



Brugge

College of Europe
Collège d'Europe



Natolin

Language use of the students of the College of Europe

A case study on the choice of language in a bilingual working environment

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1 Introduction

This paper examines language use of the students of the College of Europe. It attempts to analyse the choice of language of a highly multilingual community in a linguistic environment dominated by two working languages (English and French). It is suggested that this scenario might be seen, to a certain extent, as a model case for communication and language choice in the European institutions. There are two reasons for this: firstly, the College of Europe provides a setting similar to the European Institutions, i.e., a highly educated, multinational and multilingual community in which both English and French dominate as vehicular languages; secondly, a large number of College of Europe alumni eventually work for the European Union and therefore participate in shaping the linguistic environment in the EU Institutions. Hence, the findings of this study might provide some insights in the situation in some of the institutions of the European Union. Obviously, these insights will not go too far. Despite striking similarities, a

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number of apparent differences remain between an institution of higher education and an institution of the European Union.

This paper is, in several aspects, indebted to O'Driscoll's *International Communication and Language Choice in Modern Europe*,¹ which provided an extensive case study on the College of Europe. The data collected by O'Driscoll in 1993 -1994 provided a valuable reference for the research undertaken for this paper in 2007. Although the methodology employed in this paper differs from O'Driscoll's, his work has provided a point of comparison for the data collected in 2007. Hence, this study covers a time span of nearly fifteen years (from 1993/94 to 2007).

This paper is structured in the following way: it sets out with a description of the College of Europe and its academic community (2). The next section (3) focuses on the linguistic rules and customs of this community and seeks to establish the respective status of the two working languages. Section 4 explains in detail the methodology of the collection of data on language use. Sections 5 and 6 present and analyze the data; a comparison with O'Driscoll's data from 1993/94 will be established where possible. The last section (7) sums up the findings and tries to establish an analogy between these and the situation in the European institutions.

2 The setting²

The College of Europe is an institution of postgraduate education in European Studies. Established in 1949, in Bruges, Belgium, the College Europe is

“[...] the world's first university institute of postgraduate studies and training in European affairs, [...]. The College's origins date back to the 1948 Hague Congress when Salvador de Madariaga, a Spanish statesman, thinker and writer in exile, proposed

¹ O'Driscoll, J. 1999. *International communication and language choice in modern Europe*. Unpublished doctoral thesis. University of Gent.

² This sub-chapter is based on information available under at the official homepage of the College of Europe, at <http://www.coleurope.eu>; access date: 1st of July, 2008.

the establishment of a College where university graduates from many different countries could study and live together.”³

In the last 60 years, this *formule du collège*, has provided to be successful. Since its origins in 1949, the number of students who study and live together for 10 months in the College has risen from 22 to over 400. Moreover, in order to anticipate the re-unification of Europe, the College opened a second campus in Warsaw, Poland in 1992 (the Natolin campus). Alumni of the College of Europe predominately work in the EU Institutions, in the services sector (consultancies, banks, law offices, etc.), in national administration, in the diplomatic service or in academia.

At present, students are enrolled in one of 5 different study programmes: European Interdisciplinary Studies (EIS),⁴ European Legal Studies (DROIT), European Political and Administrative Studies (POL), European Economic Studies (ECO) and EU International Relations and Diplomacy Studies (IRD)⁵. The first four of these programmes (DROIT, POL, ECO, IRD) are taught at the Bruges campus in Belgium and the fifth (EIS) is taught at the Natolin campus in Poland. In order to graduate and to obtain their postgraduate degree (either MA or LLM), students of all study programmes have to complete approximately 300 hours of courses and to submit an individual research paper (MA/LLM thesis).

The College of Europe has two working languages, English and French.⁶ The choice of these two languages seems to be closely linked to the College’s

³ <http://www.coleurope.eu/template.asp?pagename=history>; access date: 1st of July, 2008.

⁴ The abbreviations in brackets such as POL, EIS, DROIT etc., are widely used in the academic community of the College and will sometimes be used in this paper in order to make reference to the different programmes.

⁵ Students of the study programmes DROIT, POL and ECO also have to follow courses in European General Studies (EG). These courses deal with topics broader than those covered in their departmental specialization. The EG programme adds an interdisciplinary dimension to these study programmes; it is not a study programme in itself.

⁶ Study rules, Article 2, available at http://intranet.coleurop.be/natolin/study_reg/study_regulations.asp.

foundation in the years after the end of the Second World War, when French and English were the prevalent languages of international communication in Europe.⁷ The College of Europe has its own language service which offers courses designed to assist students with their academic needs in the two working languages (see below 3.3). The language service also offers several courses in other languages such as Dutch and Spanish (in the Bruges campus), Polish and Russian (in the Natolin campus) and German (in both campuses).

Last but not least, the College of Europe is a private institution and charges fees for tuition and accommodation.⁸ However, more than 80% of students benefit from full or partial scholarships from diverse national or international, governmental or private organizations.

2.1 The students

Admission to the College of Europe is based on a selection procedure. The aim of this selection procedure is twofold: to recruit only the best qualified students and to ensure that the student body truly mirrors an international environment. Although there are no strict quotas per country, the number of admitted students from a specific country tends to reflect to some extent the size and population of a country (see below, table 1). Applicants must hold a relevant university degree and be fluent in English and French,⁹ although many students of the College of Europe do speak three to four foreign languages.¹⁰ In the academic year 2007/08, 52 different nationalities were represented among the 400 students of the College of Europe.¹¹ Furthermore, the statistics show that more females than

⁷ English and French are also the official languages of the Council of Europe founded in 1949, see: <http://www.coe.int>; access date: 1st of July, 2008.

⁸ Fees for the academic year 2008-2009 amounted to 17.640 Euro, see <http://www.coleurope.eu/template.asp?pagename=admisfees>; access date: 1st of July, 2008.

⁹ See below, 3.3.

¹⁰ According to the statistics of the academic year 2005/06, 80% of students spoke more than 4 languages.

¹¹ College of Europe, admission service.

males study at the College of Europe. In the academic year 2007/08 female students accounted for nearly 62% of the total number of students.¹²

COLLEGE D'EUROPE

Année académique 2007-08

	CAMPUS BRUGES					CAMPUS NATOLIN
	TOTAL	DROIT	POL	ECO	IRD	EIS
ALBANIE	1			1	-	
ALGERIE	0	-	-	-	-	1
ALLEMAGNE	30	6	15	3	6	8
ARGENTINE	2		1		1	
ARMENIE	5	1	1	1	2	1
A.R.Y. DE MACEDOINE	1			1		1
AUTRICHE	5	2	2		1	
AZERBAIDJAN	4	1		1	2	
BELGIQUE	13	4	5	1	3	3
BIELORUSSIE	1		1			1
BRESIL	1				1	
BULGARIE	6	3	2		1	3
CANADA	3	1	2			
CHYPRE	1				1	
COLOMBIE	1				1	
CROATIE	0					1
DANEMARK	4		3		1	1
ESPAGNE	25	10	5	6	4	9
ESTONIE	1				1	
FINLANDE	6	2	3		1	1
FRANCE	34	11	11	7	5	14
GEORGIE	1				1	
GRECE	9	4	3	1	1	
HONGRIE	2		1		1	
IRLANDE	5	3	1		1	
ITALIE	27	10	10	3	4	11
JAPON	1				1	
KOSOVO	1				1	
LIBAN	1				1	1
LIECHTENSTEIN	1	1				
LITUANIE	4	3		1		

¹² College of Europe, admission service.

LUXEMBOURG	2	1			1	
MALTE	3	1	1		1	
MAROC	2	1	1			
MEXIQUE	1				1	
MOLDAVIE	1				1	2
MONTENEGRO	2			2		
NORVEGE	1	1				
PALESTINE	1				1	
PAYS-BAS	8	2	3	1	2	2
POLOGNE	18	5	5	5	3	25
PORTUGAL	7	6			1	4
REP. TCHEQUE	3		2		1	1
ROUMANIE	5	1	2	2		3
ROYAUME-UNI	21	9	7	1	4	1
RUSSIE	5	2	2		1	1
SERBIE	1		1			1
SLOVAQUIE	3			2	1	
SLOVENIE	2	2				
SUEDE	7	3	2		2	
SUISSE	7	3	3		1	2
TURQUIE	5		4		1	
UKRAINE	4		1		3	3
USA	4	1			3	
TOTAL	309	100	100	39	70	101

Campus Bruges : 52 nationalités

Campus Natolin : 25 nationalités

01.12.2007

Table 1 – nationalities of students per study programme¹³

2.2 The staff

The staff of the College of Europe can be divided in three main groups: visiting professors, academic staff and administrative staff. Visiting professors are by far largest group of the teaching faculty. In contrast to the permanent staff, visiting professors are not employed by the College. The academic staff consists of a small number of permanent (and adjunct) professors and a larger number of teaching assistants, who tend to be former students of the College. The administrative staff is in charge of the administration of the College and of other

¹³ College of Europe, admission service.

students' services (library, student residences, restaurant etc.). While the visiting and permanent faculty and the highest positions of the administration (e.g. Rector, Directors of Study, Head of the Library) are as multinational as the student body, the administrative staff is not. Thus, most of the administrative staff in Bruges is Belgian and nearly all of the administrative staff in Warsaw is Polish.

3 The language question

The following sections describe some of the linguistic rules and customs (3.1); they take into consideration the extent to which French and English are used in the different study programmes (3.2), and the specific language requirements students have to fulfill in order to be admitted to the different study programmes (3.3).

3.1 Linguistic rules and customs

As has been mentioned,¹⁴ the College of Europe has two working languages, English and French. Only these two languages are used for its official and academic activities. This language policy has several important consequences. Firstly, and perhaps most importantly, the entire academic programme of the College of Europe is taught in the working languages.¹⁵ Secondly, all official events (such as the opening and closing ceremonies, etc.) are conducted both in French and English. Thereby, it seems to be a well established custom that official representatives of the College switch several times from one working language to another. This multiple switching from English to French (and vice-versa) is rarely used in unofficial events. Hence, scientific meetings and conferences, guest lectures etc. are normally organized and held in one working language only.

¹⁴ See above, section 2.

¹⁵ See below, section 3.2.

Notwithstanding, the exclusive use of French and English for official and academic purposes neither signifies that the College exclusively functions in English/French nor that the whole staff is necessarily fluent in both or even in one of these languages. Indeed, given that the largest part of the administrative employees are Belgian or Polish,¹⁶ a large part of the administration operates in Dutch (at the Bruges campus) or Polish (at the Campus in Warsaw). However, it does seem that many of the administrative staff do speak one or both of the official languages.¹⁷

Contrary to the administrative staff, the permanent academic staff of the College works in both working languages. It is important to note that this rule does not apply to visiting professors, who typically teach only a single course in a single working language. For this reason, visiting professors need not be fluent in both working languages, though in reality, many have a working knowledge of English and French. Still, there are a number of them who are only fluent in one working language. In most cases, this language is English.¹⁸

Courses are normally taught in one single working language, the so-called “language of the course”. This means that the professor, the assistant/s and the students will use this language throughout the course, even for the relative course work and examination. If a single course is taught by more than one professor, it might occur that different working languages are used by different professors. In this situation, the exam normally consists of a combination of questions in both working languages corresponding to that part of the course which was taught in them. The rule of the exclusive use of one working language per course seems to be widely respected for all “in classroom activities”. In “out-of classroom situations” related to a specific course (e.g. consultation of students

¹⁶ See above, section 2.2.

¹⁷ This claim is based on the author’s own subjective experience and not based on any empirical data.

¹⁸ This observation is solely based on the author’s own experience.

with the professor/assistant, discussions among students, etc) there is no rule concerning the use of language.

3.2 The role of English and French in the different study programmes

The study rules of the College of Europe provide that each student has to follow at least one course in each of the two working languages.¹⁹ Therefore, this “bilingualism” rule does not necessarily entail an equal use of English and French for all academic programmes and for all students, rather it establishes a minimal threshold requiring students to study in both languages to some degree. Above this minimal threshold, the different study programmes determine which working language is to be used for which course and whether students have to follow any other specific linguistic regulations.²⁰ Consequently, the importance of the use of English and French varies considerably within the 5 different study programmes.

In order to establish the extent to which English and French are used in the respective study programmes, it is necessary to consider two different indicators. Firstly, the number and length of courses offered in French vs. the number and length of courses offered in English and secondly, the number and length of courses a student has to follow in both languages in order to obtain the diploma. The distinction between these two indicators is necessary, because all study programmes consist of a number of compulsory courses and (normally a larger) number of optional courses. This means that students are allowed to choose a considerable part of their courses according to their preferences, including linguistic preferences. Therefore, the proportion between the number of [hours of] courses offered in English or French need not necessarily correspond to the number and length of] courses a student will have to follow in these two languages.

3.2.1 The courses on offer: English vs. French

¹⁹ Study rules, article 12.

²⁰ Study rules, article 11, 16, 35

The table underneath indicates the number of hours of courses the College of Europe offers in its two working languages. The figures include only courses which are subject to an examination.²¹ In cases where a course is taught by several professors in different languages, the number of hours given in each language has been taken into account.

	English	French
DROIT	17 courses (465 hours)	12 courses (340 hours)
POL	22 courses (685 hours)	8 courses (285 hours)
IRD	21 courses (465 hours)	4 courses (95 hours)
ECO	12 courses (375 hours)	4 courses (120 hours)
EIS	22 5/6 courses (622 hours)	9 1/6 courses (213 hours)
EG	10 courses (250 hours)	14 courses (350 hours)
Total	104 1/3 courses (2842 hours)	51 2/3 courses (1423 hours)

Table 2 – number of [hours of] courses taught in English / French per study programme²²

As can be seen in table 2, the number of hours of courses offered in English and French varies considerably according to the different study programmes.²³ The European Legal Studies programme (DROIT) is the only study programme which comes close to achieving a balance between English (58%) and French (42%). In all other study programmes the offer of courses in French is significantly lower than the offer of courses in English. At present, POL offers 31%, EIS 26%, ECO 24% and IRD 17% of its academic programme in French. This imbalance in favour of English is to a certain extent counterbalanced by the European General Interdisciplinary studies (EGI) which offers a larger number of courses in French (58%) than in English (42%).²⁴ Nevertheless, on the whole, it seems that at present, the College of Europe offers nearly twice as many courses in English

²¹ This means that all courses which are not evaluated, such as “introductory courses” or “compact seminars” etc., have been omitted.

²² Study programmes 2007/08.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ These courses are part of the study programmes ECO, POL and DROIT.

(66%) than it does in French (33%). This was not always so. In the 1960s and 1970s the largest number of courses at the College of Europe were taught in French and not in English.²⁵ Throughout the years, the dominance of French in the curriculum has slowly given way to English. Since the academic year 1993/94, the year which marks the beginning of the time frame in consideration in this study, the overall offer of courses taught in French slightly decreased (by - 5% on average).²⁶ This decrease could be observed in the following study programmes, POL: from 33%²⁷ to 31%, ECO: from 28%²⁸ to 24% and DROIT: from 44%²⁹ to 42%. On the other hand, the number of hours of courses taught in French increased from 22% to 26% in the study programme EIS.³⁰

3.2.2 The “minimum number” of [hours of] courses in English and French

The number of hours of courses offered in English or French is only one indicator for the relative importance of these languages in the different study programmes. In order to find out how many (hours of) courses a student has to follow at the very least in each of these languages, the rules governing the choice of courses must be taken into consideration. Study programmes limit the choice of languages by students in that some compulsory courses are only offered in one language. Moreover, one study programme (DROIT) imposes a strict “language rule” on their students, according to which they have to choose at least 4 courses (ca. 120 hours) in the working language least represented in their total choice of courses.

	English	French
DROIT	4 courses (120 hours)	4 courses (120 hours)
POL ³¹	3 ½ courses (100 hours)	1 ½ courses (60 hours)

²⁵ E.g.: study programme 1961/62, College of Europe, secretariat.

²⁶ Source: academic programme 1993/94, 2000 for EIS;

²⁷ 1994 – POL: 200F, 400E

²⁸ 1994 – ECO: 120F, 315E

²⁹ 1994 – DROIT: 315F, 405E.

³⁰ 2000 – EIS: 165F, 570E.

³¹ One obligatory course is conducted in both working languages, whereby students can choose their preferred language.

