational organisation
5. Results

Figure 5a: Distribution according to pupils’ mother tongues

Figure 5b: Number 1 Language Group - Dutch

The total number of schools represented in the graph is 81.
The ‘Other’ category contains the following languages: English, Romani, Sranan Tongo and/or other Surinam language varieties, and Tibetan.
Figure 5c shows Moroccan as the second-largest language group.

The total number of schools represented in the graph is 77.

The ‘Other’ category contains the following languages: Dutch, English, French, Iranian (Persian), Iraqi, Kurdish, Portuguese, Sri Lankan (Sinhala and/or Tamil), and Somali.

Figure 5d shows Turkish as the third-largest language group.
5. Results

The total number of schools represented in the graph is 65.
The ‘Other’ category contains the following languages: Ambonese, Cape Verdean, Danish, French, Iraqi, Russian, Serbian and/or Bosnian, Romani, Spanish, and Swahili.

English at school

Figure 5e shows the number of schools that do and do not teach English according to the information gathered from the questionnaire as well as an estimated count of the total number of remaining schools that do and do not teach English according to information gathered from the internet.

![Figure 5e: Distribution of PrO-schools in the Netherlands according to the provision of English](image)

A total of 41 respondents chose to further specify their answer to the question about English being a part of the curriculum or not. The majority of the comments relate to the number of hours per week spent on English and English being an optional/compulsory subject. Most schools seem to spend one hour per week on English; only a few spend two or more hours per week on the subject. However, it is not always clear whether this applies to LSE, HSE, or both, or whether the subject is optional or compulsory.
5.1.3. Comparative analyses

5.1.3.1. English YES

Type of implementation
There are different ways in which English can be implemented. The options were: (1) English as a separate subject, (2) English as a module within another subject, and (3) Other; please specify. The question was answered by 46 AVO-teachers, representing a total number of 43 schools. Table 5.3 shows the distribution of the different types of implementation.

Table 5.3: The types of implementation of English and their frequencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of implementation</th>
<th>Number of schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Separate subject</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated subject (within other subject)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: workshop</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>43</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Level of implementation
Table 5.4 shows the distribution of schools according to the level of implementation (i.e., LSE, HSE, or both levels). Due to ambiguous information from the same schools the total number of usable questionnaires was 67.
### Table 5.4: The levels of implementation of English and their frequencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of implementation</th>
<th>Number of schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Only LSE</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only HSE</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both LSE and HSE</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>67</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Teaching methods used

Table 5.5 presents a list of methods in alphabetical order that was compiled with the information from 46 AVO-teachers at 43 schools. Note that some schools may use more than one method; the total number of methods does thus not equal 43. The total number of methods used is 20. They are used on 71 occasions.

The teachers were asked to assess their own as well as their pupils’ experiences with the PrO-method *Let’s Get Started*. As there were three incomplete questionnaires the number of responses to this question is 21. The teacher assessment is shown in Table 5.6. There were five answer options, four of which were selected as an answer. The fifth option, *mostly negative*, was never chosen. The estimated pupil assessment is shown in Table 5.7. There were four answer options, two of which were selected as an answer. The other two options, *not enjoyable to work with* and *very challenging and informative: a success* were never chosen.
### Table 5.5: List of methods used at PrO-schools in alphabetical order

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Publisher/Description</th>
<th>Target group</th>
<th>Freq.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Anglia</td>
<td>International network</td>
<td>“Young children”</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Clips</td>
<td>EPN</td>
<td>VMBO + LWOO</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Go For It! Super Lite</td>
<td>ThiemeMeulenhoff</td>
<td>VMBO-B + LWOO</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Let’s Fly</td>
<td>N.i.a.*</td>
<td>N.i.a.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Material developed by school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Method Primary Education (unknown)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Primary Education</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Method Primary Education</td>
<td></td>
<td>Primary Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Bubbles</td>
<td>ThiemeMeulenhoff</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Hello World/Hello You</td>
<td>Malmberg</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Just Do It</td>
<td>ThiemeMeulenhoff</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Real English/Let’s Do It</td>
<td>ThiemeMeulenhoff</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The Team</td>
<td>Noordhoff</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- New Interface</td>
<td>ThiemeMeulenhoff</td>
<td>BaVo + VMBO</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Nice To Meet You</td>
<td>Uitg. Angerenstein</td>
<td>MBO</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Picture Dictionary</td>
<td>Online software</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- PrOmotie – Let’s Get Started</td>
<td>Edu’Actief</td>
<td>PrO</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Rosetta’s Stone</td>
<td>Online Language</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Course</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Stepping Stones</td>
<td>Noordhoff</td>
<td>VMBO + LWOO</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Steps</td>
<td>Noordhoff</td>
<td>VMBO-B + LWOO</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Viguurs</td>
<td>N.i.a.</td>
<td>N.i.a.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Xchange</td>
<td>EPN</td>
<td>VMBO</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*N.i.a.: No information available*
Table 5.6 shows the assessment of the PrO-method *Let’s Get Started*.

*Table 5.6: Teacher assessment ‘Let’s Get Started’*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher assessment <em>Let’s Get Started</em></th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mostly negative</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither positive nor negative</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly positive</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very positive</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>21</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.7 shows the AVO-teachers’ estimated pupil assessment of the method.

*Table 5.7: Pupil assessment ‘Let’s Get Started’ according to AVO-teachers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher assessment <em>Let’s Get Started</em></th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some sections are good</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most sections are good</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>21</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Time of introduction**

32 school management members of a total of 32 schools that teach English were asked about the time of and reasons for the introduction of the subject into the curriculum. The time of introduction is shown in Figure 5f.
The reasons for the introduction are listed in Table 5.8. Some schools mentioned multiple reasons; thus, the total number of reasons does not equal 32.

Table 5.8: The introduction of English into the curriculum: motivations and frequencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation</th>
<th>Freq.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On pupil’s and parents’ request</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social relevance/Internationalisation</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development self-esteem and independence building pupil</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating the idea of a “real” secondary school</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AKA / MBO trend</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status among pupil’s peer group</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language use ICT</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange with foreign school</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. RESULTS

5.1.3.2. English NO

Pupil indications
AVO-teachers at schools that do not teach English were asked about indications as to whether or not their pupils express the wish to learn English at school. Although the number of responses to this question was rather small \((N = 11)\), the answer was unanimously ‘yes’. The following question relates to the future of English at the 11 schools mentioned above. Table 5.9 shows the AVO-teachers’ predictions.

*Table 5.9: The future of English at school according to AVO-teachers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status quo</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concrete plans</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussed but no concrete plans</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No plans</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The English skills of AVO-teachers
Finally, the teachers were required to give an indication of the level of their English skills. There were three options, two of which were selected as an answer. The option *No, my English language skills are not sufficient* was not chosen. The answers are shown in Table 5.10.

*Table 5.10: AVO-teachers’ self-reported English skills*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sufficient</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Motivations and predictions

School management members of schools that do not teach English (N = 4) were asked about the school’s motivations for not introducing English into the curriculum. The result was four different responses: (1) the topic has never been discussed, (2) Dutch is sufficient and challenging enough, (3) a lack of teachers’ English skills, and (4) recent educational innovations did not allow for any additional changes. When asked to give a 5-year forecast with regard to the introduction of English into the curriculum, one respondent assumed that the subject would not be introduced whereas the other two assumed that it would “due to the need for educational diversity”. The fourth respondent’s answer did not relate to the question and was deleted.

5.1.4. Statistical analyses

In order to uncover potential associations between the schools that do and do not teach English, as well as differences within those groups, four statistical analyses are done. The statistical measure used is a Chi-Square analysis. The alpha-level is set at .05, which is conventional within the social sciences.

1. Location

The first question is related to potential associations between the location of the schools and the teaching of English. One hypothesis is that cities (i.e., places with more than 100,000 inhabitants) are more ‘international’ than towns (i.e., places with less than 100,000 inhabitants) hence more experienced where contact with the English language is concerned. This aspect is related to cities usually housing more non-Dutch speaking inhabitants, which could theoretically lead to an overrepresentation of smaller towns in the list of schools that do not teach English.

Table 5.11 shows an overview of the total number of schools in three location categories as well as the percentage of the total number of schools and the number of schools in that particular category. It gives an impression of the general distribution of schools that do and do not teach English relative to their location.
Table 5.11: English teaching and location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Total nr. of schools</th>
<th>Total % of English schools</th>
<th>% of Rep. English total schools</th>
<th>% of % of Rep. English total schools</th>
<th>% of % of Rep. English total schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Randstad*</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>83.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cities</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>65.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towns</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>68.1</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>51.2</td>
<td>75.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>166</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>74.6</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, and Utrecht

A Chi-Square analysis is done to see whether or not these two factors are associated in any way, in other words, whether or not the location of a school can inform about the teaching of English in that particular location. The analysis showed that such is not the case as the outcome was not significant $\chi^2 (1) = .4$, $p = .50$. Thus, there are no significant differences between the teaching of English in respective locations.

2. Denomination

The second question is related to potential associations between the various denominations and the teaching of English. The aim is to find out whether one or more denomination/s are overrepresented in the list of schools that do not teach English. Table 5.12 shows an overview of the total number of schools in five denomination categories as well as the percentage of the total number of schools and the number of schools in that particular category. It gives an impression of the general distribution of schools that do and do not teach English relative to their denomination. Note that the denominations of all schools (including those who did not participate in the questionnaire) are included. However, due to unclear information about certain schools’ denomination the numbers in the table are the reported numbers; the real numbers may vary slightly.
5. Results

Table 5.12: English teaching and denomination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Denomination</th>
<th>Rep. % of total</th>
<th>% of English total YES</th>
<th>Rep. % of total</th>
<th>% of English total NO</th>
<th>Rep. % of total</th>
<th>% of English total UNKN.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>total nr. schools</td>
<td>cat.</td>
<td></td>
<td>total nr. schools</td>
<td>cat.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public (non-rel.)</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>42.8</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>73.2</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prot.-Christ.</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>87.2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>74.1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reform.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Othera</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>76.2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>166</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>74.6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a E.g., interconfessional education

Besides the fact that little is known about the reformational schools (there is no information for 62.5% of the schools in this category), the data do not suggest any major differences between the different denominations. However, it is not possible to perform statistical analysis as the nature of the data does not allow the application of appropriate statistical measures.

