



Gemeente Utrecht

Multilingualism in Utrecht

December 2009



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Municipality of Utrecht

Department of Public, International & Subsidy Affaires

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December 2009

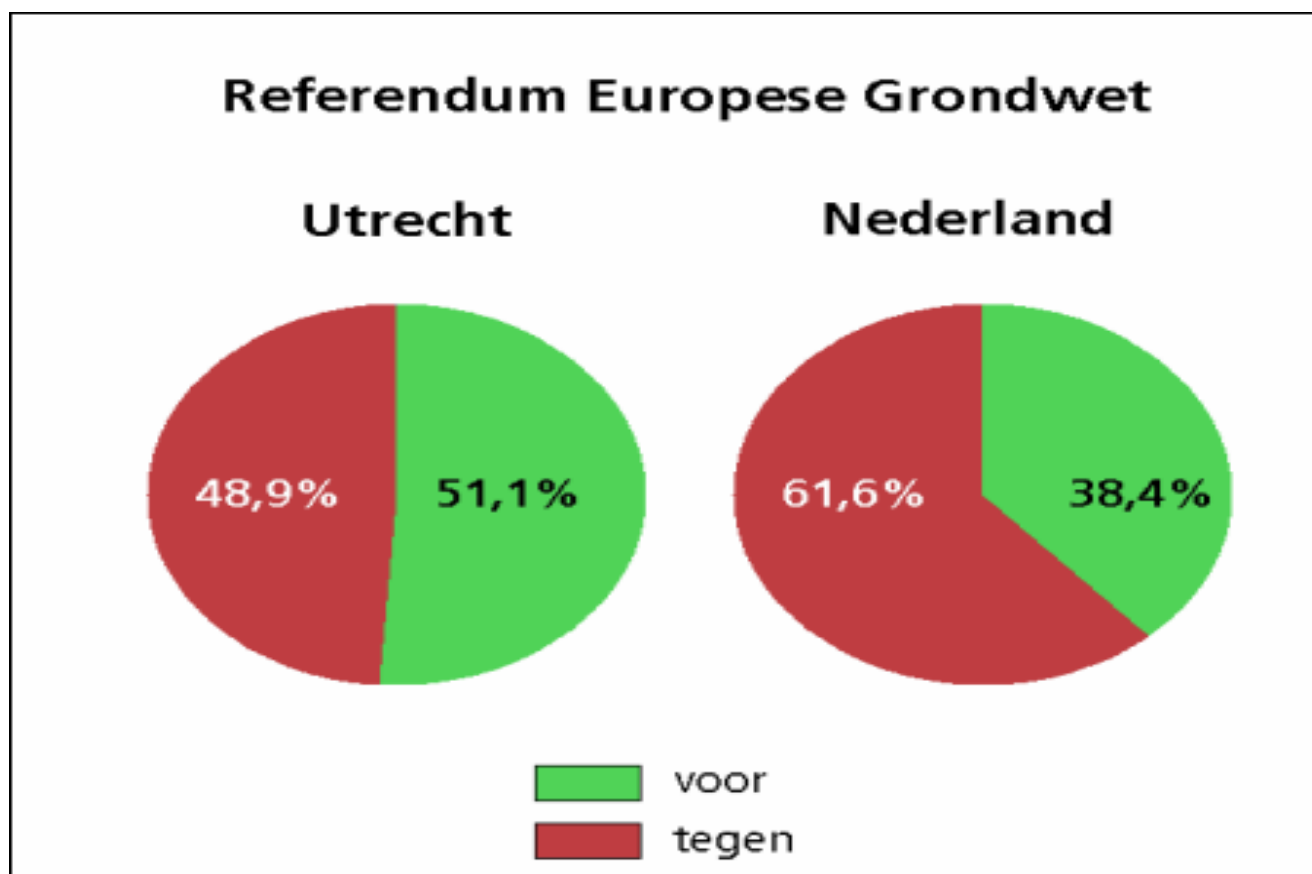


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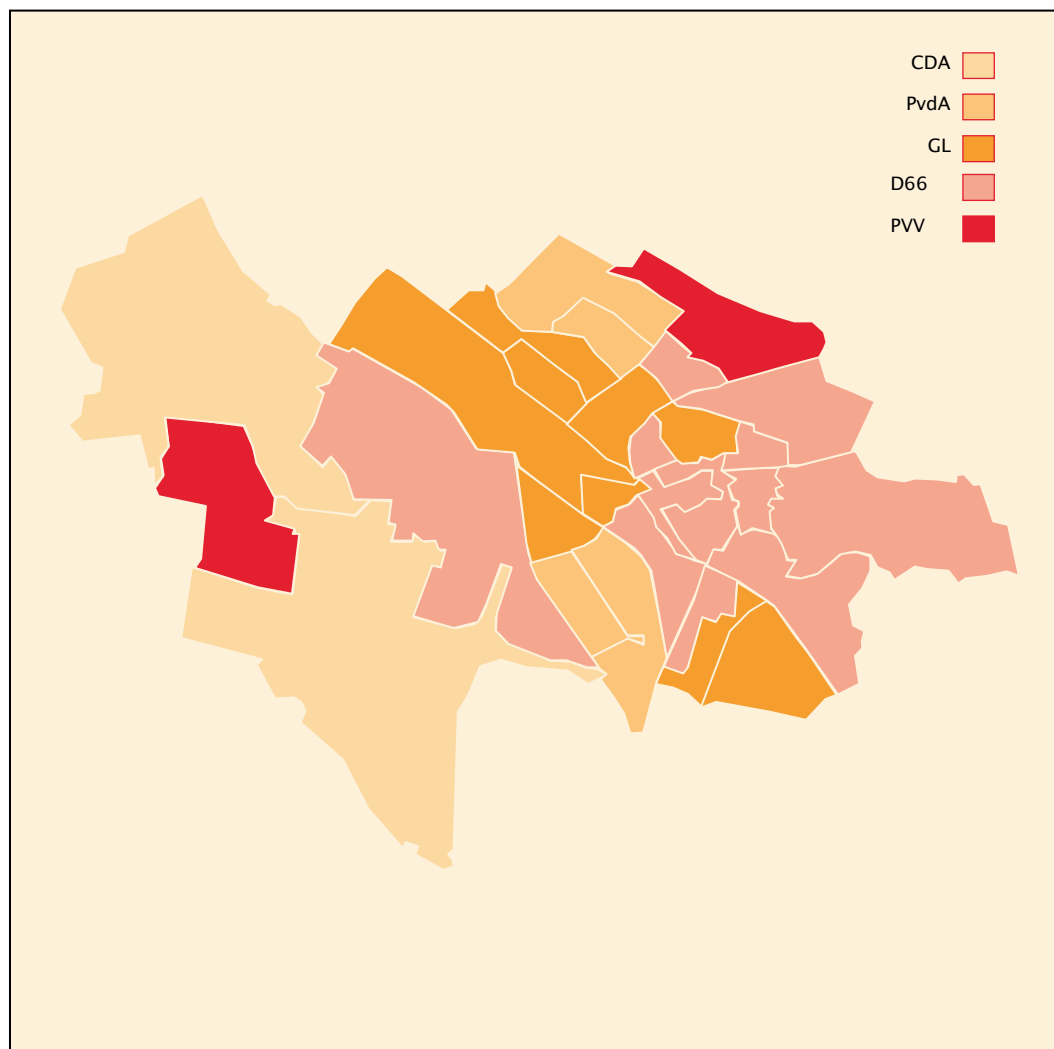
About Utrecht

- 4th city of the Netherlands
- Hub of railways, roads
- University Utrecht number 1 in the Netherlands
- 70.000 students
- 32% of the citizens have a foreign background
- Top 10 of European economic regions (with cities like London, Hamburg, Stockholm, Munich)
- Green, social liberal, social democratic tradition
- Only Dutch city voted in the Netherlands in favor of the European constitution
- But diversity not very much on the political agenda anymore
- Local elections in March 2010 ...