IRD	8 courses (180 hours)	1 course (20 hours)
ECO	5 courses (165 hours)	1 course (30 hours)
EIS	4 ½ (155 hours)	3 ½ courses (80 hours)

Table 3 – minimum number of [hours of] courses to be followed in English / French per study programme (each study programme consists of approximately 300 hours of courses), academic year 2007/08.

As can be seen in table 3, most study programmes offer students the possibility of minimizing or at least reducing the number of [hours of] courses in their less preferred working language. Table 3 also shows that it is easier for students to minimize the number of courses they have to follow in French rather than in English.

In the case of the IRD study programme it is theoretically possible for students to complete the study programme by following a single course of 20 hours in French and all remaining courses in English.³² Still, IRD students are required to follow a French language course throughout the year if their level of French is lower than B1.³³ The achievement of B1 in French by the end of the academic year is necessary in this study programme in order to graduate.³⁴ In ECO, it is possible for students to complete their studies by following a single course of 30 hours in French and all remaining courses in English. The minimum number of courses taught in French which students have to follow in order to complete their study programme is higher in POL (1 ½ courses with a total of 60 hours) and in EIS (3½ courses with a total of 80 hours). Students of the legal studies programme (DROIT) have to follow at least 4 courses with a total of 120 hours in French.

In contrast, it is hardly possible to complete any of the College's study programmes without following a substantial number of courses in English. In the

³² Each programme consists of ca. 10 courses adding up to approximately 300-320 hours of courses.

³³ Common European Framework languages scales,
http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/Portfolio/?L=E&M=/main_pages/levels.html

³⁴ Academic programme, IRD;

IRD programme, the minimum threshold for English is 8 courses with a total of 180 hours, in ECO 5 courses with a total of 165 hours and in EIS 4½ courses with a total of 155 hours, in DROIT 4 courses with a total of 120 and in POL 2 courses with a total of 80 hours.

3.2.3 LLM / MA thesis

The study rules provide that students have to write an LLM / MA thesis on a topic in connection with their study programme. Subject to the approval of the supervising professor and the specific rules of their study programme, this paper may be written either in French or English.³⁵ In practice, students are not obliged to write their thesis in the language of the course taught by their supervisor, but may use English or French, provided the supervisor agrees with this choice of language. This approval depends largely on whether or not the supervising professor is familiar enough with the chosen language. It seems that a majority of professors readily accept thesis proposals in either language. However, a number of them accept theses only in French or, more often, only in English.³⁶ Independently from the language in which the MA thesis is written, the oral defense takes place in the language of the course in the framework of which the thesis was written. However, not all study programmes provide for an oral defense of the MA thesis.³⁷

3.3 Language knowledge as a requirement for admission

Given the bilingual nature of the College of Europe, it is clear that all candidates for admission have to have a certain knowledge of both English and French, and that the knowledge of these languages is an essential criterion for the selection of students.³⁸ However, the linguistic admission requirements for the different study programmes differ to some extent.³⁹

³⁵ Study rules, Art. 35.

³⁶ See above, 3.1.

³⁷ This is the case of the EIS study programme.

³⁸ Study rules, Art. 2.

³⁹ Ibid.

At present, three of the five programmes, i.e., European Interdisciplinary Studies, European Legal Studies and European Political and Administrative Studies require students to have a minimum level of B2 (on the Common European Framework languages scales)⁴⁰ for both English and French. In the other two programmes, language requirements are less strict as far as the level of French is concerned. Admission to European Economic Studies may be granted for students who have an elementary level of French (level A2 or B1), provided their level of English is B2 or higher.⁴¹ Likewise, students with a French knowledge of level A2 may be admitted to EU International Relations and Diplomacy Studies, if they have a minimum level of C1 in English and follow a French course throughout the year. By the end of the academic year, these students must achieve a level of French corresponding to level B1 in order to graduate.⁴²

During the selection procedure, the level of language knowledge is assessed in a two steps: Firstly, students have to include officially recognized language certificates, where applicable, and a “language knowledge statement” in their application file. In the latter document, applicants describe their experience in studying (in) and/or working with English and French. Language certificates and language knowledge statements are assessed by the selection committee. Secondly, a staff member of the College of Europe interviews each candidate shortlisted for admission in both working languages. Candidates who do not meet the language requirements are usually not accepted as students. However, in practice, selection committees have a considerable margin of discretion and it is not infrequent that candidates with an outstanding academic record are accepted despite having weak language skills. This being said, selection committees admit candidates on the condition that they follow an intensive language course before the beginning of the academic year.⁴³

⁴⁰ http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/Portfolio/?L=E&M=/main_pages/levels.html, date of access: 1st of July 2008.

⁴¹ <http://www.coleurope.eu/template.asp?pagename=ecolangreg>; date of access: 1st of June 2008.

⁴² <http://www.coleurop.be/template.asp?pagename=irdlangreg>; date of access: 1st of June 2008.

⁴³ The *alliance française* offers an intensive French course ‘tailor-made’ for prospective students of the College in Brussels and Warsaw. There is no comparable offer for English. See:

On arrival of students at the beginning of the academic year, the language service of the College of Europe assesses the level of French and English of students who did not submit officially recognized languages certificates and who are not native speakers of English or French. All students who do not fully meet the linguistic requirements have to follow language courses organized by the language service of the College of Europe. These courses, which are an addition to the academic programme, aim to assist students with the linguistic needs arising from their study programmes, e.g. presentation techniques, academic writing etc. With the exception of the IRD programme, the marks for language courses are not taken into account for the calculation of the students' final mark and do not have any direct consequence on the students' ability to obtain their diploma.

3.4 Conclusion - linguistic environment

The above description of the “linguistic environment” of the College of Europe shows that there is no complete equality between the two working languages; the “institutional pressure” to use a specific language is not the same for English and French. Although both languages have the same formal status, English seems to be *de facto* the more important working language. Firstly, the number and length of courses taught in English is considerably higher than the comparable number in French. Secondly, the rules of organization of most study programmes allow students, to a certain extent, to minimize the number of courses they have to follow in French. What is more, in two of five study programmes the linguistic requirements for admission are clearly lower in French than they are in English.

Despite these general findings, there are significant differences between the 5 study programmes: while the European Legal Studies programme comes close to achieving an equal balance between the two working languages, English

<http://www.coleurop.be/template.asp?pagename=languagerequirementsimproving>, date of access: 1st of June 2008.

dominates the study programmes ECO and IRD. The remaining study programmes POL and EIS situate themselves between these two scenarios. Although their curricula favour to a certain extent the use of English, French has a significant role. This raises the question whether the different *de facto* status of working languages in the different study programmes has repercussions on students' use of languages.

4 Methodology

The set of data presented in the following sections of this paper derives from two main sources: a survey addressed to students of the academic year 2007/08 and a statistical analysis of students' Master theses of the last 14 years. This data will be compared to O'Driscoll's data undertaken in 1993-94; it is therefore useful to first take a look at the latter approach.

4.1 O'Driscoll's survey from 1993/94

O'Driscoll used a classical paper-based survey to establish the language use of students of the College of Europe. This survey was presented to students in two language versions (English and French) whereby half of them were prompted to fill in the questionnaire in French and the other half in English.⁴⁴ The main element of this survey was the so-called "student dyad item",⁴⁵ in which students had to indicate their language choice with a number of fellow students, ranging from 8 to 12. In cases where this was confirmed by the respective counterpart, the results of this survey were recorded in a final database.

As O' Driscoll suggests, this dyadic approach, which focuses on language behaviour with individuals rather than with classes of people, delivers very

⁴⁴O'Driscoll, J. 1999. *International communication and language choice in modern Europe*. Unpublished doctoral thesis. University of Gent, p. 239

⁴⁵Ibid, p. 230.

reliable results.⁴⁶ However, for the present study, practical considerations strongly militated against the establishment of such a dyadic database. Firstly, the number of students of the College of Europe has almost doubled since the academic year 1993/94. Secondly, the scope of this paper is far more limited than O’Driscoll’s doctoral thesis. For these reasons, the 2007/08 survey uses a simpler, if less accurate, approach which focuses on linguistic behaviour with classes of people rather than with individuals.

4.2 The 2007/08 survey

Our survey was addressed to all students who were enrolled at the College of Europe during the academic year 2007/08; this includes both campuses and all study programmes. The administration and design of the questionnaire took account of relevant standards for questionnaires in second language research.⁴⁷ In order to facilitate data processing and to minimize “empty replies”, closed questions were privileged. Nevertheless, students who wished to do so had the possibility to insert free comments throughout the questionnaire. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in the annex to this paper.

The questionnaire was administered in the form of an electronic survey. Students received a message on their College e-mail account inviting them to follow a link to the intranet and to fill in an anonymous questionnaire about their use of languages in the College.⁴⁸ The students had the choice between a questionnaire in French or in English. In contrast to O’Driscoll’s survey,⁴⁹ students were not prompted to fill in one of the two language versions. Therefore, several precautions were taken in order to avoid the electronic survey eliciting specific replies. The message inviting students to fill in the questionnaire contained all information in both English and French and indicated two hyperlinks directing students to the English and French versions of the questionnaire. It was

⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 246.

⁴⁷ Dornyei, Zoltan. 2003. *Questionnaires in Second Language Research: Construction, Administration, and Processing*. Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence, Erlbaum Associates.

⁴⁸ The message to students and the questionnaire can be found in the annex.

⁴⁹ See above, 4.1.

assumed that students would be familiar with filling in questionnaires published in the intranet, because this is a frequent procedure at the College. Students regularly fill in electronic questionnaires for different purposes such as signing up for courses, filling in course evaluations, questionnaires related to the career service, etc. Contrary to the “college custom” of using a single bilingual (English/French) questionnaire, two separate language versions were used. This seemed necessary for two reasons: firstly, due to the fact that the length of the questionnaire and the questions would have reduced both the visual attractiveness of a bilingual questionnaire and the willingness to fill in such questionnaire, and secondly, the students’ choice of one of the two language versions was the only way to elicit direct data on language behaviour (as opposed to indirect data reported in the survey).

As far as the content is concerned, the survey focused on the following aspects:

- Personal data (study programme, native language(s), students’ knowledge of the two working languages);
- Students’ oral use of language in communicating with different groups of persons in the academic community whose native language differs from their own;
- Students’ reasons underlying their intention to choose either English or French as the language of their LLM/MA thesis;
- Students’ opinion concerning the importance of English and French at the College of Europe.

To indicate their study programme students had to choose an icon from a drop-down menu. Likewise, students could choose their level in English and French by selecting an item corresponding to the Common European Framework languages scales.⁵⁰ An open question was used to record the L1 of the respondents. Thus, it was possible to indicate any language, multiple entries or

⁵⁰ http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/Portfolio/?L=E&M=/main_pages/levels.html, date of access: 1st of July 2008.

other comments in this rubric; the term L1 was not used in the survey in order to avoid confusion among respondents.

The questions referring to students' language use were aimed to establish the extent to which students use one rather than the other working language (or a third language) as a *lingua franca*.⁵¹ As it was assumed that students would normally use their L1 with a person of the same L1 group,⁵² they were asked to indicate the language they used with a person whose L1 differed from their own. They were also asked to indicate the extent to which, in such a situation, they would use English, French or another language on a percentage scale ranging in 10% steps from 0% to 100%, whereby the total sum had to amount to 100%. A set of questions distinguished between different scenarios. The chosen scenarios covered communication among students, communication between students and teaching assistants, students and professors, and communication between student and the administrative staff.

The next questions explored students' intention concerning the choice of language for their LLM/MA thesis. In this respect, students were also asked about the reasons underlying their choice.

Students also had the opportunity to react to a number of statements concerning the frequency of the use of English and French in the College using a classical Likert scale (*I strongly agree - I partly agree - I partly disagree - I strongly disagree*).

- In the College, **English is more often used than French**
- In the College, both English and French are used **to a comparable amount**
- In the College, French is more often used than English

⁵¹ Carson, Lorna (ed.). 2003. Multiple Europes 18: *Multilingualism in Europe*. Brussels: P.I.E.-Peter Lang, p. 29.

⁵²This seemed to be a relatively safe assumption. In the three years during which the author worked in the academic community of the College, he hardly ever witnessed a case where persons of the same L1 used another language for private conversations.

- In case you feel that one of the Colleges working languages (English/French) is less used, would you be in favour of measures reinforcing the use of this language?

Last but not least, those students who voiced the opinion that one of the working languages was less used than the other, were asked to indicate whether they were in favour of “measures reinforcing the use of the lesser used working languages”, and to describe what form these measures could take.

In addition to these structured questions, students had the possibility to comment on every question. A number of these comments will be discussed in the following sections. The reference for these comments is as follows: English or French version of the questionnaire, anonymous registration number, study programme and L1 (e.g.: #F44, IRD student, L1 French means: respondent filled in the French questionnaire number 44, enrolled in IRD, L1 French).

4.3 The statistical analysis of LLM/MA theses

The statistical analysis of students’ LLM/MA theses established the extent to which students chose to write their LLM/MA thesis in English or French. The collected data was processed according to the academic year, the nationality of the student and the study programme⁵³ and should permit to identify the relevant trends in the respective use of the two working languages. The analysis covers approximately 4700 papers written during the last 14 years. This time frame was chosen for two reasons: firstly, because it made it possible to include nearly the totality⁵⁴ of MA/LLM theses written by students of the College of Europe since the requirement to write such a thesis was introduced in the curriculum in 1992; secondly, because this time frame permits to cover the academic year 1993/94, during which O’Driscoll collected his data on language use in the College of Europe.

⁵³ The IRD programme exists only since the academic year 2006; therefore, the data is limited to a single year as far as this programme is concerned.

⁵⁴ With the exception of the theses of academic year 1992/93, to which access proved to be too difficult;

5. The results of the questionnaire

The questionnaire was filled in by 116 out of a total of 410 students of the academic year 2007/08. This amounts to an overall return rate of approximately 30% (ECO: 18%, DROIT: 22%, IRD: 21%, POL: 29% and EIS: 42%). With the exception of EIS, the return rate was relatively equally distributed among study programmes.⁵⁵ The comparatively higher return rate among EIS students might be due to the specific educational background of the students in this programme (a sizeable number of EIS students hold degrees in languages) and the fact that the author of the message inviting students to fill in the electronic survey was personally known to all of these students.

The return rate seems relatively evenly spread among the different L1 language groups.⁵⁶ The fact that out of the 116 students who returned the questionnaires, 27 have been considered to have French as (one of their) L1 and only 10 to have English as L1 corresponds to the overall ratio of students from countries in which French L1 is frequent (e.g. all students from France, and a part of the students from Belgium, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Algeria and Lebanon) compared to students from countries where English is typically L1 (e.g. Ireland, UK, USA, partly Malta).⁵⁷ The higher number of French L1ers probably finds its explanation in the fact that the College of Europe is traditionally more popular among French graduates than among British graduates, which may be due to a different perception of the European integration process in these two countries.⁵⁸

On the whole, the return rate and spread of returns among different study programmes and L1 groups seem to indicate a sufficient representativeness of the survey. What is more, many respondents used the possibility to enter “free” comments. Together with the relatively respectable return rate, this seems to

⁵⁵ See below, table 4.

⁵⁶ See below, table 5.

⁵⁷ See table 1

⁵⁸ This is also reflected in the number of scholarships governments make available for their nationals to study at the College of Europe.

indicate that the question of language use in the College of Europe is an issue of concern for many students.

5.1 French or English version of the questionnaire?

Out of the 116 students who returned the questionnaire 42% preferred filling in the French version and 58% the English version, which means that English was preferred to French by a ratio of 3:2. However, the preference for either version seems to vary significantly according to the study programme and L1 of the respondents.

5.1.1 Differences according to the study programme

	English version	French version
DROIT	10	12
POL	13	16
IRD	12	3
ECO	4	3
EIS	26	17

Table 4 – French or English version of questionnaire; differences according to study programme of respondents.

Table 4 shows that, with the exception of the returns from students of the IRD programme, the use of the English and French version of the questionnaire was relatively evenly spread, ranging from 55% of returns in French and 45% in English in POL to 40 % of returns in French and 60 % in English in ECO and EIS. However, the comparative figures for the IRD programme indicate a clear preference for the English version (80 % of returns in English and only 20 % in French). This might serve as an indication that students of this programme perceive English as by far the most important working language.