3. Pupil population

The third question is related to potential associations between pupil population and the teaching of English. One hypothesis is that schools with a predominantly non-Dutch pupil population (i.e., pupils that have a language other than Dutch as their mother tongue) may have opted to leave out English from their curricula, as the learning of Dutch may receive priority. The aim is to discover whether the predominantly non-Dutch schools are overrepresented in the list of schools that do not teach English. Table 5.13 shows the total number of schools that do and do not teach English relative to each of the three population categories.
Table 5.13: English teaching and pupil population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Total nr. of schools</th>
<th>% of total English</th>
<th>% of total YES</th>
<th>% of total NO</th>
<th>% of total English</th>
<th>% of total YES</th>
<th>% of total NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 70% NL/Fr as MT</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>51.8</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-70% NL/Fr as MT</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 30% NL/Fr as MT</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>85</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>69</strong></td>
<td><strong>81.2</strong></td>
<td>16</td>
<td><strong>18.8</strong></td>
<td><strong>-</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data suggest that there is no tendency that predominantly Dutch PrO-schools teach English more often than non-Dutch PrO-schools. However, it is not possible to statistically confirm this claim as the nature of the data does not allow the application of appropriate statistical measures.

4. Type of school

The fourth and final question is related to potential associations between the type of school and the teaching of English. One hypothesis is that PrO-schools that are subdivisions of a comprehensive school with other educational levels (i.e., levels at which English is compulsory) are in some way influenced by these levels, for example by cooperating with them (e.g., VMBO). The aim is to discover whether there are significantly more independent PrO-schools in the list of schools that do not teach English. Table 5.14 shows the total number of schools that do and do not teach English relative to the type of school.
### Table 5.14: English teaching and type of school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School type</th>
<th>Total nr. of schools</th>
<th>% of total YES</th>
<th>% of total English</th>
<th>% of total NO</th>
<th>% of total English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>50.6</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subd. of compr. school</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part of ed. org.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>166</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>74.7</strong></td>
<td><strong>29</strong></td>
<td><strong>17.4</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A Chi-Square analysis was done to see whether or not these two factors are associated in any way, in other words, whether or not the type of school can inform about the teaching of English. The analysis showed that such is not the case as the outcome was not significant $\chi^2 (1) = .02$, $p = .88$. Thus, there are no significant differences between the teaching of English at the different types of schools.
5.2. Results of the PQ

5.2.1. Introduction

To facilitate insight in the results there are two issues that need to be addressed. Firstly, the original questionnaire is written in Dutch, as was the TSMQ. However, the language use in the current questionnaire has been considerably adapted to a rather specific target group. In translating certain sections of the questionnaire (e.g., answer options and personal comments) an attempt is made to keep the style of the translated English version parallel to the original Dutch version. However, due to linguistic differences the use of language in the English translation may differ (i.e., be more formal) from the Dutch version. Secondly, all respondents completed the questionnaire by clicking the KLAAR (‘Done’) button at the end. However, this does not guarantee completion of all questions as some of them were not compulsory. Therefore, the number of respondents may vary per analysis. If this is the case it will be indicated.

The results of the PQ are structured as follows. Firstly, an overview of the descriptive statistics is presented. Secondly, the respondents are divided into two groups depending on whether or not they believe English is a useful language to know: (1) YES and (2) NO. Thirdly, the respondents are divided into two groups depending on whether or not they receive English education at school: (1) English YES and (2) English NO. Finally, statistical analyses are done in order to uncover potential associations between factors relating to the learning and teaching of English.

5.2.2. Descriptive statistics

Respondents

Table 5.15 shows the distribution of the respondents according to location, age, grade, and gender. The total number of respondents is 394. The number of schools represented in the study is 12 and equals the number of locations. The mean number of respondents per school is 32.8. The mean age of the respondents is 14.2.
Table 5.15: Respondents categorised according to location, age, grade, and gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Total number of respondents</th>
<th>% of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cities &gt; 100,000 inh.</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>25.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towns &lt; 100,000 inh.</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>74.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>394</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (M = 14.2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-13</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>33.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-15</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>51.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-18</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>394</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>33.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>30.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 or up</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>35.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>394</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>57.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>42.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>394</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2.3. Knowing English: useful or useless?

Table 5.16 shows the distribution of pupils who do and do not think English is a useful language to know.

5.2.3.1. YES – Knowing English is useful

96% of the respondents believe that knowing English is useful. Their motivations are shown in Figure 5g and Table 5.17. There were four answer options (selecting more than one answer was allowed) (see Figure 5g) as well as room for additional comments (see Table 5.17). The figure represents the total number of times that a particular answer was selected. Thus, the numbers in the figure do not represent the total number of respondents.
Table 5.16: The usefulness of knowing English according to PQ respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Useful</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The question was answered by 365 respondents, all of whom selected at least one answer. A total of 128 respondents used the opportunity to share their additional thoughts on the matter. However, only relevant answers were used for categorisation (i.e., repetitions of previously given answers and comments that did not relate to the topic were deleted), which resulted in a total number of 53 comments.

Figure 5g: Distribution of motivations for the usefulness of knowing English
Table 5.17: Motivations for the usefulness of English: additional comments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English is a must nowadays: it is the language of the world</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English is everywhere: it is useful in many different situations</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication with foreign people in Holland</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication with foreign friends/family</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further education requires English</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>53</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2.3.1. NO – Knowing English is not useful

4% of the respondents do not believe that knowing English is useful. Their motivations are shown in Figure 5h. There were five answer options (selecting more than one answer was allowed) as well as the opportunity for additional comments. The question was answered by all 14 respondents. Although five respondents took the opportunity to share some of their additional thoughts, none of these related to the actual topic. Therefore, they are deleted from analysis.

![Motivations for the uselessness of knowing English](image)

Figure 5h: Distribution of the motivations for the uselessness of knowing English
5.2.4. English at school

Table 5.18 shows the number of respondents that do and do not receive English education at school.

Table 5.18: Respondents categorised according to English education at school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English education</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2.4.1. English at school - YES

Respondents who receive English education ($N = 220$) were asked five questions regarding the English lessons, the results of which are presented in Tables 5.19 to 5.23.

English class – opinions and motivations

Table 5.19 shows the respondents’ opinions regarding the English lessons. Their motivations were analysed and categorised (see Table 5.20); irrelevant answers (i.e., repetitions of previously given answers and comments that did not relate to the topic) were deleted. Many respondents gave more than one motivation, which were counted separately. Thus, the total number of comments does not equal the total number of respondents.
5. RESULTS

Table 5.19: Respondents’ opinions regarding the English lessons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I enjoy the lessons</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not enjoy the lessons</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I sometimes enjoy the lessons</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>220</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.20: Motivations of the opinions regarding the English lessons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Motivation</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I enjoy English class</td>
<td>It is important for the future because English is the world language</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find it informative/I learn a lot</td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important for when you visit another country</td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like the English language/English is a beautiful language</td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find it easy/ I’m good at it</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teacher is good/funny</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The material is good to work with</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I get to work independently on the computer</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We get to work in small groups</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not enjoy English class</td>
<td>I find it difficult/I’m not good at it</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is boring</td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teacher is boring/not good</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m Dutch</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The material is not good to work with</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t think it’s important</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’d rather learn another language</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I sometimes enjoy English class</td>
<td>I find it very useful but difficult</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It depends on the type of lesson/teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t always feel like it</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Activities during English class and self-rated progress in English language skills

Tables 5.21 and 5.22 show the activities during the English lessons. All combinations with regard to the four skills are shown in Table 5.21 in order of frequency, as there were, of course, different combinations possible. Table 5.22 shows the learning methods used in English class.

Table 5.21: Activities during class categorised into four skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill/s</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All skills</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading + Writing</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking + Listening</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking + Writing</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking + Writing + Listening</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening + Reading + Writing</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening + Writing</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking + Reading + Writing</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening + Reading</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking + Listening + Reading</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>220</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.22: Learning method: book or computer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Book</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evenly balanced</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>220</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.23 shows the respondents’ self-rated progress in English language skills.

*Table 5.23: Self-rated progress in respondents’ English language skills*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-rated progress</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, I can see progress</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, I cannot see progress</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>220</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**5.2.4.2. English at school - NO**

Respondents who do not receive English education ($N = 174$) were asked whether or not they would be interested in learning the language at school. The results are shown in Table 5.24.

*Table 5.24: Learning English at school: Yes or No?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, I would like to learn English</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, I would not like to learn English</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>174</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Results

5.2.5. Statistical analyses

In order to learn more about potential associations between factors related to the learning and teaching of English, statistical analyses are carried out for five questions: (1) the association between gender and the usefulness of English, (2) the association between gender and taking pleasure in the English lessons, (3) the association between the teaching of English and finding it useful, (4) the association between taking pleasure in the English lessons and finding it useful, and (5) the association between the way of learning English and taking pleasure in the lessons. Furthermore, the connection between the pupils’ future job plans and the relevance of learning English is analysed.