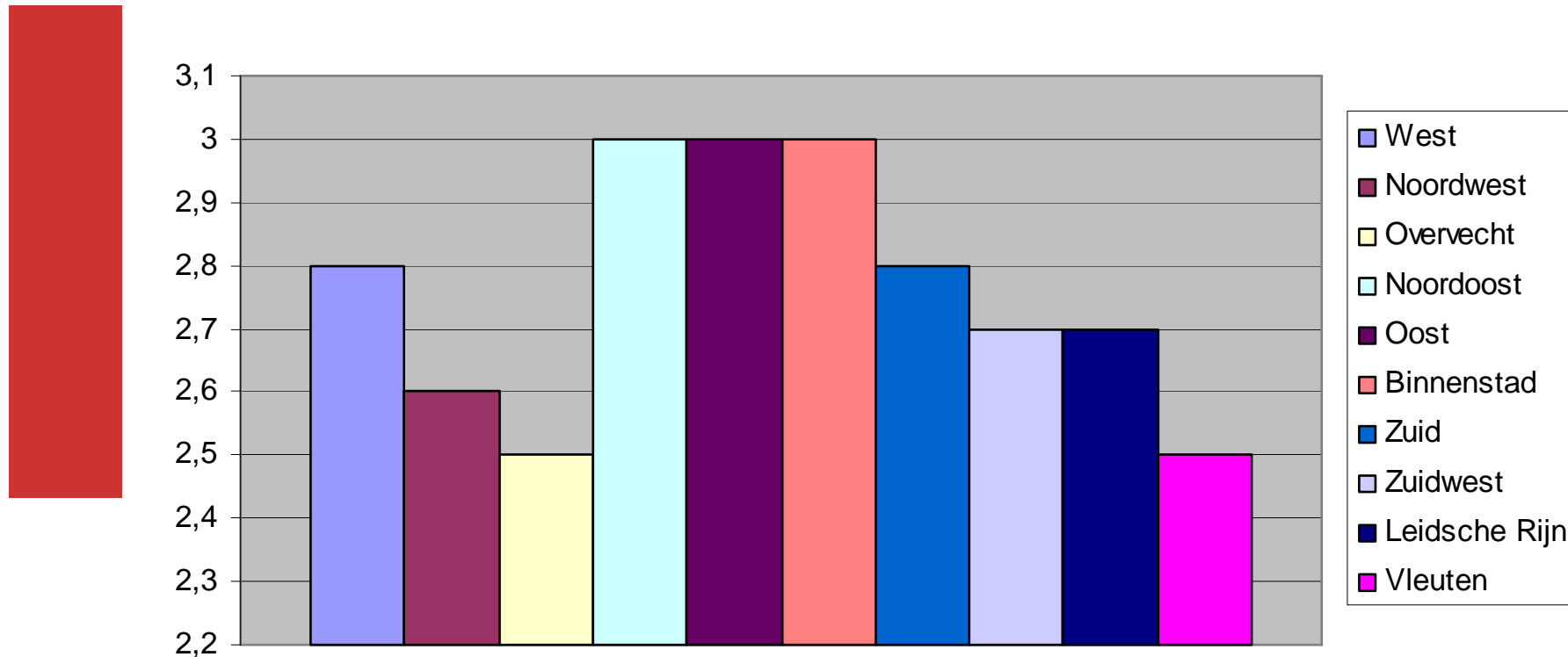
European constitution referendum 2005



Elections European Parliament June 2009



Number of languages spoken well per district

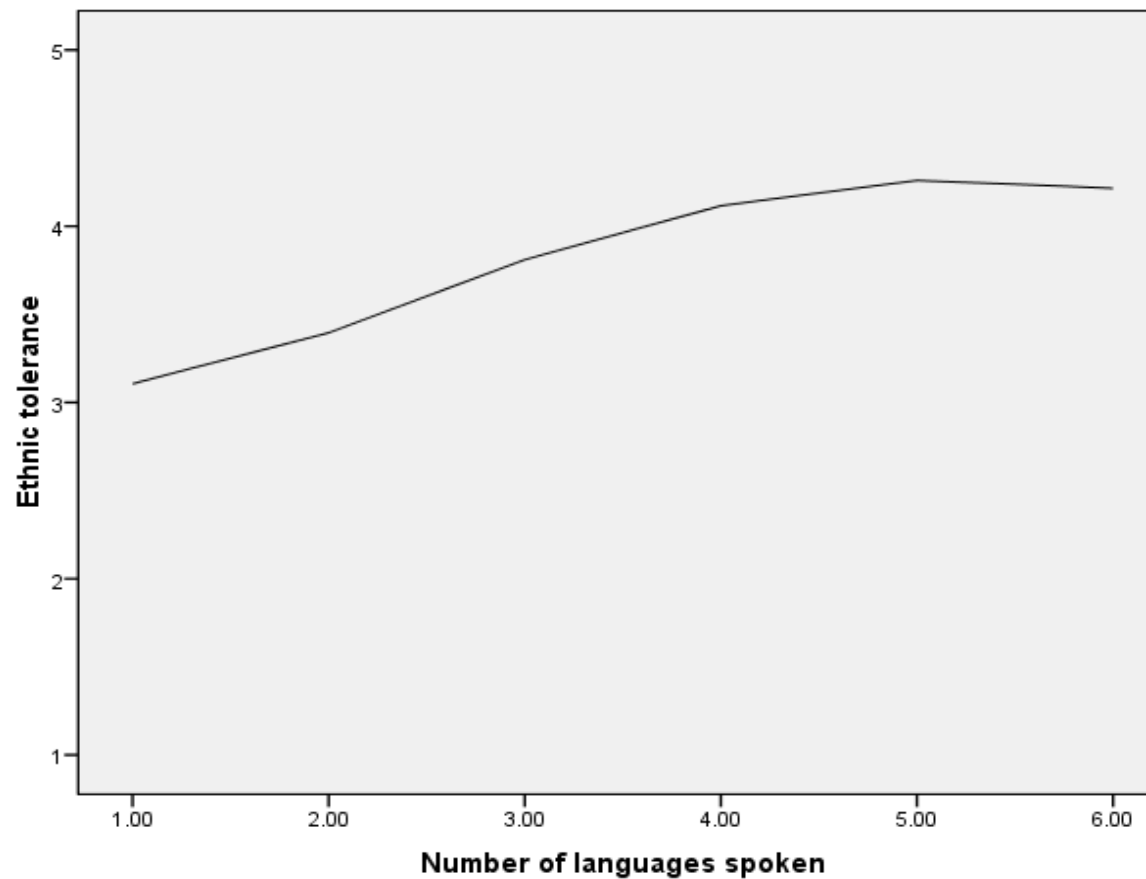


- There are differences in the degree of multilingualism across the neighborhoods of Utrecht.
- Noordoost, Oost and Binnenstad are the most multilingual neighborhoods; the inhabitants speak on average 3 languages, which is the norm promoted by the EU.
- The least multilingual neighborhoods are Overvecht and Vleuten, with their inhabitants speaking 2.5 languages on average.



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Languages and ethnic tolerance



- People who speak more languages tend to be more tolerant towards members of other ethnic groups. Ethnic tolerance was here measured as acceptance of one's child marrying someone from another ethnic group.