5.1.2 Differences according to the L1

The following table displays the languages which students have indicated as their native language(s). It also indicates which language version of the questionnaire students have preferred to fill in.

Native language(s)	English version	French version
Armenian	1	
Arabic	1	
Bulgarian	1	
Catalan		1
Croatian	1	
Czech	1	
Danish	3	
Dutch	2	1
English	7	2
French		22
French / Polish ⁵⁹	1	1
French / Arabic ⁶⁰		2
French / Turkish ⁶¹		1
French / German ⁶²		1
German	12	1
German / Hungarian	1	
German / Polish	1	
Greek	2	
Italian	3	3
Luxembourgish		1
Maltese / English ⁶³	1	
Portuguese	5	
Polish	5	1
Romanian	2	2

⁵⁹ For purposes of this study, French was considered to be L1

⁶⁰ For purposes of this study, French was considered to be L1

⁶¹ For purposes of this study, French was considered to be L1

⁶² For purposes of this study, French was considered to be L1

⁶³ For purposes of this study, English was considered to be L1

Russian	1	1
Russian / Ukrainian	2	
Russian / Romanian	1	
Serbian	1	
Slovak	1	
Spanish	5	7
Spanish / Galician	1	
Spanish / Catalan		1
Swedish	2	
Swedish /Finnish	1	
Swedish / Hungarian	1	
Ukrainian	1	1

Table 5 – French or English version of questionnaire; differences according to L1 of respondents.

With one exception, all students who claimed French as their L1 have chosen to fill in the French version of the questionnaire whereas not all students with English L1 have opted for the version in their native language. Apart from L1ers of French, the French version was popular among L1ers of Luxembourgish (100%), Spanish (60%), Italian and Romanian (both 50%). L1ers of all other languages (e.g. German, Danish, Dutch, Swedish, Polish, Portuguese and Russian) more often preferred the English version of the questionnaire.

The choice of the language version of the questionnaire seems to indicate the following two considerations. Firstly, students of the IRD programme clearly preferred filling in the English version. Secondly, the preference for English or French seems to be to a certain extent linked to the linguistic family to which students' L1 belongs. Students with Slavic or Germanic L1 mostly preferred the English version. However, the French version was popular among students who indicated a Romance language (French, Spanish, Italian and Romanian) as L1. Interestingly, this rule does not hold true for students with Portuguese L1, who all preferred filling in the English version of the questionnaire. On the whole, this might be an indication that French is the preferred working language (at least for

filling in questionnaires) of students with a Romance L1, with the noteworthy exception of Portuguese. All other students seem to prefer English.

5.2 The students' level in the two working languages

According to the self-evaluation in the 2007/08 survey, the knowledge of working languages among students is quite diverse. While some students are proficient in both English and French, most students seem to have a better knowledge of one of the two working languages. Moreover, despite the rigorous selection procedure,⁶⁴ a number of admitted students seem to have weaknesses in one or even both working language(s).

Figures 1 and 2 show the distribution of the knowledge of English and French in the College of Europe and in the different study programmes. As can be seen, students evaluate their level of English higher than their level of French. While more than 80% of students have indicated to be proficient in English (level C1 or higher) only 55% of students did so for French.

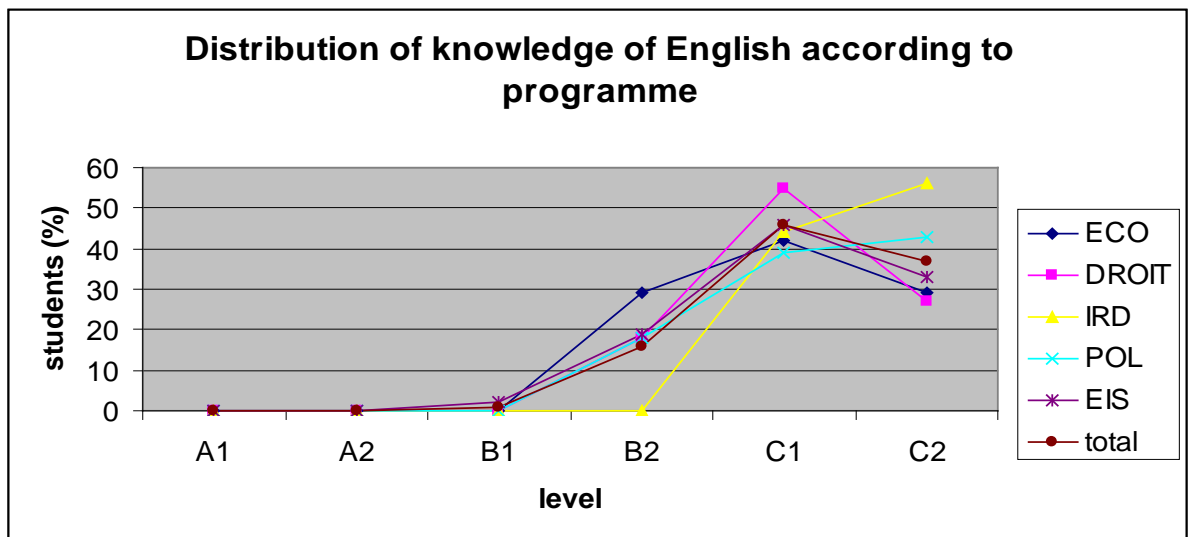


Figure 1, knowledge of English according to programme

⁶⁴ see above, 3.3.

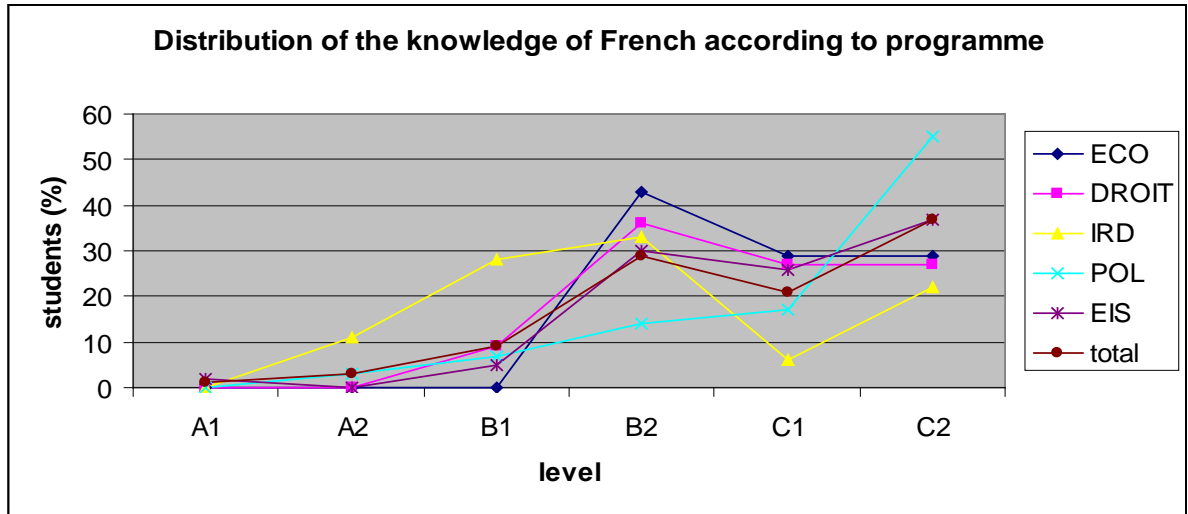


Figure 2, knowledge of French according to programme

Figures 1 and 2 also show that there are more students with a low level of French than a low level of English. Approximately 10% of students indicated to have a level of French of B1 or lower; hardly any student indicated to have a level of English lower than B2. The figures also show that, students' self assessment of working language knowledge is fairly homogenous in all study programmes, although there are two exceptions to this rule:

Firstly, students of the POL programme seem to have more often a native-speaker level of French than other students (55% have indicated a level of C2 in French compared to a level of about 35% for the other programmes). The reason for this aberration might be the fact that this programme is particularly popular among students with French L1.

Secondly, the linguistic profile of the students of the IRD programme differs from their colleagues' in that they have a higher level of English (100% claimed to hold a C1 or above) and a lower level of French (only 20% of them hold a C1 or above, nearly 40% of them hold a B1 or less). This divergence from the other programmes can be explained by the different linguistic admission criteria for these students.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ see above, 3.3.

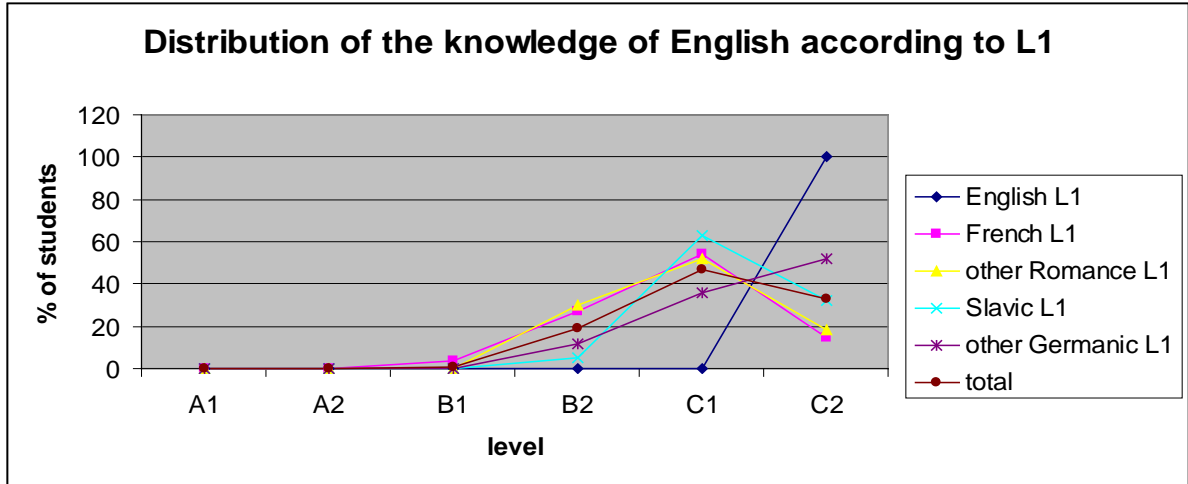


Figure 3, knowledge of English according to L1

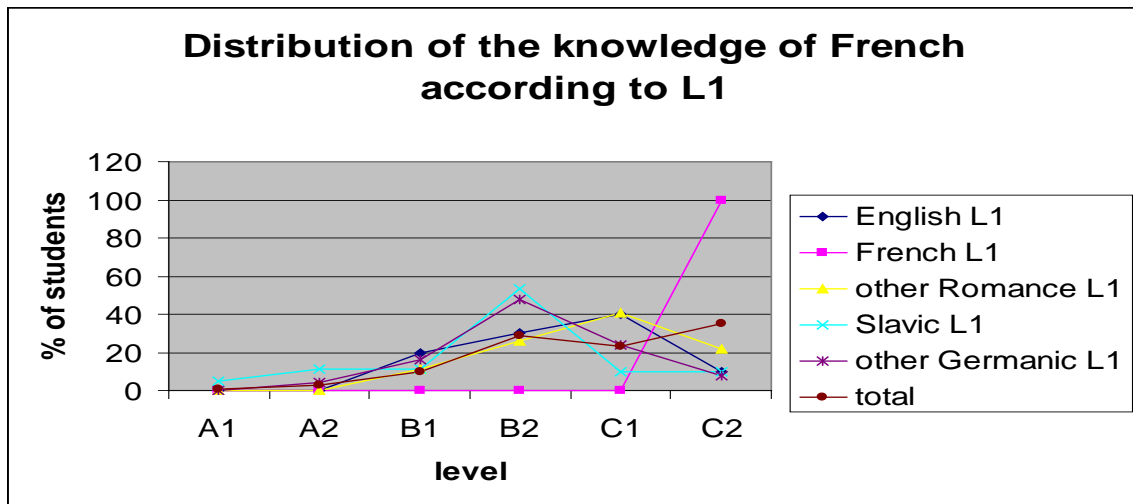


Figure 4, knowledge of French according to L1

Figures 3 and 4 show how students with different L1 have evaluated their knowledge of the two working languages. Unsurprisingly, all L1ers of English and French have indicated a level of C2 in their respective L1. Still, the level of English among French L1ers seems to be generally higher than the level of French among English L1ers. The rate of proficiency in the other working language is nearly 60% for French L1ers compared to 50% for English L1ers. Likewise, there are few French L1ers who indicated to have a level of English of B1 or lower (5%), however, a substantial part of English L1ers (20%) stated to have a level of B1 or lower in French.

Students with Slavic or Germanic L1 claimed more often to be proficient in English (nearly 90% of them) than in French (only 35% for Germanic L1ers and a mere 20% for Slavic L1ers). Likewise a substantial part of them claimed to have deficiencies in French (20% stated to have a level of B1 or lower) while nearly none of them indicated this for English.

Students with a Romance L1 indicated more often to be proficient in French than other students (60%) but were even more proficient in English (70%). Only 10% of them indicated a low level in French and virtually none of them indicated the same for English.

Self-assessment is certainly not the most exact way of determining students' level of knowledge. Although it can give, at most, an educated guess at students' real knowledge, it certainly shows students' confidence with regard to the two working languages, which might possibly be an important factor for their choice of languages. Still, the data based on self-evaluation of students, does seem fairly reliable and corresponds by and large to the estimation made by the language service of the College of Europe, which tests the level of French and English of many admitted students upon their arrival.⁶⁶ According to the language services' estimation, 15 % of students have a level of B1 or lower in French and 5% of students in English. What is more, only 70% of students are proficient (level C1 or above) in English and 50% of students in French. If one compares these estimations with students' self-assessment, it seems that 5-10% of students over-estimated their language skills.

Proficiency in English: 80% (students), 70% (language service estimation)
Proficiency in French: 55% (students), 50% (language service estimation)
Deficiencies in English: 0% (students), 5% (language services estimation)
Deficiencies in French: 10% (students), 15% (language services estimation)

Despite this discrepancy, it is evident that the number of students who are proficient in English, i.e., who reach at least level C1 in this language, is

⁶⁶ Source: Ms Angela O'Neill, Head of the language service of the College of Europe, telephone conversation, October 2007.

considerably higher than the number of students who are proficient in French. Moreover, the number of students with language deficiencies in English is lower than the comparable number for French. What is more, the number of students who, without being L1ers of this language, have reached proficiency in a working language is far higher than in English than in French. Indeed, nearly 90% of proficient users of English are not L1ers, compared to nearly 50 % for French.⁶⁷

5.3 Language use

5.3.1 Language use among students

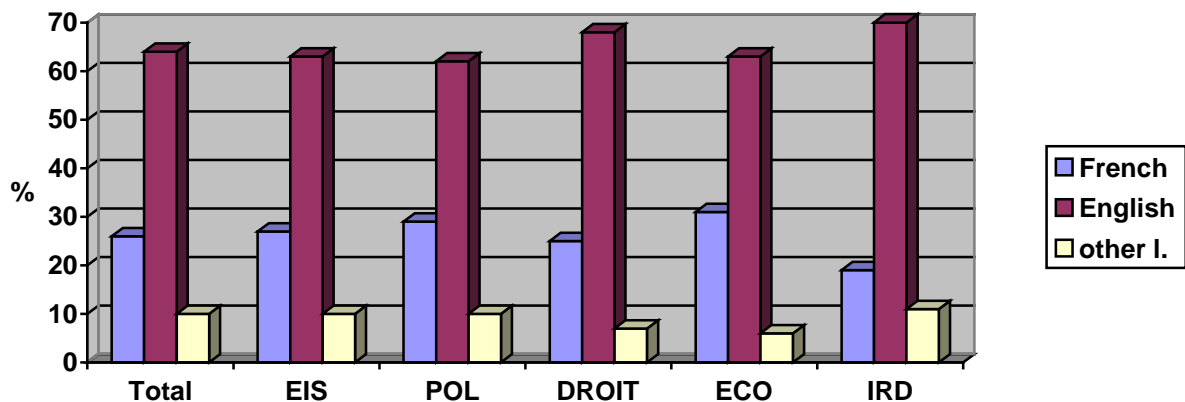


Figure 5, language use among students with different L1

English is, with 64%, the most popular vehicular language. French occupies the second place with a frequency of 26%. This situation is comparable in most study programmes. Only the students of the IRD programme seem to use French significantly less often (19%) than the students of the other programmes. One respondent commented on the situation in the IRD programme in the following terms:

⁶⁷ See above: 27 students with L1 French, 10 students with L1 English;

*“en IRD, la langue prédominante c’est l’anglais, tous les cours [...] sont en anglais. Dans un tel environnement l’usage du français semble forcée (sic !) et mal vu”.*⁶⁸

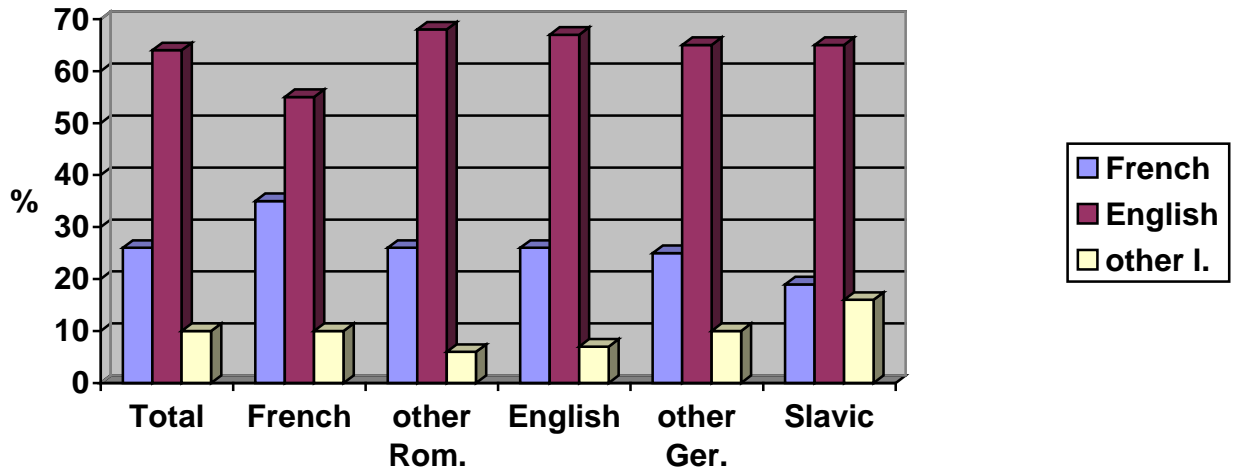


Figure 6, language use among students of different L1 according to L1 of respondent

The use of English and French as a vehicular language is also fairly comparable if one considers the different L1 of the respondents. English L1ers used English with L1ers of other languages not more than other students. Only the L1ers of French reported a higher use of French (35%) than the others. L1ers of Slavic languages used French less than average (19%), but reported instead the use of a third language, probably Russian and (especially at the Natolin campus) Polish. Within the different language families there were hardly any noteworthy differences. Students with Dutch or German L1 seem to use French slightly more often than students with a Scandinavian L1. Russian and Ukrainian L1ers reported an even lower use of French than the L1ers of the other Slavic languages but a higher use of a third language.

⁶⁸ #F52, IRD, L1 Dutch.

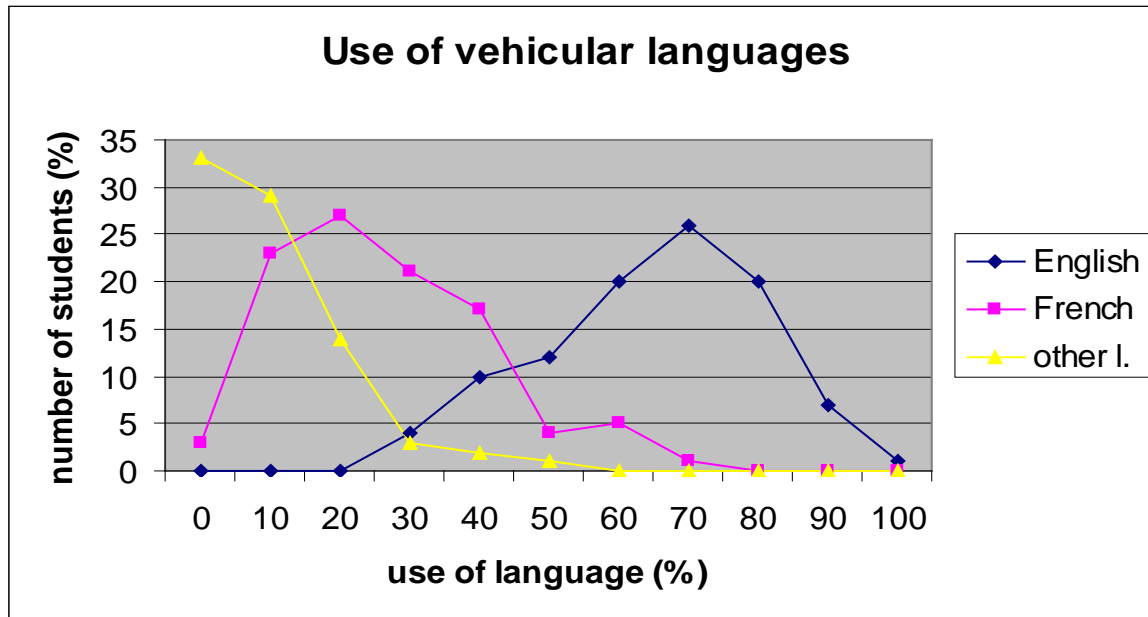


Figure 7, frequency of the use of languages.

Figure 7 shows that one can distinguish between three groups of students according to the frequency with which they use a specific vehicular language. The first group, which amounts to 28% of students, predominantly uses English (80% or more). The second group, 58% of students, prefers English (50-70%) but uses French to a considerable extent (30-50%). The last and very small group, about 14% of students, privileges the use of French (60-70%) over English (30-40%). There is virtually no student who uses a third vehicular language more than 20%.

Students widely commented on their use of vehicular languages. Many students reported that English was the more popular language, e.g.:

“the starting language [of a conversation] is usually English”;⁶⁹

“the majority of [students] in the College prefer speaking English”;⁷⁰

“English just comes out naturally [when] I speak.”⁷¹

Some students explained the more frequent use of English by its “simplicity” and students’ higher competence in this language:

⁶⁹ #E53, POL, L1 German.

⁷⁰ #E12, EIS, L1 Spanish.

⁷¹ #E58, EIS, L1 Portuguese.

“English is easier and many [students] don’t do well in French” ;⁷²
“l’anglais est la langue la mieux parlée au campus” ;⁷³
“je parle majoritairement en anglais avec les autres étudiants, [...] parce que la plupart des non-francophones sont plus à l’aise en anglais qu’en français” ;⁷⁴
“l’anglais est LA langue d’échange entre les étudiants. Ceux-ci connaissent souvent nettement moins bien le français.”⁷⁵

One student, enrolled in a programme in which a level of B2 in French was obligatory for admission, reported that s/he and a number of other students could not speak French at all:

”The College seems to [...] accept students – like myself – with no previous knowledge of French [...] assuming that we will somehow learn it”.⁷⁶

Still, many students reported that the desire to practice a specific language had an influence on the language use among students, e.g.:

“les étudiants dont la langue maternelle est l’anglais essayent de parler français pour renforcer leur usage de cette langue et c’est de même pour ceux dont la langue maternelle est le français qui cherchent à renforcer leur anglais”;⁷⁷

“I wish I could speak more French but unfortunately as a mother tongue English speaker the students revert back to English if I struggle with a word or two [in French]”;⁷⁸

“tout le monde préfère par défaut l’anglais [...], c’est qui est ennuyant pour moi puisque je voudrais bien améliorer mon français”;⁷⁹

“comme je suis française, les autres étudiants me parlent [...] d’emblée en français pour le pratiquer, ce qui fait que je ne parle pas autant d’anglais que je le souhaiterais.”⁸⁰

One respondent also indicated that some French L1ers showed a certain reluctance to use French as a vehicular language with students who did not have a high level of French:

“French-speaking students are not very eager to speak French with people who are not native speakers of French [...] once they see that the level of French [of the person starting a conversation in this language] is not very advanced [...] they always switch to English”⁸¹

⁷² #E11, EIS, L1 Danish.

⁷³ #F25, EIS, L1 Catalan.

⁷⁴ #F6, EIS, L1 French, similar: #F19, IRD, L1 Spanish.

⁷⁵ #33, POL, L1 French.

⁷⁶ #E17, EIS, L1 Spanish.

⁷⁷ #F44, IRD, L1 French.

⁷⁸ #E36, DR, L1 English.

⁷⁹ #F28, POL, L1 Spanish.

⁸⁰ #F11, EIS, L1 French.

⁸¹ #E34, ECO, L1 Polish.

A French L1er confirmed this tendency:

*“[j]’utilise] le français seulement si [les autres étudiants] le parlent bien”.*⁸²

The comparatively higher use of French reported by French L1ers in their communication with non French L1ers (35% compared to 26%)⁸³ together with the fact that only about two thirds of students (among them probably all L1ers of French) use French to some extent as a vehicular language suggest that this use of French is largely restricted to communication between French L1ers and other students. If one adopts Ammon’s terminology, the use of French among students in the College can therefore largely be characterized as confined to asymmetric vehicular situations.⁸⁴ This use of French was also confirmed by numerous respondents, e.g.:

*“avec les personnes de nationalité française, je parle en français [...] mais en général je parle anglais,”*⁸⁵ »

*“with French native speakers I speak in French, [...] with students from other countries [...] in English” ;*⁸⁶

*“[...] when we are in a group with non native French speakers we [...] speak English”;*⁸⁷

*“comme je suis française, les autres étudiants me parlent [...] d’emblée en français pour le pratiquer, ce qui fait que je ne parle pas autant d’anglais que je le souhaiterais ;”*⁸⁸

*“les étudiants étrangers”⁸⁹ veulent parler français avec les français ;”*⁹⁰

*“je parle français avec les francophones”.*⁹¹

⁸² #F9, EIS, L1 French.

⁸³ See above, Figure 3.

⁸⁴ Ammon, Ulrich. 1991, *Die internationale Stellung der deutschen Sprache*. Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, page 76.

⁸⁵ #F16, IRD, L1 Spanish.

⁸⁶ #E64, IRD, L1 Swedish/Finnish.

⁸⁷ #E42, POL, L1 English.

⁸⁸ #F11, EIS, L1 French.

⁸⁹ An interesting comment! What does the term “foreign student” signify in a community which consists of more than 50 nationalities? For this French student studying in Bruges, Belgium, “foreign student” meant “not French”.

⁹⁰ #F40, ECO, L1 French.

⁹¹ #F30, DR, L1 English.

5.3.2 Language use between students and assistants

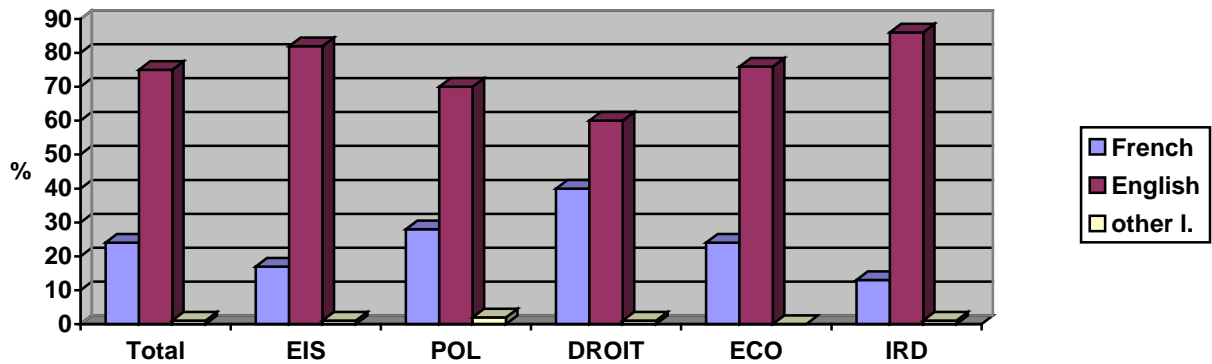


Figure 8, language use between students and teaching assistants (with different L1)

Only the working languages English and French are used as vehicular languages between students and assistants. English is most widely used. The ratio of the use of English and French depends to a large extent on the study programme. In DROIT both English and French are used to a comparable extent (60% English, 40% French). In EIS, ECO and POL English is by far more often used than French. In IRD this language dominates with 86%.

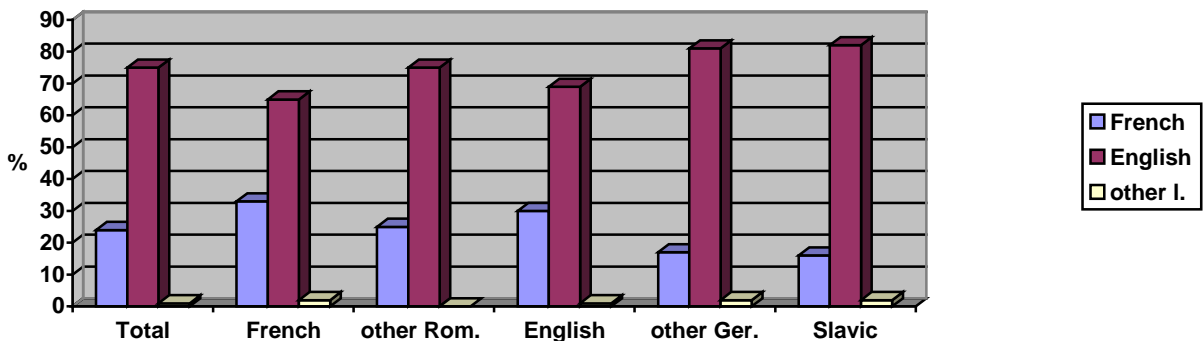


Figure 9, language use student-assistant (with different L1) according to L1 of respondent

The L1ers of French and English report a convergent use of vehicular languages. Both groups tend to use English less often than the average (65% and 69%, compared to an average of 75%) and more often French (33% and 30% compared to an average of 25%). L1ers of other Romance languages follow the

overall average. L1ers of other Germanic languages and Slavic languages use English more often than the average (81% and 82%) and French less often (17% and 16%).

Among the different reasons given, some students referred to their own lower level of English, e.g.:

“I am more fluent in English; therefore it is easier to discuss academic questions [...] in English.”⁹²

“I can explain academic concepts better [in English].”⁹³

However, some students also felt that English was more appropriate for the discussion of academic subjects than French, e.g.:

“There is a barrier to cross when speaking French on technical matters.”⁹⁴

“English is the language of most of the academic literature [...]”⁹⁵

Some students indicated that they would speak English with teaching assistants because they seemed to be more comfortable in this language:

“[...] *je pense que les assistants [...] sont plus à l'aise en anglais.*”⁹⁶

“[...] most of them seem to be more comfortable with English than [...] French.”⁹⁷

Some students categorically stated (unfortunately without giving reasons) that they would speak French with assistants only if they belonged to the French L1 group, or if they had French nationality:

“*on approche seulement les assistants de langue maternelle française en français – avec tous les autres on utilise l'anglais*”;⁹⁸

“*cela dépend de la langue maternelle de l'assistant. S'il est français j'utilise ce dernier*”;⁹⁹

“*Si l'assistant est français, je parle français avec lui, sinon je parle anglais*”.¹⁰⁰

⁹² #E37, POL, L1 German.

⁹³ #E55, POL, L1 Italian.

⁹⁴ #E11, EIS, L1 Danish.

⁹⁵ #E55, POL, L1 Italian.

⁹⁶ #6F, EIS, L1 French.

⁹⁷ #42, POL, L1 English.

⁹⁸ #F10, EIS, L1 German.

⁹⁹ #F13, EIS, L1 Polish

¹⁰⁰ #F11, EIS, L1 French.