The statistical measure used is a Chi-Square analysis. The alpha-level is again set at .05.

1. Gender and the usefulness of knowing English

The question of whether or not gender has an influence on finding the English language useful is investigated. It could be hypothesised that one of the sexes is more strongly inclined to believe that knowing English is useful. A Chi-Square analysis revealed that the association between gender and the usefulness of English was significant $\chi^2 (1) = 4.7$, $p = 0.03$. Thus, a pupil’s gender and the usefulness of knowing English are related in the sense that the percentage of girls that find English useful is higher than the percentage of boys that do. Figure 5i show the observed values that were used in the analysis.

![Gender and the usefulness of English](image)

Figure 5i: Gender and the usefulness of English: absolute numbers
2. Gender and enjoying the English lessons

The question of whether or not gender and enjoying the English lessons are associated is investigated. It could be hypothesised that there are differences between the sexes where enjoying the English lessons are concerned. If there is a significant difference this could be considered in, for example, the designing and evaluation of teaching methods. A Chi-Square analysis revealed that the association was significant $\chi^2 (1) = 3.8$, $p = .05$. Thus, gender and enjoying the English lessons are related in the sense that girls seem to enjoy the lessons more than boys do. Figure 5j shows the observed values that were used in the analysis.

![Gender and enjoying the English lessons](image)

**Figure 5j:** Gender and enjoying the English lessons: absolute numbers

3. Educational environment and the usefulness of knowing English

In the context of the study we can assume that pupils are influenced by their environment (see Chapter 2.2.1.2). Therefore, it could be hypothesised that the educational environment of a pupil (in this case the presence or absence of English teaching) may influence his or her opinion about the usefulness of the subject. A Chi-Square analysis revealed that association between educational environment and the usefulness of English was not significant $\chi^2 (1) = .4$, $p = .52$. Thus, in this case, the educational environment does not have an influence on the pupils’ opinion about the usefulness of English. Figure 5k shows the observed values that were used in the analysis.
4. Enjoying the English lessons and the usefulness of knowing English

It could be hypothesised that pupils who do not enjoy English lessons are more inclined to believe that English is not useful. A Chi-Square analysis revealed that association between educational environment and the usefulness of English was significant $\chi^2 (1) = 5.7$, $p = .01$. Thus, enjoying the English lessons and pupils’ opinions about the usefulness of the language are related. Figure 5l shows the observed values that were used in the analysis. It should be noted that option *I sometimes enjoy English class* ($N = 31$) was not part of the analysis. Therefore, the total number of responses in this analysis is 189.
5. Activities during the English lessons and enjoying the English lessons

To determine whether or not there is a significantly favourite or least favourite skill within the language learning process (i.e., speaking, writing, listening, and reading) the following table (Table 5.25) in which the four skills are linked to the respondents’ rating of the English lessons is constructed.

A Chi-Square analysis revealed that association between the activities during the English lessons and enjoying the English lessons was not significant $\chi^2 (1) = 5.5, p = .14$. Thus, it cannot be claimed that the presence or absence of one or more skills has an influence on the pupils’ rating of the lessons.
5. RESULTS

Table 5.25: The activities during English class related to the classes being enjoyed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>SOMETIMES</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S + L</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S + W</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S + R</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R + W</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L + R</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L + W</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S + W + L</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S + L + R</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S + R + W</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L + R + W</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALL</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 122 67 31 220
6. Future career plans and the relevance of learning English

Respondents were requested to report any post-school career plans. 272 respondents (69%) mentioned at least one potential career. To find out whether or not there are professional groups that particularly appreciate the usefulness of knowing English with respect to a future job the responses were compared to the responses regarding the usefulness of knowing English. Firstly, the outcome of this analysis is summarised in Table 5.26 in order of frequency of professional group. The column *Freq. Job* lists the number of times “Future job” was chosen as a reason for the usefulness of knowing English. Secondly, the professional groups with more than 20 representatives (*N* = 6) were analysed by means of a Chi-Square analysis, which revealed that the association between professional group and the relevance of learning English was not significant $\chi^2 (5) = 10.7, p = .06$. However, there does seem to be a tendency towards certain professional groups valuing the knowledge of English in their job more than others. The observed values used in analysis are shown in Figure 5m.

![Graph showing English and its importance for future work](image)

**Figure 5m**: English and its importance for work according to the six largest professional groups
### Table 5.26: Professional groups related to the relevance of English for future job

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work field</th>
<th>Total freq.</th>
<th>Freq. Job</th>
<th>% of total freq.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child/Maternity/Day/Elderly care</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>57.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car/motor mechanic, service station</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>38.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel and catering industry</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>28.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hair/nail stylist, beautician</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>37.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal/electrotechnology, carpentry</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail, supply/stock room</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>38.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gardening</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>43.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building/painting industry</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal care</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police/Fire brigade/Land &amp; Air force</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further education</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lorry/tractor driver</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>45.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showbusiness</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baker/bakery</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agribusiness</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surveillance</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing industry</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designing/architecture</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun fair</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaming industry</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleaning agency</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fashion</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreter</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery service</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. DISCUSSION

In this section the results of the study are interpreted and discussed in the order in which they were previously presented: (1) the results of the TSMQ and (2) the results of the PQ.

6.1. TSMQ

When looking at the results it becomes immediately clear that the vast majority of PrO-schools in the Netherlands seem to be teaching English in one way or another. Both the information gathered directly from schools through the questionnaires and the information about the remaining schools gathered from the Internet indicates that English education is a topic that is very much alive within PrO. However, by establishing this the investigation is not completed, rather the contrary. The outcomes of the questionnaire lead to the conclusion that teaching English is not simply a matter of ‘yes’ or ‘no’. The current state of affairs as reported shows discrepancies and ambiguity, in some cases even within the same school. When the answers of two representatives from the same school did not match they were deleted from statistical analyses. However, at the same time these discrepancies, as well as those found in the additional comments by respondents from other schools, can offer insight into the situation concerning the implementation of English at that particular school.

Although it seems to be clear among colleagues at the same school whether or not English is part of the curriculum, there turns out to be much discrepancies regarding the implementation of the subject. The first example is the level at which English is taught. One respondent claims it is taught at the LSE level whereas his/her colleague at the same school maintains that it is not. Another respondent claims in an additional comment to be unsure whether or not English is part of the curriculum at the LSE level. The issue relates directly to a second example, which is found in additional comments regarding English being compulsory or optional. Many combinations are possible. The majority of schools that teach English offer it to both LSE and HSE level. At some schools English is compulsory at LSE, HSE, or both levels. At some schools it is optional at LSE, HSE, or both levels (e.g., for those who follow the AKA course), which seems to fit into the
competency-based and individual learning trend. At some schools, however, teachers have the option to teach English. This technically means that pupils are dependent on the decision of their teacher, in the case of which it would be interesting to know what this decision is based upon. If some pupils do and some pupils do not receive English education at the same level within the same school, regardless of whether they want to learn English, an arbitrary and therefore unfair situation may arise.

A third example concerns the methods that are used. At a number of occasions two AVO-teachers at one school mention different methods or additional methods that are not mentioned by the other representative. There are also teachers who claim not to know which methods their colleagues use.

The methods

Overall, the use of methods shows a great amount of inconsistency. As there is no information available regarding their use as yet, it is impossible to draw any conclusions as to the quality and effectiveness of English education in these cases. However, the lack of suitable material to choose from does lead to the use of methods that are aimed at different target groups. This is not to say that there is a causal relationship between these methods and the quality of English education, as there are many other factors that play a role (e.g., teacher and pupil motivation and attitudes). However, considering that PrO-pupils require a specific type of education due to their cognitive abilities, appropriate methodology is considered essential, which is confirmed by the development of educational material in other areas specifically aimed at PrO (i.e., PrOnomie).

As demonstrated by the results, the most frequently used method is Edu’Actief’s Let’s Get Started ($N = 24$). This is not unexpected as it is the only PrO-method available. The largest peak in the introduction of English can be seen in the category Between the summers of 2006 and 2008, which coincides with the publication of Let’s Get Started in 2006. However, the use of Let’s Get Started comprises only 5% of the total number of methods that are used within PrO ($N = 20$). This number shows the variety in the use of English methods, which may be partly due to the relatively recent publication of Let’s Get Started. Another explanation is that English education at PrO, being a relatively ‘young’ development, finds itself in a state of experimentation, which causes disorder.
The overall AVO-judgments of the method (both the teacher and estimated pupil assessments) are slightly more positive than negative, which confirms that it is impossible to claim a causal relationship between method and quality. However, it should be noted that the introduction of *Let’s Get Started* occurred relatively recently. Therefore, schools that use the method may still be in a transitional phase in which they are discovering the best way of implementation for their purposes. The judgment of the material may have been influenced by this process. Furthermore, the recent introduction may be part of the reason for the great variety of methods in use at the moment of writing. Schools may be using methods aimed at other target groups that are in fact well-received by pupils and seem to be effective. Others may be searching for a method to either replace an old method or to introduce English into the curriculum for the first time. There are also schools that, at the time of investigation, were planning on introducing *Let’s Get Started* in the academic year 2009-2010. However, at the moment of writing there simply is not enough information available to schools so as to make an informed decision about which methods have proven to be successful, and how ‘successful’ is defined. The introduction of *Let’s Get Started* might cause the numbers to show an entirely different pattern in the near future.