However, a majority of respondents declared that they would always speak with teaching assistants in the language of the courses they assist. Students claimed to respect this pattern of language use even in situations not related to the specific course:

*“Je parle toujours la langue du cours.”*¹⁰¹

*“[...] en fonction de la langue des cours.”*¹⁰²

*“Je m’adresse [...] aux assistants dans la langue du cours du professeur qu’ils assistant.”*¹⁰³

*“It depends on [the language of] the course.”*¹⁰⁴

*“This strongly depends on the language the lecture is given.”*¹⁰⁵

*“[...] dans la langue dans laquelle le cours se donne.”*¹⁰⁶

*“Je parle en général en anglais, parce que tous les cours sont en anglais.”*¹⁰⁷

*“[En anglais, parce que] l’usage de l’anglais pour les cours [et] tutorats est prédominant par rapport au français.”*¹⁰⁸

The choice of the vehicular language corresponds by and large to the respective repartition of working languages for the courses in the different study programmes.¹⁰⁹ In general, students seem to respect the custom of using the “language of the course” as a vehicular language with the assistant who deals with this course. This seems to be particularly the case with students whose L1 is English or French. A number of students seem to use French only with teaching assistants who belong to the French L1 group (or even have French nationality). The use of English does not seem to depend on the fact of whether or not the assistant belongs to the English L1 group.

¹⁰¹ #F22, DR, L1 Dutch.

¹⁰² #F31, EIS, L1 English.

¹⁰³ #F45, DR, L1 French.

¹⁰⁴ #E34, ECO, L1 Polish.

¹⁰⁵ #E56, DR, L1 German.

¹⁰⁶ #F19, ECO, L1 Spanish.

¹⁰⁷ #F16, IRD, L1 Spanish.

¹⁰⁸ #F44, IRD, L1 French.

¹⁰⁹ See above, 3.2.1.

5.3.3 Language use between students and professors

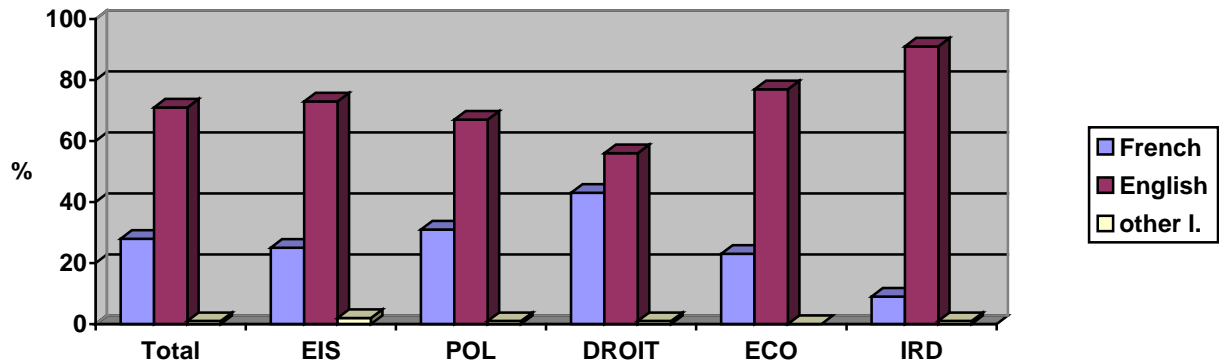


Figure 10, language use between students and professors (with different L1)

Similarly to the situation as between students and assistants,¹¹⁰ only the two working languages are used as vehicular languages between students and professors. In total, English is most widely used (71%, compared to 28% in French). The ratio of the use of English and French again depends to a large extent on the study programme. In DROIT both English and French are used to a comparable extent (56% English, 43% French). In POL, ECO and EIS English is by far more often used than French. Yet again, in IRD this language dominates with 91%.

¹¹⁰ See above, 5.3.2.

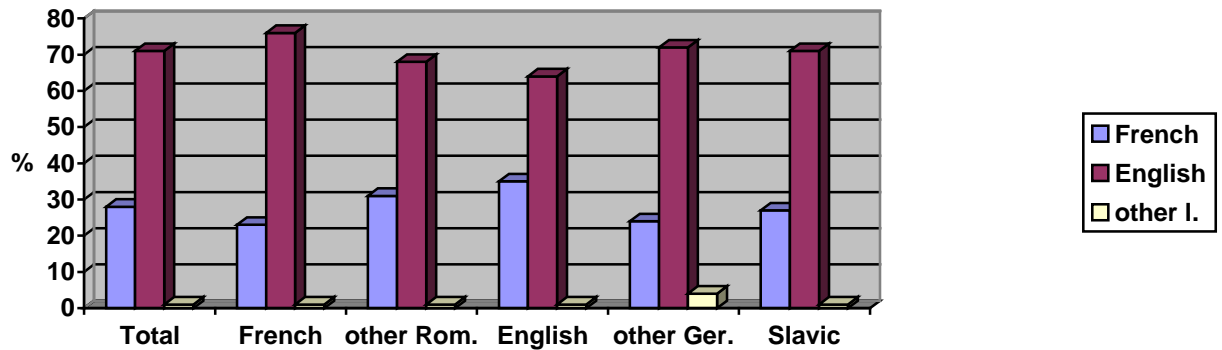


Figure 11, language use between students and professors (with different L1) according to L1 of respondent

Figure 8 shows a remarkable difference in the use of vehicular languages between French L1ers and English L1ers. It seems that students whose L1 is English are less likely to use this language with a professor than the average student (64% compared to an average of 71%). Instead, their use of French is more frequent (35% compared to an average of 28%). Conversely, students with French L1 are more likely to use English (76%) and less likely to use French (23%) with a professor than the average student.

L1ers of other Romance languages use slightly less English (68%) and more French (31%) and L1ers of Slavic languages and other Germanic languages use slightly more often English (71% and 72%) and less often French (27 and 24%) than the average student. A number of students whose L1 is a Germanic language report the very limited use (4%) of other vehicular languages.

According to students' comments it seems that the choice of language is to a large extent determined by the language in which the professor teaches:

*“Je parle toujours la langue du cours.”*¹¹¹

*“Le pourcentage correspond à la division linguistique des cours.”*¹¹²

*“Le choix de la langue est fonction de la langue du cours.”*¹¹³

¹¹¹ #F22, DR, L1 Dutch.

¹¹² #F27, EIS, L1 Spanish.

“*Ca depend du cours – s’il est en français ou en anglais.*”¹¹⁴
“[...] always the language in which the course is taught.”¹¹⁵
“it actually depends on the language in which the professor teaches.”¹¹⁶
“I have only classes in English.”¹¹⁷
“*anglais [parce que] tous les cours [...] sont en anglais.*”¹¹⁸

Still, some students seem to stop using the language of the course with the professor as soon as they leave the classroom:

“*Je m’adresse aux professeurs dans la langue du cours. En dehors du cours [...] quasi toujours en anglais.*”¹¹⁹

Some students also felt that many professors were more familiar with English than with French:

“*La plupart des professeurs [...] sont plus à l’aise en anglais; certains ne parlent même pas du tout français.*”¹²⁰
“Most professors are English speaking.”¹²¹

On the whole, the ‘language of the course’ is most often the vehicular language between students and professors. French and English L1ers among the students seem to be particularly eager to use the working language which is *not* their L1 as a vehicular language with professors.¹²²

¹¹³ #F30, DR, L1 English.

¹¹⁴ #F32, POL, L1 Romanian.

¹¹⁵ #E4, EIS, L1 German.

¹¹⁶ #E5, EIS, L1 Italian.

¹¹⁷ #E40, IRD, L1 Hungarian.

¹¹⁸ #F16, IRD, L1 Spanish.

¹¹⁹ #F18, DR, L1 French.

¹²⁰ #F6, EIS, L1 French.

¹²¹ #E11, EIS, L1 Danish.

¹²² See below,

5.3.4 Language use between students and the administration

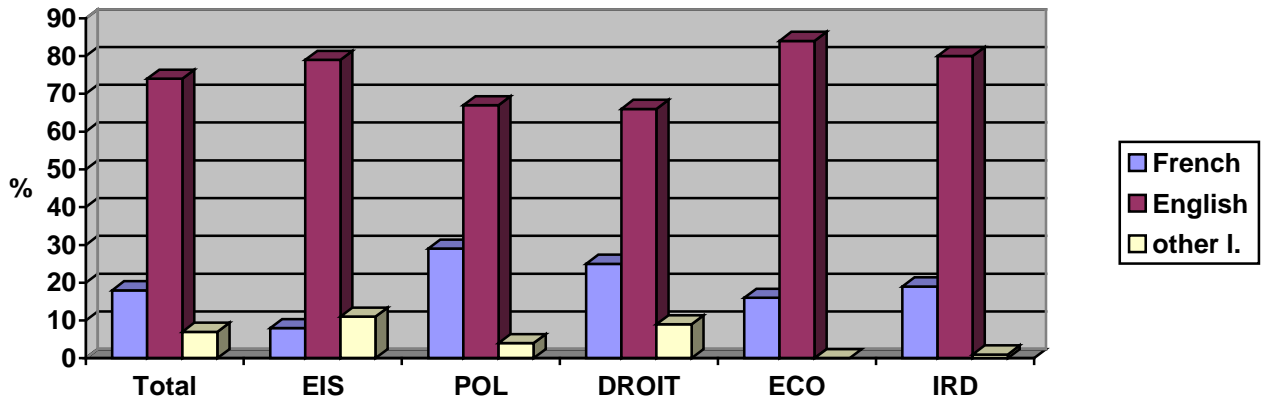


Figure 12, language use between students and administrative staff (with different L1)

English is the most frequently used vehicular language between students and the administration (74%). French only accounts for a total of 18%. The use of French is particularly rare at the Natolin campus (8%). Third languages have a certain importance as vehicular languages, which is probably due to the fact that a large part of the administrative staff consists of Dutch and (in the Natolin Campus) of Polish L1ers.¹²³

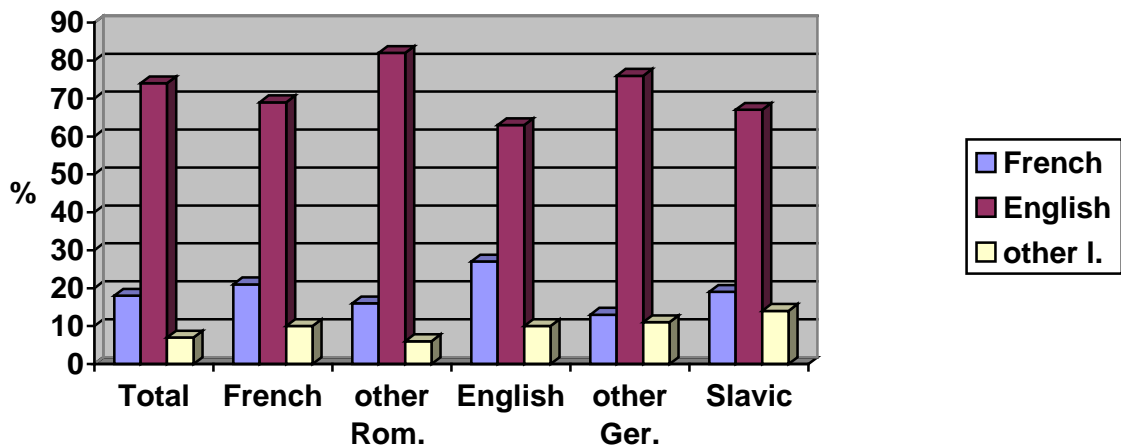


Figure 13, language use between students and administrative staff according to L1

¹²³ See above, 2.2.

Students with French L1 and particularly students with English L1 use French more often with administrative staff than with their colleagues (21% and 27% compared to an average of 18%). Students with Slavic L1 use a third vehicular language twice as often as the other students (14% compared to an average of 7%). It may safely be assumed that this is due to the statistical effect of the situation at the Natolin campus,¹²⁴ and that the third languages in question are Polish and to a certain extent Russian.

Students provided only very few comments on their language use with the administrative staff. As might be expected, a number of respondents declared that their language use results from their wish to practice either Dutch or Polish, e.g.:

*“J’essaye de parler néerlandais avec le personnel.”*¹²⁵

*“J’essaye de mettre en pratique le polonais.”*¹²⁶

One student also made reference to the “Belgian language conflict” as a reason for his/her use of English with Flemish members of the administration:

*“Je parle en anglais [avec le personnel administratif] parce que la plupart [d’eux] est flamand et [...] plus contents si on leur parle pas en français.”*¹²⁷

¹²⁴ Students of the NATOLIN Campus (EIS) were slightly overrepresented among the respondents to the survey; see above, 5.

¹²⁵ #F23, POL, L1 French.

¹²⁶ #F9, EIS, L1 French.

¹²⁷ #F19, ECO, L1 Spanish.

5.4 The global perception of the working language balance in the College of Europe – a case for interventionism?

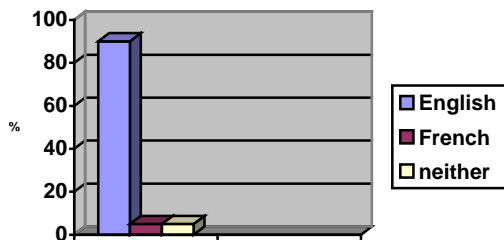


Figure 14, Which language is more often used in the College of Europe?

On the whole, there can be no doubt that students do have the impression that English is the dominant working language in the College of Europe. Figure 11 shows that 90% of all students believe that English is more often used than French (56% strongly believe that this is the case and 34% believe that this is at least the case to a certain extent). Only a few students (5% each) have the impression that French is more often used than English or that both languages are used to a comparable extent.

The majority of students (64%) seem to be in favour of measures reinforcing the use of the lesser used working language, i.e. French.¹²⁸

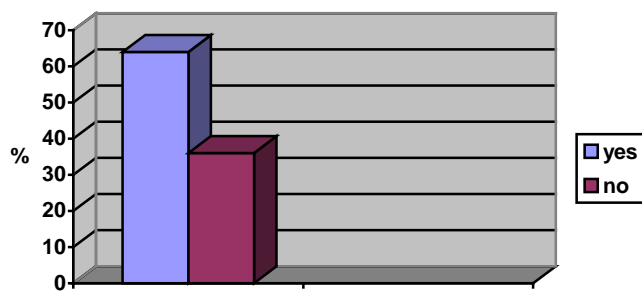


Figure 15, Would you be in favour of measures reinforcing the use of the lesser used working language?

¹²⁸ See below, Figure 11.

Students had the opportunity to comment on this question. If they pronounced themselves in favour of some form of “linguistic intervention”, they were also asked to provide concrete examples of “measures reinforcing the use of the lesser used working language”. The amount and length of the comments show that many students are quite passionate with regard to this issue. A number of students also used the occasion to criticize what is, in their view, an insufficiently bilingual setting at the College of Europe.

Some students felt that the College admission policy was the cause for this situation:

“[...] some students who are admitted do not speak sufficient French [...] this is very frustrating for those who want to use both languages [...] the College should be more rigorous in its selection procedure.”¹²⁹

A large number of students expressed their concern that French did not have a fair share in the academic programme:

*“L’anglais est la langue largement dominant au Collège d’Europe. [...] l’anglais est [...] largement dominant [dans le programme académique].”*¹³⁰

*“[...] les matières a fort coefficient sont en anglais [...] [au moins le cours du] droit devrait être en français.”*¹³¹

*“[...] les cours dits ‘secondaires’ [sont] en français, les matières majeures en anglais.”*¹³²

*“J’aimerais bien avoir un élément du tronc commun [politique, droit ou économie] en français.”*¹³³

*“[...] on s’attend à recevoir une formation bilingue. [...] mais l’environnement est tout à fait dominé par l’anglais [...] cela dépouille le Collège de son avantage comparatif.”*¹³⁴

*“[...] renforcer l’usage du français, augmenter le nombre de cours en français.”*¹³⁵

“[...] In my economics programme I don’t have any French classes at all [...] [and] I [came] to study at the College to practice my French!”¹³⁶

“[I would be] in favour of more courses or research seminars in French.”¹³⁷

¹²⁹ #E4, EIS, L1 German.

¹³⁰ #F6, EIS, L1 French.

¹³¹ #F1, EIS, L1 French.

¹³² #F8, EIS, L1 French.

¹³³ #F31, EIS, L1 English.

¹³⁴ #F52, IRD, L1 Dutch.

¹³⁵ #F44, IRD, L1 French/Arabic.

¹³⁶ #E32, ECO, L1 Dutch.

¹³⁷ #E42, POL, L1 English.

“The College wants to profile itself as a bilingual institution [...] but I think the focus is clearly on English.”¹³⁸

“There should be more stress on French, through French classes, seminars and conferences.”¹³⁹

“If the College were really bilingual, (50/50), [this] would help me a lot to improve my French.”¹⁴⁰

“It would be great to use [not only English but] both languages equally or close to equal!”¹⁴¹

“[...] it should not be possible to choose [courses] so as to avoid French, which is currently possible.”¹⁴²

However, a number of students felt that the situation in the law programme (DROIT) was satisfactory:

“[...] as regards the law dept, I don’t think the College needs to take any measures to strengthen the French language.”¹⁴³

“[...] due to the language rules in the law department we attend lectures in French and English to a comparable amount.”¹⁴⁴

*“Dans le département de droit, le programme est déjà tout à fait bilingue.”*¹⁴⁵

On the other hand, a large, if less vocal, minority of students (36%) was opposed to the idea of “language interventionism” from the side of the College, e.g.:

“This is a thing to consider for every student based on his/her future linguistic needs [not for the College].”¹⁴⁶

“Bilingualism should be [...] an opportunity [not] a means of coercion.”¹⁴⁷

“English IS the dominating language which is a fact that should be accepted. [...] any further re-enforcing [of French] would be artificial.”¹⁴⁸

A number of respondents who were against “linguistic interventionism” strongly pronounced themselves in favour of English as a single working language:

*“Comme l’anglais est de plus en plus utilisé en Europe, je suis plutôt de l’opinion que le Collège doit utiliser que l’anglais.”*¹⁴⁹

¹³⁸ #E64, IRD, L1 Swedish.

¹³⁹ #E34, ECO, L1 Polish.

¹⁴⁰ #E18, EIS, L1 Bulgarian.

¹⁴¹ #E40, IRD, L1 Hungarian.

¹⁴² #E4, EIS, L1 German.

¹⁴³ #E28, DR, L1 Swedish.

¹⁴⁴ #E56, DR, L1 German.

¹⁴⁵ #F45, DR, L1 French.

¹⁴⁶ #E10, EIS, L1 Polish.

¹⁴⁷ #E51, DR, L1 German.

¹⁴⁸ #E44, POL, L1 German.

¹⁴⁹ #F22, DR, L1 Dutch.

*“Dans l’Europe d’aujourd’hui [...] il devient difficile de justifier l’usage du français [...]. Pourquoi le français [...] et pas l’allemand, le polonais ou l’espagnol?”*¹⁵⁰

“[...] the use of French has nothing to do with communication [...] it is a policy decision. I am strongly in favor of a single working language: English.”¹⁵¹

“I sincerely believe French is an overrated language, totally useless [...].”¹⁵²

However, some students also explicitly approved of the current situation in the College, e.g.:

“I think the way languages are used now at the College is good. [It] reflects students’ competence.”¹⁵³

5.5 Analysis of and comparison with O’Driscoll’s data from 1993/94

The following sections focus on some important points common to the use of languages in the communicative contexts examined above. They also provide a comparison with O’Driscoll’s conclusions dating back 14 years.

5.5.1 Dominance of the working languages

Figures 5-13 clearly show that no language other than the two working languages of the College has any considerable function as a vehicular language. A number of students seem to use third languages to a limited extent in non-academic contexts, namely with other students (10%)¹⁵⁴ and with administrative staff (7%).¹⁵⁵ Students with a Slavic L1 use third languages twice as often with other students (19%) and administrative staff (14%). The third vehicular languages in this case are very probably Russian and Polish. In the academic context (students’ communication with assistants and professors), the use of the two working languages is quasi-exclusive.¹⁵⁶

The complete dominance of the two working languages is somewhat surprising, if one considers that students of the College of Europe are (on average) fluent in

¹⁵⁰ #F37, DR, L1 French.

¹⁵¹ #E5, EIS, L1 Italian.

¹⁵² #E17, EIS, L1 Spanish.

¹⁵³ #E37, POL, L1 German.

¹⁵⁴ See above, 5.3.1

¹⁵⁵ See above, 5.3.4.

¹⁵⁶ See above, 5.3.2 and 5.3.3.

three to four foreign languages, live in Dutch or Polish-speaking areas and follow language courses in a number of non-working languages.¹⁵⁷ However, the data is very clear with regard to this point and fully in line with the study O'Driscoll conducted in 1993/94.¹⁵⁸ The only noteworthy difference between the two studies concerns the emergence of a perceptible use of a third language by students with a Slavic L1 in 2007/08. This development can easily be explained by structural changes; since O'Driscoll's study the College of Europe has opened a second campus in Natolin, Poland. What is more, the number of students from countries with Slavic languages has steadily increased since 1994.

5.5.2 Strong relative dominance of English

The survey clearly shows that English prevails over French as a vehicular language. English is not only the preferred language of response to the survey,¹⁵⁹ but also the most widely used in all academic programmes and in all communicative contexts.¹⁶⁰ The overall ratio of the use of English to French as vehicular languages is lower but close to a ratio of 3:1 in favour of English.¹⁶¹ As far as the academic context is concerned (communication student – assistant, student – professor), there are strong divergences between the different study programmes, ranging from a more or less balanced use of the working languages with a slight advantage for English (50%-60%) in DROIT towards a very strong dominance of English (over 90%) in the IRD programme.

It is true that the response rate for the 2007/08 survey (58% English, 52% French)¹⁶² does not fully coincide with the finding that English leads over French by a ratio of lower but close to 3:1, i.e. nearly 75:25. Given that the response rate is the only form of direct data available, this might cast some doubts on the reliability of this conclusion. However, it is very likely that this divergence is explained by the involuntary prompting of some students to fill in the French

¹⁵⁷ See above, 2.

¹⁵⁸ O'Driscoll, 1999, *International communication and language choice in modern Europe*. Unpublished doctoral thesis. University of Gent. p. 258-264.

¹⁵⁹ See above, 5.1.

¹⁶⁰ See above, 5.3.

¹⁶¹ This is an overall estimation based on the data of the survey (figures 2-10).

¹⁶² See above, 5.1.

version of the survey. It seems that the bilingual message asking students to fill in the questionnaire (wherein French was used in the first place and English in the second)¹⁶³ may have inadvertently prompted some students, in particular those of French L1, to resort to the French version.

At any rate, the ratio of vehicular use of English and French in the 2007/08 survey (lower but close to 3:1) corresponds very well to the overall findings made by O'Driscoll. Based on data from the academic year 1993/94, O'Driscoll concluded that the ratio of the use of English and French was 2:1 (i.e. 67:33) with English gradually reinforcing its position.¹⁶⁴ It seems therefore that O'Driscoll was correct in predicting the current relationship between the two working languages at the College of Europe. The most striking difference to O'Driscoll's results seems to have occurred on the level of the different study programmes. Whereas O'Driscoll reported a clear preponderance of French (82%) in dyadic interaction among students of one of the study programmes (the PECO¹⁶⁵ programme),¹⁶⁶ the present survey (and the present author's experience) does not confirm this. As it stands in 2008, English is, in all study programmes, incontestably more often used as a vehicular language than French. In 2007/08, the relative highest use of French was reported in the DROIT programme, whereby it was strictly limited to an academic context.¹⁶⁷ It is true that the different methodology used in the 2007/08 survey did not permit to distinguish between student interactions within the different study programmes and this entailed a certain leveling effect. Nonetheless, it seems highly unlikely that the dominance of French in a specific programme could have been overlooked.

¹⁶³ See annex.

¹⁶⁴ O'Driscoll, 1999, *International communication and language choice in modern Europe*. Unpublished doctoral thesis. University of Gent p. 271.

¹⁶⁵ *Programme Europe Centrale et Orientale*, the precursor of the EIS programme which is currently based at the Natolin campus in Warsaw.

¹⁶⁶ O'Driscoll, 1999, *International communication and language choice in modern Europe*. Unpublished doctoral thesis. University of Gent p. 270.

¹⁶⁷ See above, 3.5.2 and 3.5.3.

Given the relative advantages of communication in English as opposed to French, in particular the comparatively higher knowledge of English,¹⁶⁸ the fact that English is the more widely used language hardly comes as a surprise. What is indeed more surprising is that French succeeded in maintaining a relatively important role (at least 25%) as a vehicular language. The conservation of French, especially in the non-academic context, seems to some extent, to run counter to Van Parijs' "maxmin law of communication", according to which, the language most commonly known in a group increasingly dominates all communicative situations.¹⁶⁹ In the College of Europe, English is certainly the most commonly known language.¹⁷⁰ Still, it has not yet imposed itself as a quasi-unique vehicular language. Therefore, it seems that some elements present in the College of Europe tend to partly offset the communicative advantages of the "most commonly known language".

5.5.3 Students' motivation to use French as a vehicular language

To analyze the students' motivation to use French as a vehicular language, it is useful to distinguish between three groups of students: allophone students (for whom neither English nor French is L1), English L1ers and French L1ers. A comparison with O'Driscoll's data is made at the end of this section.

5.5.3.1 Allophone students

In general, students, who are neither L1ers of French nor English (about 65% of the students), use more than twice as often English than French as a vehicular language. The language competence of most of these students, including students of Romance L1, is higher in English than in French,¹⁷¹ which renders English the most effective vehicular language. Although there are cases of allophone students who are considerably more proficient in French than in English, this situation seems to be the exception.

¹⁶⁸ See above, 5.2.

¹⁶⁹ Van Parijs, 2007, page 219.

¹⁷⁰ See above, 5.2.

¹⁷¹ See above, 5.2.

Nevertheless, the data of the 2007/08 survey suggests that a number of students seem to have a strong desire to speak French to students, assistants, professors and administrative staff who belong to the French L1 group. The use of French as a vehicular language is therefore largely confined to asymmetric situations.¹⁷² This motivation to use French can hardly be explained by communicative facility. Given the overall level of French and English, it is clear that French is, in the majority of cases, only the second best option for communication (including communication with French L1ers). However, instrumentality does not seem to play the most important role in oral communication between non French L1ers and French L1ers. Many non-French L1ers seem to be of the opinion that speaking French with “French” persons would be the appropriate thing to do.¹⁷³ In part, this idea seems to be supported by the understandable desire to practice French with competent speakers. However, the interlocutor’s competence in French alone does not seem to be decisive. A number of comments indicated that the use of French by non French L1ers did not so much depend on the other speaker’s competence in this language but rather on the fact of whether or not they considered their interlocutor as “French” in a cultural sense.¹⁷⁴ It seems that in speaking French with “French” persons many students seek acceptance by the French L1er group as a ‘francophone’, which means in this context that the French L1er group accepts to use French with them. Acceptance by the French L1ers is clearly a positive thing, rejection is not. If, despite the continued efforts of an allophone student to use French, French L1ers persist on using English with that person, this is perceived as being negative, e.g.:

“French-speaking students are not very eager to speak French with people who are not native speakers of French [...]”¹⁷⁵

Still, the desire of many non French L1ers to speak French also varies with the communicative context. When communication turns more formal (e.g.: with

¹⁷² See above, 5.3.1; see also Ammon, 1991, *Die internationale Stellung der deutschen Sprache*. Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, page 76.

¹⁷³ See above, the comments in 5.3.1- 5.3.4.

¹⁷⁴ Whereby it is sometimes not even clear whether this is a reference to L1 or rather to a different, maybe cultural, concept of ‘Frenchness’.

¹⁷⁵ #E34, ECO, L1 Polish.

assistants), there is a certain tendency among students to switch to English, which is the strongest language among students with Slavic or Germanic L1.¹⁷⁶ In some cases, even a form of diaglossia can be witnessed, in which students would make some general conversation in French before they switch to English in order to talk about the academic subject matter. This form of diaglossia seems to occur particularly often in formal asymmetric situations, i.e. in oral communication between allophone students and assistants or professors who belong to the French L1 group. Still, a number of allophone students scrupulously respect the rule of using the 'language of the course'; however the adherence to this rule is more frequent in communication with professors than it is with assistants.

On the whole, French is a language of aspiration for many allophone students, who are typically more familiar with English. This aspiration is, to some extent, certainly based on the status of French as an important language of European Integration, which makes students perceive proficiency in French as an important asset for their career. The fact that French is a working language of the College reinforces this perception. Among allophone students of the College, proficiency in English is commonplace and proficiency in French is less frequent. Thus, proficiency in French is prestigious, even if it is not strictly speaking necessary for communication at the College. Still, it is likely that this prestige of French alone would not be sufficient to guarantee its use as a vehicular language among students, if it were not for the presence of a large group of French L1ers at the College (up to 25% of the students). The large group of French L1ers, who uses French among themselves, is a focal point for the linguistic aspirations of many non French L1ers. In this context, "acceptance" by French L1ers largely compensates allophone students for their difficulties in using French instead of English. However, if the interlocutor cannot offer this "acceptance" because he/she does not belong to the French L1er group, English will be used. Conversely, the use of English is not limited to English L1ers. English is the

¹⁷⁶ See above, figure 6

default language and its use does in no way depend on acceptance by the English L1 group.

5.5.3.2 English L1ers

In so far as communication among students is concerned, English L1ers (about 10% of the students) hardly differ from their allophone fellow students. Similarly to their colleagues, English L1ers use English to 67% and French to 26% as a vehicular language with other students (total: English to 64%, French to 26%). However, some of them perceive an amount of peer pressure to use English as a vehicular language, e.g.:

“I wish I could speak more French but unfortunately as a mother tongue English speaker the students revert back to English if I struggle with a word or two [in French]”;¹⁷⁷

It might be due to this reason that English L1ers report a higher use of French (and a lower respective use of English) in other communicative contexts. Communication between English L1ers and assistants is 30% in French and 69% in English (compared to a total of 24% and 75%). In communication with professors, this figure rises to 35% for French and falls to 64% for English (compared to a total of 28% and 71%). What is more, English L1ers use comparatively more often French (27%) and less often English (63%) with the administrative staff than other students, which use French to 18% and English to 74%. Therefore, it seems that many English L1ers are even more motivated to use French than allophone students. Like allophone students, English L1ers aspire to achieve proficiency in French.¹⁷⁸ However, unlike other students, English L1ers use English among themselves and (to a large extent) in a vehicular context. For this reason English L1ers use English much more than all other students, which makes some of them seize all possible occasions to speak French. As a result, some English L1ers seem to be the only students who use French not only in asymmetric situations but also with persons who do not belong to the French L1er group.

¹⁷⁷ #E36, DR, L1 English.

¹⁷⁸ See above, 5.5.3.1.

5.5.3.3 French L1ers

French L1ers constitute about 25% of students of the College of Europe. A number of them seem to have a strong preference for their L1 as a vehicular language; this group includes a few students with a particularly low level of English.¹⁷⁹ Nevertheless, few L1ers exclusively use French. Given the typically low level of all other students in French than in English,¹⁸⁰ English is for French L1ers often more effective as a vehicular language than their own L1. What is more, it seems that many French L1ers have a particular desire to use English in order to practice it.¹⁸¹ However, as many non French L1ers wish to practice their French with French L1ers,¹⁸² the former seem to face a fair amount of pressure from the latter to speak this language, e.g.:

*“comme je suis française, les autres étudiants me parlent [...] d'emblée en français pour le pratiquer, ce qui fait que je ne parle pas autant d'anglais que je le souhaiterais.”*¹⁸³

As a result, the following scenarios can frequently be observed among students on the campus, especially at the beginning of the academic year:

- 1) a non L1er of French speaks French with a French L1er; the French L1er answers in English.
- 2) a French L1er speaks English with a non French L1ers; the non French L1er answers in French.

After a couple of weeks, and most often without explicit agreement between the participants, one language emerges as the vehicular language of a specific pair or group of students, based on the parties' respective proficiencies and degree of determination to use this language. For French L1ers this vehicular language is 35% French, 55% English and 10% another language. In communicative contexts in which French L1ers apparently

¹⁷⁹ This seems to be the case for only about 5% of French L1ers, see above, 5.2.

¹⁸⁰ Typically other students have a level of B2 in French and C1 in English, see above, 5.2.

¹⁸¹ See above, 5.3, for students' comments.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ #F11, EIS, L1 French.

do not face any peer pressure to use French, they tend to use English. Therefore, the percentage of French L1ers' use of English rises to 65% (33% for French) with assistants and to 76% (23% for French) with professors. Likewise, French L1ers tend to use English more often with administrative staff (69%) than with fellow students.