**The reasons**

The most frequently heard argument for the introduction of English is that it happened on request of both the pupils and their parents. Some respondents comment that introducing English would not have been their choice, but did not motivate this opinion. The pupils’ and parents’ reasons for pleading for English education are most likely a mix of the arguments listed in Table 5.8 (among others). The most likely explanation of the frequent references to the parents’ involvement is that they want their child to be able to follow the broadest education program possible at their own level. However, there is another explanation that is linked to the fourth argument on the list: creating the idea of a ‘real’ school. As mentioned in Chapter 2.3 PrO-schools generally do not have a ‘high’ status. Teaching English might be part of a school’s way to improve their image; wanting to learn English might be a pupil’s way to improve theirs (the sixth argument on the list). In the same vein, pleading for English education could be a parent’s way to ‘create the idea of a real school’. In this case, image is prioritised over content. The fact that this argument is mentioned as frequently as *Developing self-esteem and independence* building pupil suggests that image indeed plays an important role.
Schools that do not teach English also have various reasons. The first is that it has never been discussed, which could be due to the reasons mentioned in Chapter 2.2: People with learning difficulties do not have the ability and/or will not need English. On the other hand, all schools that do not teach English indicate that their pupils have expressed the motivation to learn English. However, only four of these schools have concrete plans to introduce the subject; the remaining seven do not. It could be argued that if the common goal of PrO-schools is to provide their pupils with individualised education and their pupils have expressed the wish to learn English, these schools are lacking in the provision of this kind of education. The second argument is that Dutch is considered to be sufficient. The school that selected this answer does not belong in the category of schools with a predominantly non-Dutch pupil population that may prioritise the teaching of Dutch rather than adding another ‘foreign language’, but to the ‘predominantly Dutch’-category. Thus, their reasoning may be similar to the commonly held belief discussed in Chapter 2.2.1.1. The third argument is a lack of teachers’ English skills. However, the majority of AVO-teachers do estimate their English skills to be sufficient, which suggests that the argument only applies to this particular school. The fourth argument is an ‘overload’ of educational innovations that did not leave room for any additional changes, which involves one particular school dealing with its curriculum and thus lays outside of the realms of this study.
6.2. PQ

In discussing the results of the PQ it is important to keep the following in mind. A pupil’s judgment can be a combination of arguments and developments that are interconnected. Factors such as liking or disliking lessons, a teacher or the material, self-confidence, and environment can all play a role in a learner’s language development as well as a pupil’s judgment of, in this case, (a) the usefulness of knowing English and (b) enjoying or not enjoying the English lessons. Factors can also influence each other and thereby form an intricate dynamic system of interconnected factors (De Bot, Lowie & Verspoor, 2007). For example, if a pupil does not relate well to the teacher he might not be motivated to learn anything from him, which may cause him to perform poorly and/or claim that he does not believe in the usefulness of knowing English, whereas he might have had another opinion had he liked his teacher. Indeed, statistical analysis confirmed this. Thus, it is impossible to determine which one of the interconnected reasons is the ‘real’ reason. However, there are certain reliable patterns that emerge when taking a closer look at the results.

The usefulness of English - YES

Evidently, the vast majority of PrO-pupils believe that it is useful for them to know English. Girls generally seem to value the knowledge of English more than boys: 99% of the girls believe knowing English is useful, whereas slightly under 95% of the boys do. The distribution of the sexes in the study corresponds to the national distribution (40% girls; 60% boys) (“Laagste vorm”, 2009). Thus, girls valuing English more than boys could be a general trend. One of the reasons could be that English has more status among girls than boys. However, at this point this is only speculative.

The omnipresence of English, particularly on a global level (holidays, the number of English speakers worldwide) but also on a personal level (future job, TV/Internet/games), seems to be the main reason for valuing English. The majority of this category (309; 81.3%) believes that English is useful in case of going abroad on holiday or a family visit. This is further explained by a large amount of additional comments:
“Omdat als je naar een land gaat waar ze Engels praten en als je het niet kan zou het niet zo goed zijn want dan kan je geen vragen stellen.”

“If you go to a country where they speak English and you can’t, it would be bad, because you wouldn’t be able to ask questions.”

“Naa meest al wel handig voor alles want overal kom je wel eens Engels tegen!”

“Well it is just very convenient because English is everywhere!”

“Het is een wereldtaal. Als je verdwaalt ben en die mensen spreken jou taal niet dan kan je het in het Engels vragen.”

“It is a world language. If you’re lost and those people don’t speak your language you can ask in English.”

The opposite (i.e., foreign people in the Netherlands) is frequently mentioned as well:

“Als je iemand tegenkomt op straat en die praat met je maar die person is niet Nederlands.”

“If you run into someone on the streets who talks to you but that person isn’t Dutch.”

“Bij voorbeeld als iemand die Engels kan en hij weet de weg niet en jij kan Engels, dan kun je erover praten en de weg wijzen.”

“For example, if someone who knows English doesn’t know the way and you can speak English, you can talk about it and give directions.”

“Ehm er kan wel eens een Engelsman komen en dan moeten wij proberen om met hem te praten in het Engels.”

“Ehm there could be an Englishman one day and then we have to try and talk to him in English.”

“Als je een Engels woord hoort dat je weet wat het is.”

“That when you hear an English word you know what it is.”

“Als er misschien iemand niet Nederlands of Frys kan praten, en Engels is een wereldtaal.”

“Maybe if someone can’t speak Dutch or Frisian, and English is a world language.”

The answer option Everyone can speak English is the least frequently chosen option, which might be due to the absence of large amounts of English speakers in the respondents’ close environment. However, the most frequently mentioned additional comment is directly related to it:
“Nou Engels is handig, dat kan de hele wereld.”
“Well English is useful, the whole world knows it.”
“Engels is erg belangrijk voor iedereen.”
“English is very important for everyone.”
“Ja want het is belangrijk dat je Engels kan want vroeg of laat dan moet je Engels praten.”
“It is important to know English because you will have to use it sooner or later.”
“Engels is de wereldtaal en ik vind dat iedereen het moet kunnen leren!
“English is the world language and I think everyone should be able to learn it!”
“Het is de belangrijkste taal van de wereld!”
“It is the most important language in the world!”

The frequency with which the answer options *Future job* and *TV/Internet/Games* are chosen (159; and 158 respectively) shows the importance of English on a more personal level. As shown in Table 5.26, the largest future work fields are care, hair/beauty, hotel/catering, mechanics, retail, and technology. In the fields of care and technology the interest in English seems to be the largest as more than 50% of the representatives indicate they might need it in their job. In addition to future careers, TV, Internet, and games play a large role in the life of many youngsters, which is confirmed by the results. Not only do the comments of the teachers in the TSMQ lead to believe that they consider ICT to be an important reason for teaching English to PrO-pupils, the pupils themselves find technology important as well:

“Ik leer het door TV kijken met ondertiteling!”
“I’m learning by watching TV with subtitles!”
“Vidio voor Engels en boeken die beter zijn. En Engelse games dat je de taal tog leert.”
“Video for English and better books. And English games so you can learn the language anyway.”
“Engelse muziek en liedjes vertalen is leuk om te leren.”
“English music and translating songs is good for learning.”

The need for English in further education is mentioned relatively infrequently, but this could be due to the fact that only a small number of pupils at this stage of their PrO-career know they will continue with further education. Having learned English at primary school, on the other hand, is mentioned:
"Ik heb Engels van me oude meester geleerd."
"My old teacher taught me English."
"Ik had Engels op me vorige school de basisschool."
"I had English at primary school."

The usefulness of English - NO
It is important to keep in mind that the results of this category represent only a small group. Therefore, the numbers are not to be generalised to a larger sample.

The majority of respondents in this category argue that they will stay in the Netherlands where Dutch is assumed to be sufficient:

"Ik blijf in dit land warom moet ik Engels kunnen, ik ben een Nederlander."
"I'm staying in this country, why should I know English, I'm Dutch."

This argument is the opposite of what was stated by the YES-group, namely that English is omnipresent in the Netherlands as well (although being a non-English speaking country) and therefore important to learn. A small number of respondents claim that it is not useful because they will not need it in their future job. An important part of a PrO-career is leaving school with a job, or the prospect of one. The results indicate that they find their future job important, but do not link this directly to a need for English knowledge. Others claim that TV and Internet teach them all the English they need to know, which is contrary to those who want to know English so that they can understand the most frequently used language in these mediums. It is clear that these pupils consider TV, Internet, and games to be important, but that their interest in English stays within the realms of ICT. Finally, a number of respondents motivated their opinion with learning arguments: they do not like learning languages, and/or believe Dutch is difficult enough.
English at school

56% of the respondents that receive English education claim to enjoy the lessons, 30% claims to not enjoy the lessons, and 14% claims to sometimes enjoy the lessons. The most frequently mentioned reason for enjoying the English lessons is *It is important for my future because English is the world language*. There seems to be a clear relationship between finding English important and motivation, a combination resulting in enjoying the English lessons, which was proven by a significant outcome of the statistical analysis. Furthermore, the fact that many pupils find the lessons informative proves to be an important motivator as well: a vast majority claims to have noticed progress in their English language skills as a result of the English lessons. Among those who notice progress are non-enjoyers as well, but they form a minority (17.6%). Quite surprisingly, aesthetics seem to be almost equally as important. Comments such as *I like the sound of English* and *English is a beautiful language* are not uncommon.

The most frequently mentioned reason for disliking the English lessons is *I find it difficult/I am not good at it*. There seems to be a clear relationship between the difficulty of the lessons and motivation, a combination resulting in disliking the English lessons. The fact that many pupils claim they find the lessons boring could be directly linked to the latter’s level of difficulty. Pupils might encounter problems that could result in decreased interest, leading to inactivity during the lessons. Due to having ‘nothing to do’ (i.e., a task that is meaningful to the pupil) they might perceive the lessons as boring. On the other hand, boredom can be a sign of tasks being too simple, which can lead to a similar process. The additional comments show that the latter is not uncommon either:

- “English should be a little more difficult, not too many easy questions.”
- “It shouldn’t be too easy. It should be a bit more difficult if you ask me.”