It seems that English is a language of aspiration for many French L1ers. Given the higher general knowledge and the more frequent use of English, some French L1ers perceive the desire of other (non French L1) students to speak French with them as artificial and reject it, unless the other students are highly proficient in French. Other French L1ers accommodate the wishes of their fellow students to use French with them. Still, in their communication with assistants and professors French L1ers tend to use English more often than other students and frequently disregard the custom of using the 'language of the course'.

5.5.3.3 Comparison with O'Driscoll's data

O'Driscoll concluded that English was "a language of everyday use" at the College of Europe and "not an object of aspiration." On the other hand, he justified the use of French in the College of Europe mainly by students' desire to use this language and not by its instrumentality. According to him, "students [we]re zealous in their pursuit of French", which was largely "a conscious deliberate choice",¹⁸⁴ resulting from an amount of "institutional foregrounding of French at the College".¹⁸⁵

O'Driscoll also found that students who were proficient in French had typically a low motivation to improve their English, because they had

"an adequate means of communication (French) and [could] not see the point of having to spend time improving their abilities in another, which, they consider, they already speak well enough to get along in".¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁴ O Driscoll, page. 290.

¹⁸⁵ O Driscoll, page. 292.

¹⁸⁶ O'Driscoll, page 292

More than ten years later, this analysis seems to be only partly correct. English certainly remains the “language of everyday use” and French remains the language of aspiration of many non French L1ers, who typically have a higher level in English than in French. The “institutional foregrounding of French at the College” which O’Driscoll observed in 1993/94 can hardly be observed in 2008. Due to its status as a working language, French certainly receives an amount of institutional support from the College of Europe, but it seems difficult to argue today (as O’Driscoll did in 1993/94) that students perceive it as the “*one real working language of the College*”. The 2007/08 survey suggests rather the opposite. What is more, O’Driscoll’s finding that English was “not an object of aspiration”,¹⁸⁷ has to be re-assessed as well. In 2008 there seems to be only one significant group of students whose level of English is lower than their level of French: the French L1ers. However, the survey clearly shows that English is a language of aspiration for the large majority of French L1ers. Contrary to O’Driscoll’s finding, this group seems to be at least as zealous in its pursuit of English as the other students are in their pursuit of French.

5.5.4 A limited correlation between “status” and use of the two working languages

It has been established above that the respective status of French and English differs in the 5 study programmes.¹⁸⁸ However, it is remarkable that these differences are hardly reflected in the language use among students. It is only with regard to one particular programme (IRD) that students reported a more frequent use of English (in about 70% of cases) and a less frequent use of French (slightly less than 20%) compared to the other programmes, but it is likely that this is at least as much the result of students’ different competence in these languages as of their different status.

¹⁸⁷ O’Driscoll, page 292

¹⁸⁸ See above, 3.4.

In contrast, the different status of English and French according to the academic programmes seems to have some influence on students' communication with teaching assistants and professors. In this respect, it is hardly surprising that students in the two study programmes that put relatively more emphasis on French (POL, DROIT) report a higher use of French than in other study programmes. POL students use French in 30% of their daily communication with representatives of the College.¹⁸⁹ In DROIT the frequency of the use of French attains 40% in communication between students and teaching assistants and between students and professors.¹⁹⁰ On the whole, the use of French between students of POL/DROIT and representatives of the College is up to twice as high as in the other study programmes, in which an average level of 20% can be observed.¹⁹¹

The frequency of the use of one or the other working language between students and academic staff seems therefore to correspond to the amount of courses offered in these languages, (e.g. 30% in POL and 40% in DROIT). The widely reported respect for the custom of using the "language of the course" for communication with academic staff outside of the classroom seems to explain why the use of English and French between students and professors and students and teaching assistants corresponds to the number of courses taught in these languages. Nevertheless, a number of persons switch to another language as soon as the "classroom" environment ends. Unless this other language is the common L1 of these persons (a situation not subject to the present questionnaire) it seems that these switches often occur from French to English and hardly ever in the other direction. The switching of the language also seems to be more frequent in communication with teaching assistants than with professors. In general, students report a marginally higher use of French with the latter than with the former.

¹⁸⁹ See above, 5.3

¹⁹⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁹¹ *ibid.*

The only noteworthy exception to this rule seems to be a situation in which teaching assistants with French L1 assist a course taught in English. In this situation there is a very high probability that a number of non French L1 students will indeed use French with this person, probably in order to practice their language of aspiration. The same behaviour was not reported with professors.

5.5.5 Summary – results of the survey 2007/08

In general terms, students of the College of Europe have a higher knowledge of English than of French. The number of students who are proficient in English (70%) is higher than the comparable number in French (50%) and the number of students with an insufficient knowledge of a working language is lower in English (5%) than in French (15%).

No languages other than the two working languages have any significant role as vehicular languages in the academic community of the College of Europe.

Despite considerable divergences depending on the study programme and the communicative context, English is more often used as a vehicular language because a large majority of students perceive it as more effective (both in terms of proficiency and preference) than French. On average, it seems that the use of English versus French as a vehicular language seems to amount to a ratio of lower but close to 75:25. This imbalanced ratio in the use of the two working languages has aroused criticism by a number of students who perceive the College of Europe as insufficiently bilingual. Two thirds of respondents to the 2007/08 survey pronounced themselves in favour of measures reinforcing the use of the less used working language.

Whereas the use of English as a vehicular language seems to be largely driven by instrumentality and to a certain extent by the wish of a number of French L1ers to practice it, the use of French is nearly exclusively driven by the wish of a large number of (non French L1ers) to practice it. Consequently, the use of English is general and widespread and the use of French is selective and mostly limited to asymmetric situations.

French L1ers and English L1ers seem to face a certain amount of social pressure to use their L1 as a vehicular language with other students. Both of these groups compensate this by using the working language which is not their L1 to a higher extent with assistants, professors and administrative staff than other students. In these communicative contexts, French L1ers report the comparatively highest use of English and English L1ers the comparatively highest use of French.

The amount of use of the two working languages for teaching in the different academic programmes seems to have little influence on the choice of the vehicular language among students. However, it influences the choice of vehicular language between the students and the academic staff (assistants, professors).

6 Language use for scientific writing (MA/LLM theses)

The following section examines students' choice of language (English or French) for their MA/LLM thesis.¹⁹² Figures 16 and 17 are based on the analysis of all MA/LLM theses (ca. 4700 papers),¹⁹³ which students have written since the introduction of this requirement in the curriculum of the College of Europe in 1992.¹⁹⁴

Figure 16 shows the relation of MA/LLM theses written in English and French according to study programme. As can be seen, the overall number of theses written in English has increased from 73% in 1994 to over 85% in 2008. This relative increase of English can be observed in most study programmes.

¹⁹² See above, 3.2.3

¹⁹³ With the exception of the theses of academic year 1992/93, to which the access proved to be too difficult;

¹⁹⁴ Academic programme 1992??

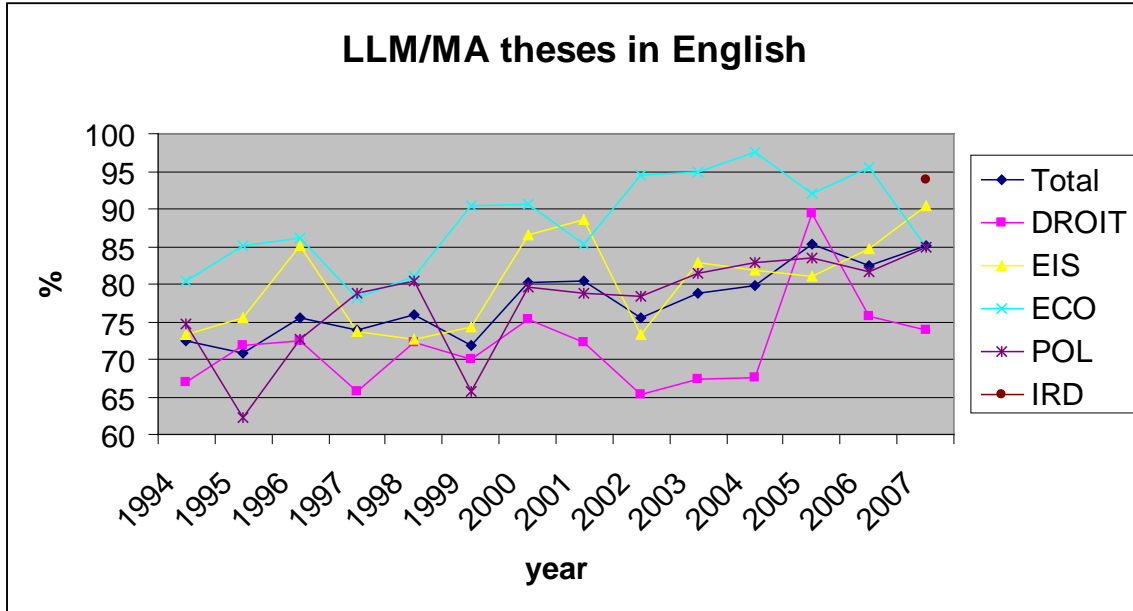


Figure 16, LLM/MA theses written in English, according to study programme

In EIS, the use of English for MA/LLM theses substantially increased. From 1993/94 to 2001/02 it significantly varied between 75% and 85%. However, in the last 6 years the number of MA thesis written in English steadily increased to nearly 90%. The use of English also substantially increased in POL. If one allows for two annual variations in 1995 and 1999, the use of English rose from 75% in 1993/94 to 84% in 2006/07 and seems to have stabilized on this level. The increase of the use of English for economic MA theses is dramatic. Although starting from a very dominant position in 1993/94 (80%), the percentage of MA theses written in English steadily rose to more than 95% in 2002 and seems to have stabilized on this level. This overall picture seems to indicate that the relative increase of French which could be observed in the academic year 2006/07 (15 %) is wholly exceptional. Figure 16 also indicates the MA theses written in English and French in the IRD programme. As the IRD programme was only made available as from the academic year 2006/07,¹⁹⁵ data is limited to this year; this data strongly suggests that nearly all students write their MA thesis in English.

¹⁹⁵ See above.

Indeed, there is only one study programme in which the use of English and French for LLM theses has remained for a long time relatively stable at a ratio of 7:3 from 1993/94 to 2003/04. In 2004/05 the proportion of papers written in French fell to 11%. In the last two years this figure recovered again to 26%.

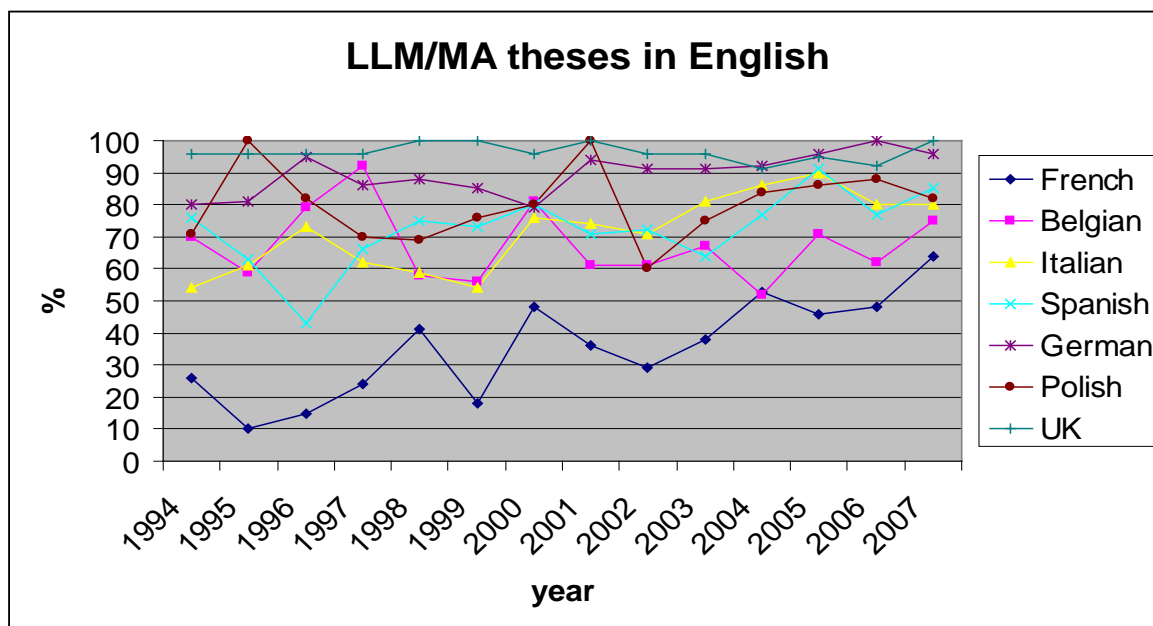


Figure 17, LLM/MA theses written in English, according to students' nationality

Figure 17 indicates the choice of English or French as the language of LLM/MA theses according to the L1 of the students. It results from the above, that the steady increase of English can be explained by the fact that students with Romance L1 increasingly write their papers in English rather than in French. Indeed, students with Slavic or Germanic L1 have always quasi-exclusively resorted to the English language. This phenomenon seems to be fairly recent for students with French, Spanish or Italian L1. In the last 14 years the use of English by these students has dramatically increased from about 60% to 85% for Italian and Spanish L1ers and from about 30% to 60% for French L1ers.

On the whole, figures 16 and 17 show that English occupies at present a far more important role than French for MA/LLM theses. The share of French has constantly decreased over the last years. In total, the use of French fell from 27%

in 1994 to 15% in 2007 which amounts to a decrease of 45% (Figure 8). This considerable shift from French towards English can be observed in all study programmes, although the decrease of French seems to be less significant in DROIT than in the other study programmes. It is interesting to note that the shift from French towards English is primarily due to the fact that students with Romance L1 (including French L1ers) increasingly write in English. For all other students, the choice of English used to be quasi-exclusive even 14 years ago.

6.1 The reasons for the choice of English or French

It was not possible to question students of past academic years on the reasons for their choice of English or French. However, the reasons put forward by students of the present year might give some indications. Asked before the start of their research, 72% of students of the current academic year expressed their intention to write in English and 28% indicated the intention to write in French. Figures 18 and 19 visualize the factors underlying the choice of either French or English as LLM/MA thesis.

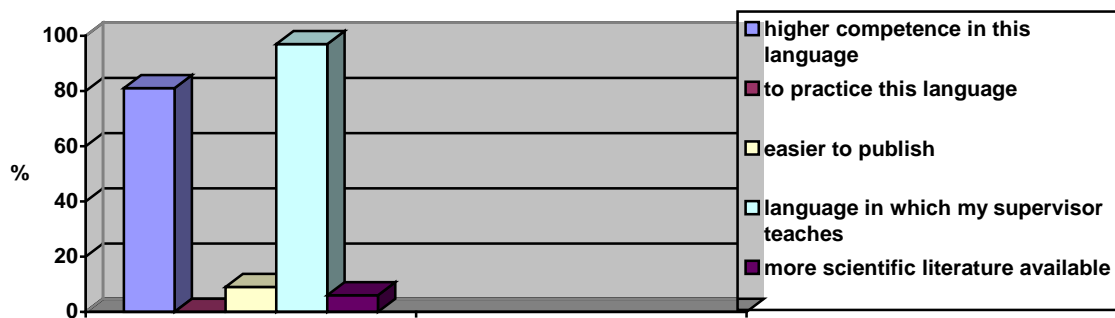


Figure 18, factors underlying the choice of French as language of the MA thesis



Figure 19, factors underlying the choice of English as language of the MA thesis

The language in which students' (potential) supervisor teaches seems to be the most important reason both for those students who intend to write their MA/LLM thesis in French and for those who want to write it in English (nearly 100%). Students' competence in the respective language also plays a very important role:

"It will take me a lot less time to get it done in English."¹⁹⁶

*"A priori en français, car c'est plus simple pour moi."*¹⁹⁷

*"Comme le français est ma langue maternelle, il est bien sur plus facile pour moi d'écrire dans cette langue."*¹⁹⁸

The same goes for students' expectations about whether or not an LLM/MA thesis in English or in French will be more useful for them for their professional career:

"For my job search or future career I believe that writing my thesis in English will enable more potential employers to read it."¹⁹⁹

"I want to go into academia and [...] believe that having written all my postgraduate work in English will be an advantage for me in this situation."²⁰⁰

*"[Je vais écrire en anglais, parce que] c'est une langue beaucoup plus importante que le français."*²⁰¹

*"Je pense qu'une thèse écrite en anglais serait plus facilement lisible par un non francophone, qu'une thèse écrite en français."*²⁰²

¹⁹⁶ #E30, POL, L1 English.