The most frequently mentioned reason for sometimes enjoying the English lessons is a combination of the reasons mentioned above: *I find it very useful but difficult*. It shows that pupils have made their decision as to the importance of English on a personal level, but are struggling with the means to achieve what is required.

The group of respondents can be divided into two categories: those who do not enjoy the English lessons mostly find the reason for their judgment on a personal level (e.g., whether or not they are
good at the subject) whereas those who do enjoy the lessons mostly have practical reasons (e.g., it is important because it is the world language). This can be explained by the fact that personal difficulties can prevent one from looking at the matter in a larger context.

The percentage of pupils that do not enjoy English is almost a third of the total number of English education receivers, which can be considered to be a rather large number given the overall enthusiasm about English. A reasonable explanation is the level of difficulty, which also applies to pupils in the *I find it useful but difficult* category. In this case there are two options: either the material is not suited for the target group (i.e., the level of the material is too high or too low) or a pupil’s abilities are such that English should not be part of their curriculum. Another explanation could be the way in which the language is taught. The results show a large number of possibilities, the most remarkable of which is *Speaking* being much more common than *Listening*. Given the high anxiety level that speaking an FL in front of a classroom often carries with it, it could be expected that *Listening* would be the preferred skill from a pedagogic standpoint. Particularly in the lower levels of education pupils still have to become familiar with the sounds of the new language. Indeed, the results show that *Speaking* is the only skill with as many ‘enjoyers’ as ‘non-enjoyers’ and seems to be the least enjoyed skill overall. It could explain why the number of pupils that find English difficult is relatively high, however, statistical analysis did not confirm this.

Furthermore, the vast majority of pupils are taught by means of a book. The use of a computer is much lower than what could be expected in a target group in which the use of computers is often seen as especially beneficial and an effective way of individualised learning. Since many pupils in this age group are familiar with the use of computers and many pupils in this target group have difficulty reading pure text, it could be expected from a teacher point of view that computer use would be more popular in the designing of the curriculum. Additional comments confirm this:

- “I would like it if I could do it on the computer.”
- “More computer work in English class!”
- “If possible, we could do the English lessons on the computer.”
- “Seeing it on a computer is easier than when it's in a book.”
The number of pupils that claim to find English lessons boring could potentially be reduced by the use of computers as there might also be a link between learning from a book and finding the lessons not only difficult, but boring as well. This is not to say that pupils should not learn from a book at all. However, if a higher level of effectiveness and pleasure in learning can be achieved, a more frequent use of the computer is worth considering. The fact that pupils in question have not commented on the matter could simply be due to learning from books at school being the default option. The latter could also be the reason for the infrequent use of computers from the teachers’ points of view.

As stated before, individualised learning may be especially relevant where language learning is concerned, which is confirmed by the results of the gender analysis. 67 respondents claim to not enjoy the lessons, 45 of whom are male (67.2%). It does not necessarily mean that males do not enjoy English as much as females, but, for example, that the methods that are used do not appeal to them as much as they do to girls. Again, the reason for not enjoying the lessons can be manifold. However, in terms of designing methods and curricula the gender aspect could be worth considering.

No English at school

The vast majority of respondents that do not receive English education (89%; 177) indicate that they would want to learn it at school. The most passionate reactions are listed below.

- “I would LOVE to learn English.”
- “WHEN ARE WE GOING TO LEARN ENGLISH AT SCHOOL, I HOPE SOON.”
- “I would really like to learn English. Can you please teach us.”
- “Tip for school: BUY ENGLISH LESSONS.”
- “Hello. Please teach us English so that I can talk to my family. P.S.: Please teach us English. Bye.”
Overall it can be concluded that the topic of teaching English at PrO is very much alive among practitioners and pupils alike. Their widely varying comments and opinions as well as the equally divergent situations at PrO-schools give the impression of a popular yet unorganised development. The latter could very well be the result of the relatively recent and intensified focus on special needs education and FL teaching to people with SEN. The rapid worldwide development of the popularity and use of the English language is unavoidably influencing people. If English is present in people’s lives in such a natural way it seems natural for those people to learn it in order to be able to ‘keep up’. Providing people with the opportunity to learn a language on an appropriate level is, however, easier said than done. Effectively transferring knowledge is a complicated task, especially without experience to draw on. In all levels of the Dutch educational system there are decades or even centuries of experience with FL teaching methodology (e.g., method development, teacher training) – except for PrO. Now that (foreign language) education for the academically less gifted as well as the development of new learning technologies have evolved relatively recently, it seems as if PrO has to catch up. It sometimes seems as if the practitioners are one step behind in this process. To pupils the presence and use of English is a given. They are well aware that Dutch is a small language that cannot always be used whereas English is a more frequently used language that may significantly facilitate communication with foreign people. Their comments suggest a certain degree of experience with Dutch being insufficient and English being a solution. Their reactions to learning the language are impressive: those who learn English at school are generally enthusiastic and eager to learn and those who do not learn English at school seem to be even more motivated. However, some teachers appear to be somewhat reserved and although their reasons are easy to explain, they are outdated. This does not apply to all PrO-teachers in the Netherlands; there are schools and practitioners who have enthusiastically and successfully implemented English in their curricula.

The outcomes also show that the majority of PrO-schools in the Netherlands have caught up and teach English in one way or another. They seem to be open to the wish of pupils and parents and realise the importance for the pupils. Some schools can present many examples of good practice; some have less positive experiences. One of the most remarkable findings, however, is
the discrepancy between and within schools regarding many facets of the implementation of English. The lack of consistency is best manifested in the variety of methods at ‘inappropriate’ levels that is used. This is not an indication of the quality of the English education as much as it is a confirmation of the inexperience and confusion within English teaching at PrO: the development still is in its infancy. The introduction of *Let’s Get Started* can be seen as the first step towards creating a knowledge base for future developments of English as a foreign language in PrO to draw from. There is still a lot of work that can be done in this area. For example, *Let’s Get Started* only covers three grades of PrO-education. Pupils who are capable of more should have the opportunity to continue. In this case, methods aimed at higher educational levels (e.g., VMBO) could be a solution, provided that they do connect to the PrO-pupil’s specific needs.

The fact that most schools (a) are currently experimenting with the implementation of English or (b) have implemented English into their curriculum leads to the question of why certain schools have no intention of introducing English. The specific characteristics of the schools (e.g., location, denomination) do not seem to determine the choice of teaching English. A number of reasons have been discussed. If these schools do not teach English because they believe it would be a ‘waste of time’ or that PrO-pupils do and will not need English, they are lacking in the provision of tailor-made education for their pupils, who have shown great interest and motivation. If these schools define ‘successful’ language learning only as the ability to retain new knowledge, other aspects of language learning (e.g., self-esteem development) are being overlooked. Furthermore, they fail to recognise the extent to which English is present in their pupils’ lives. Moreover, pupils often have an educational background in which English was included. They continue with further education in which English is a prerequisite more frequently, and the AKA-course requires knowledge of English too. In this sense, PrO-schools who do not teach English create an undesirable gap in the pupil’s educational career, which gives the schools yet another reason to consider the introduction of English.

PrO-education claims to follow the pupils and maximise their potential by giving them the opportunity to work with their abilities. The theoretical curricula are based on the regulations for *Basic Education*. It can be assumed that English is part of the present day’s PrO-pupils lives and therefore, it can be argued that it should be part of their common knowledge. Not only will it enrich their theoretical skills, the latter can also be of practical use in finding a job after PrO.
Obviously, not all pupils enjoy learning English. Although most of them claim that knowing English is useful, a rather large percentage of those who receive English education do not enjoy the lessons. This could be partly due to the use of inappropriate methodology and the experimental state the teaching of English at PrO-schools is often in. Of course, some pupils do not like learning languages in general; others do not see the need as they will always stay in the Netherlands. In some cases English can prove to be too difficult for the pupil. However, these examples should not be generalised to the entire pupil population by depriving those who do have the ability and want to learn English from the right to do so. These pupils should have the option to maximise their potential English talents.

Previous academic and empirical research as well as the outcome of the current study show that there is no medical reason to exclude PrO-pupils from the right to learn English. It is easy to explain how the ideas held by some practitioners have come about, however, anno 2009 it seems outdated to maintain these beliefs. Furthermore, an audience that shows so much motivation should be worked with rather than denied. It seems that most PrO-schools in the Netherlands do; those that do not are advised to reconsider, find out what their pupils want and adapt their curriculum to fit their needs.
SUMMARY (ENGLISH)

The study investigates the status quo of the implementation of English at PrO-schools (secondary education facilities that cater for pupils who have learning difficulties due to a sub-average IQ of between 55 and 80) in the Netherlands. Furthermore, both the views and opinions of the practitioners and the pupils are investigated. The research method for both target groups is a questionnaire.

The outcomes of the investigation show that the teaching and learning of English is a topic that is very much alive within both levels of PrO. Firstly, English is taught at the majority of PrO-schools for a number of reasons, the most frequently mentioned reason being the request of both pupils and parents. The way in which English is taught varies greatly both between and within schools, which is mainly reflected in the large number of different methods aimed at different target groups (e.g., VMBO) that is used. The method that is specifically developed for PrO by educational publisher Edu’Actief, Let’s Get Started, is the most frequently used method. However, further research is required to determine the effectiveness and reception of this method.

Secondly, the majority of the pupils are positive about learning English and find it important. Those who receive English education are predominantly enthusiastic; those who do not receive English education seem to be very eager to learn.

The conclusion of the study is that given the large amount of positive pupil reactions and the absence of proof that PrO-pupils are unable to learn a foreign language, PrO-schools are to include English in their curriculum if their aim is to provide tailor-made education for all pupils. Furthermore, in order to develop and improve English teaching to PrO-pupils, more research into current as well as new methods and insights is required.
Het doel van de scriptie is enerzijds het in kaart brengen van de huidige stand van zaken rondom de implementatie van het vak Engels in het praktijkonderwijs (PrO) in Nederland en de mogelijke redenen hiervoor; anderzijds het onderzoeken van de manier waarop er over Engels gedacht wordt door zowel PrO-docenten en –medewerkers als PrO-leerlingen. De gebruikte onderzoeksmethode voor beide doelgroepen is een enquête.

De uitkomst van het onderzoek laat duidelijk zien dat Engels een onderwerp is dat bijzonder leeft binnen het PrO. Op de meeste PrO-scholen wordt Engels gegeven. Uit het onderzoek blijkt dat de belangrijkste reden voor de introductie van Engels de wens van zowel ouders als leerlingen is. De manier waarop Engels wordt aangeboden verschilt echter per school en soms zelfs binnen één en dezelfde school. De grote hoeveelheid verschillende methodes gericht op een andere doelgroep dan PrO (zoals het VMBO) laat de verscheidenheid en inconsistentie in het gebruik van methodes duidelijk zien. De meest gebruikte methode is *Let’s Get Started*, speciaal ontwikkeld voor PrO door uitgeverij Edu’Actief. Om echter meer over de effectiviteit van de methode en de mening van zowel docenten als leerlingen te weten te komen is verder onderzoek nodig.

De uitkomst van het tweede deel van het onderzoek waarin de leerlingen om hun mening gevraagd wordt getuigt van zeer veel enthousiasme. Leerlingen die Engels krijgen vinden het over het algemeen zeer interessant en leerzaam; leerlingen die geen Engels krijgen lijken het bijzonder graag te willen leren.

De conclusie van de studie is dat naar aanleiding van de positieve reacties van de leerlingen en het gebrek aan bewijs dat PrO-leerlingen niet in staat zouden zijn een vreemde taal te leren aan PrO-scholen geadviseerd wordt om Engels in het curriculum op te nemen. PrO-onderwijs volgt immers de leerling en willen op maat gemaakt onderwijs bieden. Tevens is verder onderzoek naar de ontwikkeling en verbetering van zowel de huidige als ook nieuwe methode(s) noodzakelijk voor het waarborgen van de kwaliteit van het onderwijs voor deze specifieke doelgroep.
Reflections on and limitations of the study

This study is, of course, far from flawless. The long process, from designing methods to gather data to actually gathering and processing the data has been very informative, but the list of ‘things not to do in the future’ is long. Firstly, having ambitious plans is easier than executing them. The initial ideas that eventually led to the current thesis covered a much broader range of topics related to English at PrO than what was feasible to investigate within the given time frame. I have learned to start narrowing down right from the beginning. Secondly, I have made mistakes in designing the questionnaires. There are questions that should have been worded differently. An example is the use of the word *handig* (± convenient) in the question *Denk je dat het handig is om Engels te kunnen?* (Do you think that knowing English is convenient?) (Pupil Questionnaire). I should not have used *handig* as it contains a value judgment that makes the question ‘manipulative’. It should have been *Wat vind je ervan/zou je ervan vinden om Engels te kunnen?* (What is your opinion/would your opinion be on knowing English?). The answer options could then, for example, be (1) *handig*, (2) I don’t need English, (3) I don’t care/know. Furthermore, not all questions in the online version of the PQ were obligatory; skipping questions was possible. This significantly complicated data processing. Finally, in retrospect there are questions that should have been asked and questions that should have been deleted. It would have been possible to retrieve more information with the same number of questions had I worded them differently and/or asked different questions. Overall, the process has taught me the valuable lessons that designing questionnaires requires careful deliberation and the creative and empathic ability to think of all possible interpretations and answers a question can evoke.

Another point of critique is that questionnaires have obvious limitations, a number of which have been discussed previously. The most important limitation I have encountered is that using questionnaires prevent you from any prediction as to the response whatsoever. In that respect, deciding to use questionnaires is certainly not without problems. Although the presentation and content of a questionnaire codetermine the response to a questionnaire, the researcher does depend on the willingness of the interviewees to respond. Furthermore, due to splitting up the
questionnaires used in the study (particularly the TSMQ) into separate sections there are questions with only very little response. Hence, it is not possible to draw conclusions from the information provided by these questions.

**Suggestions for further research**

English is a relatively new subject in PrO-schools and no previous research has been done. Therefore, there are many topics to put on the research agenda. The first is further research into the ‘gap’ that may arise when PrO-pupils with no previous English education move on to further education at the MBO-level as well as the way in which existing English education at PrO connects to that on the MBO-level. The second suggestion is taking the current investigation to a European level and further investigate the status quo of English at schools for people with SEN in other European countries as well as developing and improving an international knowledge base. The third and final suggestion is further research into PrO-method *Let’s Get Started* and its potential improvement, as there are a lot of ‘knowledge gaps’. There are, for example, no substantial data regarding the amount of English PrO-pupils know upon entering a PrO-school. Knowing this could provide a starting point for method development and improvement. Furthermore, there is no information about the number of clients that buy and/or use *Let’s Get Started*, nor is there any information about the way in which the method is received by either pupils or AVO-teachers. It would be interesting to document former PrO-pupils’ experiences with the method as well as their post-school use of English. Another question is the effectiveness and possibilities for improvement of the method, and whether the Netherlands and other non-English speaking countries could learn from methods developed for this target group in native English speaking countries.

These are only a few of the topics that could be further investigated; English education for people with SEN is a young field with plenty of possibilities for improvement.
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## GLOSSARY

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<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Dutch Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>AKA</td>
<td>Arbeidsmarktgekwalificeerd Assistent</td>
<td>Labour market Qualified Assistant</td>
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<td>AVO</td>
<td>Algemeen Vormend Onderwijs</td>
<td>General Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BaVo</td>
<td>Basisvorming</td>
<td>Basic Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BICS</td>
<td>Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (J. Cummins)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bovenbouw</td>
<td>Higher Secondary Education (HSE)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CALP</td>
<td>Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency (J. Cummins)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEFR</td>
<td>Common European Framework of Reference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DD</td>
<td>Developmental Disability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EADSNE</td>
<td>European Agency for the Development in Special Needs Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FL</td>
<td>Foreign Language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLLD</td>
<td>Foreign Language Learning Disability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAVO</td>
<td>Hoger Algemeen Voortgezet Onderwijs</td>
<td>Senior General Secondary Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HBO</td>
<td>Hoger Beroepsonderwijs</td>
<td>Higher Professional Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSE</td>
<td>Higher Secondary Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID</td>
<td>Intellectual Disability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IOP</td>
<td>Individueel Ontwikkelingsplan</td>
<td>Personal Development Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1</td>
<td>First Language (mother tongue)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2</td>
<td>Second Language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LD</td>
<td>Learning Disability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSE</td>
<td>Lower Secondary Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LWOO</td>
<td>Leerwegondersteunend Onderwijs</td>
<td>Learning Support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LWV-Pro  NL: Landelijk Werkverband Praktijkonderwijs
EN: National Association of Practical Education

MinOCW  NL: Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschappen
EN: Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science

NaB-MVT  NL: Nationaal Bureau Moderne Vreemde Talen
EN: National Bureau of Modern Foreign Languages

Onderbouw  Lower Secondary Education (LSE)

PrO  NL: Praktijkonderwijs
EN: Practical Education

PrO-school  NL: School voor Praktijkonderwijs
EN: School for Practical Education

RefGroup PrOIDS  NL: Referentiegroep Praktijkonderwijs in de Steigers
EN: ± Reference Group PrO Under Construction

ROC  NL: Regionaal Opleidingscentrum
EN: Regional Education Centre

RVC  NL: Regionale Verwijzingscommissie
EN: Regional Referral Committee

SEN  Special Educational Needs

SLA  Second Language Acquisition

VMBO  NL: Voorbereidend Middelbaar Beroepsonderwijs
EN: Pre-senior Secondary Vocational Education

VWO  NL: Voorbereidend Wetenschappelijk Onderwijs
EN: Pre-university Education

WM  Working Memory

WVO  NL: Wet op het Voortgezet Onderwijs
EN: Law on Secondary Education
APPENDIX I — CRITERIA PRo-DISPOSITION RVC

The following list of the criteria used in the assessment of the PrO-disposition application is an excerpt from Decree 262 (27 May, 2003) containing regulations concerning RVCs in the Staatsblad van het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden. An English translation is presented below.

Artikel 4. Beoordelingscriteria regionale verwijzingscommissie
1. Een regionale verwijzingscommissie baseert per aanvraag de beschikking over de indicatiestelling uitsluitend op:
   a. de door het bevoegd gezag gegeven motivering die gebaseerd is op ervaringen met de leerling in het onderwijsleerproces, zoals die onder meer blijken uit het onderwijskundig rapport, bedoeld in artikel 10e, vierde lid, en 10g, tweede lid, van de wet,
   b. de leerachterstand van de leerling,
   c. het intelligentiequotiënt van de leerling,
   d. indien dat noodzakelijk is voor het vormen van een oordeel, de resultaten van een of meer persoonlijkheidsonderzoeken met betrekking tot prestatiemotivatie, faalangst en emotionele instabiliteit die een beeld geven van de sociaal-emotionele problematiek van de leerling in relatie tot de leerprestaties, en
   e. indien het een aanvraag voor praktijkonderwijs betreft: de zienswijze van de ouders.