¹⁹⁷ #F11, EIS, L1 French.

¹⁹⁸ #F9, EIS, L1 French.

¹⁹⁹ #E53, POL, L1 German.

²⁰⁰ #E42, POL, L1 English.

²⁰¹ #F44, IRD, L1 French.

²⁰² #F18, DR, L1 French.

A large number of students considered that the availability of scientific literature in a specific language played an important role for the choice of their MA/LLM thesis. However, this factor was 8 times more frequent among students wishing to write in English (56%) than among those wishing to write in French (6%).

Likewise, a number of students took into account whether it would be easier for them to publish their MA/LLM in English or in French. Again, more students felt that it would be easier for them to publish a paper written in English (39%) than a paper written in French (9%). Although virtually no student indicated that s/he would write in a specific language in order to practice this language, the comments show that this consideration does play a certain role for some students:

*"[...] écrire en anglais me ferait sans doute faire des progrès."*²⁰³

*"La rédaction de ma thèse en anglais est pour moi un challenge supplémentaire."*²⁰⁴

*"I'd like to write in French, but to write in academic French is by many considered almost impossible."*²⁰⁵

The abovementioned comments seem to indicate that English is perceived as a challenge for students from the French L1 group. To write in French was considered a challenge by at least one other respondent who was probably more familiar with English.

6.2 Analysis

Two questions call for an explanation: firstly, why did the use of English in the College of Europe increase at twice the pace for written use for LLM/MA theses (from 73% to 85%, i.e. +20 %), than for oral use as a vehicular language (from 67% to 73%, i.e. +10%)?

Secondly, what might explain the differences between the different study programmes DROIT and ECO?

²⁰³ #F6, EIS, L1 French.

²⁰⁴ #F37, DR, L1 French.

²⁰⁵ #E11, EIS, L1 Danish.

6.2.1 The overall increase of English

Firstly, the increase of English may partly reflect the fact that there was a certain shift in students' respective competence in the two working languages. In particular, it seems that the overall level of French may have declined to some extent in recent years.²⁰⁶ However, this relative decrease affects both the oral and the written use of French and does not explain why the former decreased far less than the latter.

Another, more valid, explanation for the decrease of the written use of French might be related to the fact that, as at 2008, the College offers approximately 5% less seminars in French than it did in 1993/94.²⁰⁷ As it has been established that the 'language of the course' is a very important element for the choice of the language of the MA thesis²⁰⁸ but less important for students' choice of a vehicular language,²⁰⁹ this decrease might indeed affect the oral and the written use of the working languages in different ways.

However, the most important reasons why English largely dominates as a language of scientific writing do not seem to be related to changes in students' competence or to the curriculum of the College. Rather, in 2008, the choice of English for the LLM/MA theses reflects students' conviction that writing in this language will provide them with better opportunities in terms of availability of scientific literature in English and the possibility of publication. Scientific documentation on the World Wide Web in English is by far more abundant and more readily available than in French. The same seems to be true for possibilities of publication. The increased use of internet resources in the last 15 years for scientific research and publication (in particular among junior researchers) could therefore easily explain the shift from French to English.

This last reason might not only explain why those students who used to write in French increasingly switch to English but also why students who strongly aspire

²⁰⁶ Telephone conversation with Ms Angela O'Neill, the head of the language service of the College;

²⁰⁷ See above, 3.2.1.

²⁰⁸ See above, 6.1.

²⁰⁹ See above, 5.5.4.

to practice their French,²¹⁰ refrain from using this language for scientific writing. Many non French L1ers who wish to use French on an oral level (especially with French L1ers) seem to be content to use English for writing because this choice appears to be easier and more profitable. Consequently, no student indicated the wish to write an LLM/MA thesis in a specific language in order to improve his skills in this language.²¹¹

6.2.2 Differences in the study programmes

The situation in two study programmes, DROIT and ECO seem to diverge from the general trend in the College of Europe. In DROIT, the use of French for LLM theses has remained relatively constant at around 30%-25% while the percentage of MA theses written in English in ECO steadily rose from 80% to more than 95%. As has been pointed out above,²¹² there are important differences in the status of the two working languages in these two programmes. These differences are clearly reflected in the students' decision to write in English or French. Still, the decisive explanation for this development seems to be external to the College. Would it be too easy an explanation to assume that ECO students are simply influenced by the fact that English seems to be for many "the language of business",²¹³ and DROIT students by the fact that French continues to be the language of the European Court of Justice?

7. Conclusion

The question of language choice in the College of Europe is complex. Although the College seems to offer, in theory, an ideal model case of language choice in a strictly bilingual (English and French) working environment, analysis shows that it is otherwise. Despite formal equality of both working languages it is fairly clear that English is *de facto* the more important working language. The College does

²¹⁰ See above, 5.5.3.

²¹¹ no student indicated this reason but at least 3 respondents stated in the commentary section that they have at least thought about it.

²¹² See above, 3.2.

²¹³ E.A. Selliere, at an EU summit in 2006; the statement made M. J. Chirac, the French President leave the room. International Herald Tribune, see: <http://www.iht.com/articles/2006/03/24/news/chirac.php> Date of access, 1st of November 2008.

not only offer a considerably higher number of courses in English than in French, but its linguistic requirements for admission are somewhat lower in French than in English. What is more, most of its study programmes tacitly accommodate students with a weaker level of French by allowing them to reduce the number of courses in this language to a minimum. Hence, the institution tacitly, and probably reluctantly, encourages students to use rather English than French. These general findings do not exclude differences between the five study programmes of which at least one (European Legal Studies) comes very close to achieving an equal balance of the two working languages. Still, English is the leading working language in all other programmes and reaches quasi-exclusivity in the study programmes European Economic Studies (ECO) and EU International Relations and Diplomacy Studies (IRD).

Students' knowledge of the two working languages is in line with their respective importance. Thus, the number of students who are proficient in English, i.e. who reach level C1 or C2, is clearly higher (70%) than the comparable number in French (50%), despite the fact that the number of students with French L1 is considerably higher than the number of students with English L1. What is more, due to the College's admission policy, the number of students with a low knowledge of working languages, i.e. level B1 or lower, is higher in French (15%) than in English (5%). Unsurprisingly, status and knowledge of languages reflect on the use students make of them as vehicular languages. On the whole it seems fairly evident that English is far more often used in this context than French. The use of English to French as a vehicular language seems to amount to a ratio of lower but close to 75:25. No languages other than the two working languages have any significant role as vehicular languages in the academic community of the College of Europe. The imbalanced ratio in the use of the two working languages has aroused criticism by a number of students who perceive the College of Europe as insufficiently bilingual. Two thirds of respondents to the 2007/08 survey pronounced themselves in favour of measures reinforcing the use of the less used working language.

As far as the choice of languages is concerned, students are strongly influenced by two factors, namely instrumentality and their, at times extremely strong, motivation to practice a specific language. Although actual use of language is always a combination of instrumentality and motivation, it seems possible to identify students' main motivations and to classify them according to students' L1, namely allophone L1ers, English L1ers and French L1ers. In very general terms, allophone L1ers typically wish to use French in asymmetric situations (only with French L1ers) but are content to use English with everybody else. What is more, they prefer English to French in more formal contexts. Most English L1ers wish to use rather French (and not English) as a vehicular language. Conversely, French L1ers are highly motivated to use English as a vehicular language. Due to these conflicting motivations, French L1ers and (if to a lesser extent) English L1ers seem to face a strong amount of peer pressure to use their own L1 as a vehicular language with other students. Both English and French L1ers seem to compensate this by using the working language which is not their L1 to a much higher extent in more formal contexts, i.e. with assistants, professors and administrative staff, than other students. This might explain why in these communicative contexts French L1ers report the comparatively highest use of English and English L1ers the comparatively highest use of French, among all students. On the whole, the use of English as a vehicular language is largely driven by instrumentality while the use of French is largely driven by the wish of a number of (non French L1ers) to practice this language. Consequently, the use of English is general and widespread and the use of French is selective and limited. The amount of use of the two working languages for teaching in the different academic programmes seems to have little influence on the choice of the vehicular language among students. However, it strongly influences the choice of vehicular language between the students, in particular those with an allophone L1, and the academic staff.

In so far as students' choice of language for scientific writing, i.e. LLM/MA theses, is concerned, English has progressed from 74% in 1994 to more than 85% in 2007/08. This large increase is mainly due to the fact that students with Romance L1 (including French L1ers) have shifted to a large extent from French to English in the last 15 years. This shift has probably been caused by external factors such as increased availability of English speaking scientific literature on the internet and increased possibilities for publication in this language. There also seems to be a gap between some students' strong motivation to use French for oral communication and their lack of motivation to use this language for scientific writing.

If one considers the linguistic environment of the College of Europe as comparable to the EU Institutions and accepts the assumption that some of its current students will (as its graduates have done) successfully pass EU competitions and finally work as EU civil servants, the findings of this study seem to impose a number of conclusions for the EU Institutions. On the one hand, it seems that English will continuously gain ground. The example of the College suggests that, persons with Romance L1 (including French L1ers) increasingly accept English as the main language for formal writing and communication in the academic context. Thus, it seems that the progress of English as a vehicular language in the EU Institutions will be particularly strong in written and in more formal oral communication and that future EU civil servants whose L1 is French or another Romance language will increasingly draft in English and also intervene in this language in official meetings and conferences. Judging from the present situation in the College of Europe, one may assume that future use of French as a vehicular language in the EU Institutions will be largely driven by non-French L1ers who, motivated by the fact that they permanently live in French-speaking areas, want to practice this language in less formal situations with their colleagues whose L1 is French. Thus, the vehicular use of French will remain strong in asymmetric and informal communicative contexts. This projection is in line with the well documented fact that the vehicular use of French has been

already for a number of years less important on the written than on the oral level.²¹⁴

It seems therefore, that we might witness a scenario in which the use of vehicular languages in the EU Institutions will amount to a form of *diaglossia*, in which English will occupy the higher level, i.e. written and formal oral communication and French will remain to be used in asymmetric situations with sufficiently informal character. Still, the example of the College of Europe also suggests that rules or even simple customs governing the use of different working languages can guarantee the use of a specific language in a formal context to some extent, even if no formal sanctions are attached to these rules. Ammon and Schlossmacher are currently examining the possibility of strict regulation of the use of different working languages in the EU Institutions.²¹⁵ Their work should soon shed more light on this point. It remains to be seen if a regulatory approach can be found which would provide an adequate solution for those who oppose *English-only* EU Institutions. For the others, who have come to support or tacitly accept this idea on grounds of instrumentality, there is no need to worry either. Time is on their side.

²¹⁴ Peter –Benda, Andrea. 1999. „le rôle et la place du français dans la vie des institutions de l’Union européenne: l’exemple du service de traduction. Communication a la *Table ronde de l’Agence de la francophonie*. Expolangues.

²¹⁵ Ammon, 2006. „Language Conflict in the European Union”. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, Vol. 16, no 3.

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Annex

Message to students (sent to their College of Europe e-mail account)

Chers étudiants,

Le Collège d'Europe organise une conférence sur le sujet "Langues et construction européenne" qui se tiendra les 29 et 30 novembre 2007 sur le campus de Natolin. L'un de thèmes de cette conférence sera le régime linguistique du Collège d'Europe et l'usage des langues par ses étudiants.

C'est pour cela que je vous prie de répondre à notre enquête sur votre usage des langues.

Merci pour votre participation !

Dear students,

The College of Europe organizes a conference on "Language and European Integration" which will take place from 29th to 30th of November on the Natolin campus. One of the topics of this conference will be the linguistic regime of the College of Europe and the language use by its students.

That's why I would like to ask you to reply to our survey on your language use.

Thank you for your participation!

Version française:

<http://survey.coleurop.pl/sites/sofns/EN/Lists/Usages%20des%20langues%20au%20College%20d%27Europe/overview.aspx>

English Version

<http://survey.coleurop.pl/sites/sofns/EN/Lists/Language%20usage%20in%20the%20College%20of%20Europe/overview.aspx>

Questionnaire (English version)

A Personal data

A1) What is your department of studies?

Closed question; choice: ECO – DR – IRD – POL - NAT

A2) What is (are) your native language(s)?

Open question;

A3) Please evaluate your knowledge of French/English (A1-C2)

NB: [A1 – beginner; C2 – native-speaker-like]

Closed question; choice: A1 – A2 – B1 – B2 – C1 – C2

B Oral use of languages

The following questions assume that you will normally use your (or one of your) mother tongue(s) when speaking to a person with the same mother tongue. E.g.: it is assumed that a German and an Austrian (who are both native speakers of German) would normally speak German with each other.

We are interested to know which language you use when you speak with persons who do not have the same mother tongue as you.

So, please indicate the percentage in which you use French, English or another language in this situation and comment briefly on the reasons for this language usage.

B1) Which language do you use when you speak with **students** whose mother tongue is **not** the same as yours? Indicate the percentage in which you use English/French/another language!

Closed question; choice:

English percentage scale (10%, 20%,..., 90%, 100%)

French percentage scale (10%, 20%,..., 90%, 100%)

Other languages percentage scale (10%, 20%,..., 90%, 100%)

(The sum of percentages should amount to 100%)

Any comments?

Open question;

B2) Which language do you use when you speak with a **teaching assistant** whose mother tongue is **not** the same as yours? Indicate the percentage in which you use English/French/another language!

Closed question; choice:

English percentage scale (10%, 20%,..., 90%, 100%)

French percentage scale (10%, 20%,..., 90%, 100%)

Other languages percentage scale (10%, 20%,..., 90%, 100%)

(The sum of percentages should amount to 100%)

Any comments?

Open question;

- B3) Which language do you use when you speak with a **professor** whose mother tongue is **not** the same as yours? Indicate the percentage in which you use English/French/another language!

Closed question; choice:

English	percentage scale (10%, 20%,..., 90%, 100%)
French	percentage scale (10%, 20%,..., 90%, 100%)
Other languages	percentage scale (10%, 20%,..., 90%, 100%)

(The sum of percentages should amount to 100%)

Any comments?

Open question;

- B4) Which language do you use when you speak with the **student affairs officer** if his mother tongue is **not** the same as yours? Indicate the percentage in which you use English/French/another language!

Closed question; choice:

English	percentage scale (10%, 20%,..., 90%, 100%)
French	percentage scale (10%, 20%,..., 90%, 100%)
Other languages	percentage scale (10%, 20%,..., 90%, 100%)

(The sum of percentages should amount to 100%)

Any comments?

Open question;

- B5) Which language do you use when you speak with **administrative staff** of the College (library staff, academic administrators, secretaries) whose mother tongue is **not** the same as yours? Indicate the percentage in which you use English/French/another language!

Closed question; choice:

English	percentage scale (10%, 20%,..., 90%, 100%)
French	percentage scale (10%, 20%,..., 90%, 100%)
Other languages	percentage scale (10%, 20%,..., 90%, 100%)

(The sum of percentages should amount to 100%)

Any comments?
Open question;

C The language of your MA Thesis

In which of the two working languages of the College do you intend to write your MA Thesis?

Closed question;

For which reasons? (Tick one or several of the following options)

- This is the working language I feel **more** competent in
- This is the working language I feel **less** competent in and I want to practice it
- It will be easier to publish my MA thesis in this language
- I believe that most of the scientific literature which I will need to read for my MA Thesis is more readily available in this language.

Any comments?
Open question;

D) General issues

To which extent do you agree with the following statements? *Likert scale*

I strongly agree - I partly agree - I partly disagree - I strongly disagree

- D1) In the College, both English and French are used **to a comparable amount**
- D2) In the College, **English is more often used than French**
- D3) In the College, **French is more often used than English**
- D4) In case, you feel that one of the Colleges working languages (English/French) is less used, would you be in favour of measures reinforcing the usage of this language?

If yes, please explain which measures you would consider useful!
Open question;