2. De leerachterstand van de leerling is de uitkomst van 1 minus (DLE/DL), waarin DLE de afkorting is van didactische leeftijdseenheden en het aantal maanden onderwijs is dat behoort bij het niveau dat de leerling feitelijk heeft bereikt en DL de afkorting is van didactische leeftijd en het aantal maanden is dat een leerling vanaf groep 3 in de periodes van september tot en met juni was ingeschreven bij een school als bedoeld in de Wet op het primair onderwijs of de Wet op de expertisecentra.

3. De regionale verwijzingscommissie wijst de aanvraag voor praktijkonderwijs uitsluitend toe, indien de leerling:
   a. een intelligentiequotiënt heeft binnen de bandbreedte van 55 tot en met 80, en
   b. een leerachterstand heeft op tenminste twee van de vier domeinen inzichtelijk rekenen, begrijpend lezen, technisch lezen en spellen, ten minste één van deze twee domeinen
[English version]

Article 4. Assessment criteria Regionale Verwijzingscommissie

1. An RVC bases the disposition per application exclusively upon:
   a. the motivation provided by the competent authorities based on experiences with the pupil in the educational process as apparent from, among other, the educational report meant in [etc.],
   b. the pupil’s educational arrears
   c. the pupil’s intelligence quotient, and
   d. if deemed necessary so as to ... judgment, the results of one or more personality tests regarding performance motivation, fear of failure, and emotional instability that give an impression of the socio-emotional problems of the pupil in relation to learning performance, and
   e. [...] the parents’ opinion.

2. The pupil’s educational arrears are the result of 1 minus (DLE/DL), in which DLE is the abbreviation for Didactische Leeftijdseenheden (didactic age units) and the number of months of education that is associated with the actual level that has been achieved by the pupil. DL is the abbreviation for Didactische Leeftijd (didactic age) and is the number of months the pupil has been enrolled in a school as meant in the Law on Primary education or the Law on Expertise Centres as from groep 3 in the period from September to June.

3. The RVC grants the application for PrO only if the pupil
   a. has an intelligence quotient that lies in between 55 and 80, and
   b. has educational arrears in at least two out of the four educational disciplines of (a) comprehensive mathematics, (b) comprehensive reading, (c) technical reading, and/or (d) spelling, at least one out of the two disadvantages needs is in the areas of comprehensive mathematics or comprehensive reading, and the arrears equals or is more than 0.5.
Engels in het praktijkonderwijs –
YES / NO / WHY / HOW?

Geachte heer/mevrouw,

Hartelijk dank voor uw interesse. Als onderdeel van mijn afstudeerproject rondom het vak Engels in het Nederlandse praktijkonderwijs inventariseer ik de huidige stand van zaken op 3 niveaus: (1) de beleidsmakers en -ontwikkelaars, (2) de mensen ‘in het veld’, waaronder u, en (3) de leerlingen zelf. Ik ben bijvoorbeeld geïnteresseerd in scholen die Engels als vak aanbieden, en de manier waarop ze dit vormgeven. Ook ben ik geïnteresseerd in scholen die geen Engels aanbieden, en welke redenen er voor zijn. De enige mensen die mij hierbij kunnen helpen zijn de mensen die dagelijks met het onderwijs te maken hebben. De leerlingen zelf worden uiteraard niet vergeten. Hun mening is minstens zo belangrijk. Hier kom ik later op terug.

Instructies

De enquête die voor u ligt bestaat uit drie delen: een algemeen deel voor iedereen, een deel voor AVO-docenten en een deel voor directieleden. U hoeft dus niet alle vragen te beantwoorden, en het invullen van de enquête zal dan ook niet langer dan 10 minuten in beslag nemen. Lees de vragen goed door en beantwoord ze vervolgens zo eerlijk mogelijk. De enquête is volledig anoniem en alle informatie wordt uiteraard discreet behandeld. Het is mogelijk dat sommige vragen niet op u van toepassing zijn. In dat geval wordt dit nadrukkelijk aangegeven. Mocht u iets niet begrijpen, vraagt u mij dan gerust. Op de laatste bladzijde van de enquête heeft u de mogelijkheid om eventuele opmerkingen, suggesties, commentaren en ideeën op te schrijven.

Ik waardeer uw medewerking aan mijn onderzoek; hiervoor nogmaals mijn hartelijke dank!
Veel succes! Lysbeth Plas, April 2009
Deel 1 – Algemene informatie

1. Naam school: .............................................

2. Plaats school: .............................................

3. Is de school voor praktijkonderwijs onderdeel van een scholengemeenschap met andere onderwijsniveaus (bijvoorbeeld: VMBO/LWOO, HAVO, VWO, gymnasium)?
   □ Ja
   □ Nee

4. Grondslag school:
   □ Openbaar
   □ Katholiek
   □ Christelijk
   □ Reformatorisch
   □ Anders, nl: .............................................

5. a. Deze vraag heeft betrekking op de moeder-/thuistaal van de leerlingen. Geef een globale indicatie van de leerlingenpopulatie op de school in percentages:
   ......% heeft Nederlands als moeder-/thuistaal
   ......% heeft een andere taal dan het Nederlands als moeder-/thuistaal

5. b. Noem de 5 grootste moeder-/thuistalen op de school. Begin met de grootste taalgroep. Indien er minder dan 5 taalgroepen zijn kunt u de betreffende regels open laten.

   Voorbeeld: 1. Nederlands 4. Spaans 5. -
   2. Zweeds
   3. Hindi

   Taalgroepen op de school:
   1. .............................................
   2. .............................................
   3. .............................................
   4. .............................................
   5. .............................................

6. Gelieve uw functie(s) binnen de school aan te kruisen. Meerdere opties zijn mogelijk.
   □ AVO-docent (Ga verder met deel II van de enquête. Deel III hoeft u niet in te vullen.)
   □ (Locatie)directeur/teamleider (Ga verder met deel III van de enquête)

Indien u beide vakjes heeft aangekruist, gaat u dan verder met deel III van de enquête.
Deel II – AVO-docenten & het vak Engels

7. Is het vak Engels een vast onderdeel van het curriculum voor alle leerlingen van alle/sommige jaarlagen op de school? Dit betekent dat er per week een x aantal uren voor Engels is ingeroosterd.

- Zo nee, kruis dit aan in onderstaande matrix onder Engels NEE en ga verder met vraag 10.

**Voorbeeld:** Op school XYZ krijgt de onderbouw les in Engels, de bovenbouw niet. De matrix ziet er als volgt uit:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Engels NEE</th>
<th>Engels JA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Onderbouw</strong> (klassen 1 + 2)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bovenbouw</strong> (klassen 3 en hoger)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Hoe wordt het vak Engels vormgegeven?

- Als apart vak ‘Engels’
- Geïntegreerd (als module binnen een ander vak)
- Anders, nl: ........................................

9. a. Van welke methode(n) wordt gebruik gemaakt voor het vak Engels?

..........................................................

- **Indien de leerlijn Let’s Get Started van PrOmotie (Uitgeverij Edu’Actief) gebruikt wordt:**

9. b. Geef aan wat uw eigen ervaringen met deze methode zijn op een schaal van 1 tot 5. Gelieve één mogelijkheid te omcirkelen en uw ervaringen te motiveren.

|------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|------------------|
Motivatie:……………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Vervelend om mee te werken</th>
<th>2. Er zit af en toe iets leuk bij</th>
<th>3. De meeste onderdelen zijn leuk</th>
<th>4. Engelse les is altijd erg leuk, uitdagend en leerzaam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Vervelend om mee te werken</td>
<td>2. Er zit af en toe iets leuk bij</td>
<td>3. De meeste onderdelen zijn leuk</td>
<td>4. Engelse les is altijd erg leuk, uitdagend en leerzaam</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bent u AVO-docent op een school waar Engels wordt aangeboden? Dan bent u klaar met het invullen van de enquête. Hartelijk dank!

10. Zijn er aanwijzingen dat er vraag is naar het leren van Engels vanuit de leerlingen?
- Ja
- Nee
- Onbekend

11. Bent u op de hoogte van eventuele plannen voor het invoeren van Engels in het curriculum?
- Ja, er zijn concrete plannen
- Nee, er is wel over Engels gesproken maar er zijn geen concrete plannen
- Nee, voor zover ik weet zijn deze er niet

12. Als u kijkt naar uw eigen vaardigheden in de Engelse taal, acht u uzelf in staat om dit vak eventueel te kunnen verzorgen?
- Ja
- Niet zeker
- Nee

Bent u AVO-docent op een school waar geen Engels wordt aangeboden? Dan bent u klaar met het invullen van de enquête. Hartelijk dank!
Deel III – Directieleden & het vak Engels

13. Is het vak Engels een verplicht onderdeel van het curriculum voor alle leerlingen van alle/sommige jaarlagen op de school?
   Dit betekent dat er per week een $x$ aantal uren voor Engels is ingeroosterd.
   
   - Zo nee, kruis dit aan in onderstaande matrix onder Engels NEE en ga verder met vraag 16.
   - Zo ja, kruis dit aan in onderstaande matrix onder Engels JA. Geef vervolgens aan of dit betrekking heeft op de onderbouw en/of bovenbouw.
   
   Beantwoord daarna de vragen 14 en 15.

   Voorbeeld: Op school XYZ krijgt de onderbouw les in Engels, de bovenbouw niet. De matrix ziet er als volgt uit:

   Voorbeeld: 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Engels NEE</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Onderbouw (klassen 1 + 2)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
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<td>Onderbouw (klassen 1 + 2)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bovenbouw (klassen 3 en hoger)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   14. Wanneer werd het vak Engels een vast onderdeel van het curriculum op de school?
   
   - 2008-2009 (vorig jaar)
   - Tussen zomer 2006 en zomer 2008
   - Tussen zomer 2004 en zomer 2006
   - Vóór de zomer van 2004

   15. Het is niet wettelijk bepaald dat er Engels gegeven moet worden op scholen voor praktijkonderwijs. Wat was de voornaamste reden voor uw school om hier wel voor te kiezen?

   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16. Wat is/zijn de reden(en) dat het Engels niet als vak is ingevoerd op de school? Meerdere opties zijn mogelijk.

- Het onderwerp is nog nooit ter sprake gekomen
- Het vak Nederlands is voldoende en uitdagend genoeg
- Gebrek aan keuze uit geschikte lesmaterialen voor de doelgroep
- Gebrek aan informatie/hulp bij de opzet ervan
- Gebrek aan animo vanuit de AVO-docenten
- Anders, nl:

17. a. Denkt u dat het vak Engels binnen nu en 5 jaar op de school wordt ingevoerd als vast onderdeel van het curriculum?

- Nee, dat denk ik niet
- Ja, dat denk ik wel.

17. b. Waarom wel/waarom niet?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

Opmerkingen/suggesties/commentaren/ideeën:

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
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OPROEP!

In de inleiding van de enquête werden de leerlingen uiteraard met nadruk genoemd. Een ander onderdeel van mijn afstudeeronderzoek bestaat uit (korte) interviews met leerlingen. Op die manier wil ik onderzoeken of de Engelse taal leeft onder deze jongeren, of ze denken dat het nuttig is om Engels te leren, of dat ze misschien al een heleboel Engels kennen.

Om een representatief beeld te krijgen van de doelgroep is het nodig om leerlingen op verschillende plaatsen in het hele land te interviewen.

Mijn laatste vraag aan u is of u en uw school bereid zijn mij een klein aantal leerlingen te laten interviewen. Dit zal in mei gaan plaatsvinden. Indien u hiertoe bereid bent, kruist u dan het hokje hieronder aan.

Dankuwel!

- Ja!

CONTACTGEGEVENS ENQUÊTEUR

Lysbeth Plas
Driemolendrift 12a
9711 BW Groningen
T: 06-274 301 31
E: y.l.plas@student.rug.nl
Hoi!

Alvast dankjewel voor het meedoen!
Ik zal eerst even uitleggen wat de bedoeling is.

Ik ben Lysbeth Plas en ik ben allerlei informatie aan het verzamelen over het vak Engels op school. Ik ben benieuwd naar of je het leuk vindt of niet, en of je het nuttig vindt of niet, dat soort dingen.

Het duurt niet lang en het is niet moeilijk. Het mooie is dat er geen "goede" of "foute" antwoorden zijn. Wat jij vindt is belangrijk, dus denk wel eerst goed over je antwoord na. Vergeet ook niet om alle vragen te beantwoorden! Als er een staat, moet je extra goed opletten. De vragenlijst is anoniem, dus je hoeft je naam er niet bij te zetten.

Je zou me heel erg helpen door deze vragenlijst te beantwoorden, dus alvast heel erg bedankt daarvoor!

Groeten van Lysbeth Plas
1. In welke groep of klas zit je?
   O 1
   O 2
   O 3 of hoger

2. Hoe oud ben je?
   Ik ben .... jaar

3. Ik ben een ...
   O jongen
   O meisje

4. Weet je al wat je na school voor werk wilt gaan doen?
   Als je een idee hebt, schrijf dit dan hieronder op.
   Als je het nog niet weet, schrijf je niks op.

5. Vind je de Engelse lessen leuk?
   O Ja
   O Nee

6. Vertel eens waarom wel of waarom niet?

7. Wat doe je het meest tijdens de Engelse les?
   O We praten vooral
   O We luisteren vooral
   O We lezen vooral
   O We schrijven vooral

8. Zit je tijdens de Engelse les vooral achter de computer of leer je uit een boek?
   O Computer
   O Boek
   O Allebei evenveel
9. Merk je dat de Engelse lessen je soms helpen?

Denk bijvoorbeeld aan wat je ziet en hoort op tv, of wat je soms op borden leest.

O Ja
O Nee
O Weet ik niet

10. Denk je dat het handig is om Engels te kunnen?

O Ja
O Nee

GA NU NAAR VRAAG 11!

SLA VRAAG 11 OVER – GA NAAR VRAAG 12!

11. Waarom denk je dat het handig is om Engels te kunnen?

Je kunt meer dan één antwoord geven. Als je antwoord er niet bij staat vul je die zelf op de stippeltjeslijn in.
Als je nog iets anders hierover wilt zeggen, mag dat ook.

O Voor mijn werk
O Iedereen kan Engels
O Voor op vakantie
O TV, internet, games
O Mijn antwoord staat er niet bij. Dit is mijn antwoord:

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

LET OP! SLA VRAAG 12 OVER EN GA NAAR VRAAG 13!

12. Waarom vind je het niet nodig om Engels te leren?

Je kunt meer dan één antwoord geven. Als je antwoord er niet bij staat vul je die zelf op de stippeltjeslijn in.
Als je nog iets anders hierover wilt zeggen, mag dat ook.

O Ik blijf toch in Nederland wonen
O Ik vind talen leren niet leuk
O Ik vind Nederlands al best moeilijk!
O Ik heb het toch niet nodig voor mijn werk later
O Wat ik van de TV en internet leer, is genoeg
O Mijn antwoord staat er niet bij. Dit is mijn antwoord:

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
13. Lijkt het je leuk om met school naar het buitenland te gaan?

O  Ja
O  Nee
O  Dat doen we al op onze school

⚠️ Als je nog graag iets wilt zeggen over Engels op school of als je ideeën of tips hebt kun je dat hieronder opschrijven, maar het hoeft niet.

Klaar? Dankjewel!
Hoi!

Alvast dankjewel voor het meedoen!
Ik zal eerst even uitleggen wat de bedoeling is.

Ik ben Lysbeth Plas en ik ben allerlei informatie aan het verzamelen over het vak Engels op school. Ik ben benieuwd naar of je het leuk vindt of niet, en of je het nuttig vindt of niet, dat soort dingen.

Het duurt niet lang en het is niet moeilijk. Het mooie is dat er geen "goede" of "foute" antwoorden zijn. Wat jij vindt is belangrijk, dus denk wel eerst goed over je antwoord na. Vergeet ook niet om alle vragen te beantwoorden! Als er een staat, moet je extra goed opletten.

De vragenlijst is anoniem, dus je hoeft je naam er niet bij te zetten.

Je zou me heel erg helpen door deze vragenlijst te beantwoorden, dus alvast heel erg bedankt daarvoor!

Groeten van Lysbeth Plas
1. In welke groep of klas zit je?
   O 1
   O 2
   O 3 of hoger

2. Hoe oud ben je?
   Ik ben ...... jaar

3. Ik ben een ...
   O jongen
   O meisje

4. Weet je al wat je na school voor werk wilt gaan doen?
   Als je een idee hebt, schrijf dit dan hieronder op.
   Als je het nog niet weet, schrijf je niks op.

5. Ken je op dit moment al wat Engels?
   O Ja, dat heb ik van TV/internet/games
   O Ja, want ik praat veel Engels met mijn familie en vrienden
   O Nee, ik ken geen Engels
   O Iets anders: ...............................................................

6. Denk je dat het handig is om Engels te kunnen?
   O Ja  ➡️  GA NU NAAR VRAAG 7!
   O Nee ➡️  SLA VRAAG 7 OVER – GA NAAR VRAAG 8!

7. Waarom denk je dat het handig is om Engels te kunnen?
   Je kunt meer dan één antwoord geven. Als je antwoord er niet bij staat vul je die zelf op de stippeltjeslijn in.
   Als je nog iets anders hierover wilt zeggen, mag dat ook.
O Voor mijn werk
O Iedereen kan Engels
O Voor op vakantie
O TV, internet, games

O Mijn antwoord staat er niet bij. Dit is mijn antwoord:

...................................................................................................................................................................................
...................................................................................................................................................................................
...................................................................................................................................................................................

LET OP! SLA VRAAG 8 OVER EN GA NAAR VRAAG 9!

8. Waarom vind je het niet nodig om Engels te leren?

Je kunt meer dan één antwoord geven. Als je antwoord er niet bij staat vul je die zelf op de stippeltjeslijn in.
Als je nog iets anders hierover wilt zeggen, mag dat ook.

O Ik blijf toch in Nederland wonen
O Ik vind talen leren niet leuk
O Ik vind Nederlands al best moeilijk!
O Ik heb het toch niet nodig voor mijn werk later
O Wat ik van de TV en internet leer, is genoeg

O Mijn antwoord staat er niet bij. Dit is mijn antwoord:

...................................................................................................................................................................................
...................................................................................................................................................................................
...................................................................................................................................................................................

9. Zou je Engels op school willen leren?

O Ja, dat zou ik wel graag willen
O Nee, dat lijkt me niet leuk

10. Lijkt het je leuk om met school naar het buitenland te gaan?

O Ja
O Nee
O Dat doen we al op onze school
Als je nog graag iets wilt zeggen over Engels op school of als je ideeën of tips hebt kun je dat hieronder opschrijven, maar het hoeft niet.

Klaar? Dankjewel!
APPENDIX IV – LIST OF REGIONS USED IN RESEARCH (SOURCE: LWV-PRO)

1. Groningen
2. Friesland
3. Drenthe
4. Overijssel
5. Flevoland
6. Gelderland – East
7. Gelderland – West
8. Utrecht
9. Noord-Holland (except for Amsterdam)
10. Amsterdam
11. Zuid-Holland (including Rotterdam)
12. Zuid-Holland (including Dordrecht)
13. Zuid-Holland (including The Hague)
14. Zeeland
15. Noord-Brabant – West
16. Noord-Brabant – East
17. Limburg