How did we start?



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- 2006: European research and policy: 3 languages for every European.
- Luxemburg, Malta and ... The Netherlands
- How is the national multilingualism reflected on the local level?
- Little survey in 2006: amazing results: More than 3/4 speaks 3 languages or more
- We start to tell about it: Reaction: 'Dutch first!'
- How do we tell the story? "public language & world language & private language ..."
- 2 Deputy-Mayors became interested; committee of the regions report
- 2009: we started a real project with bigger research and created an urban network

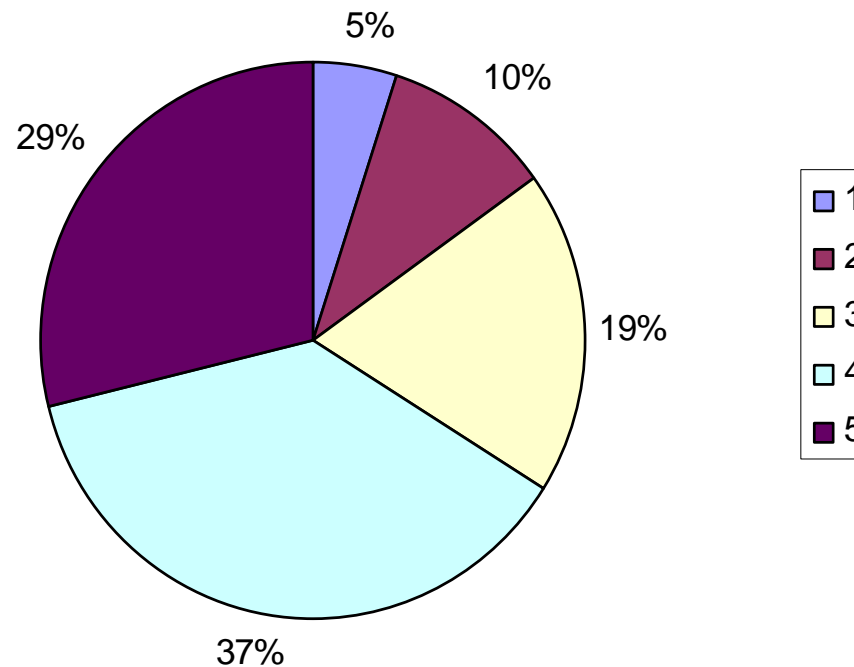


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Survey of inhabitants

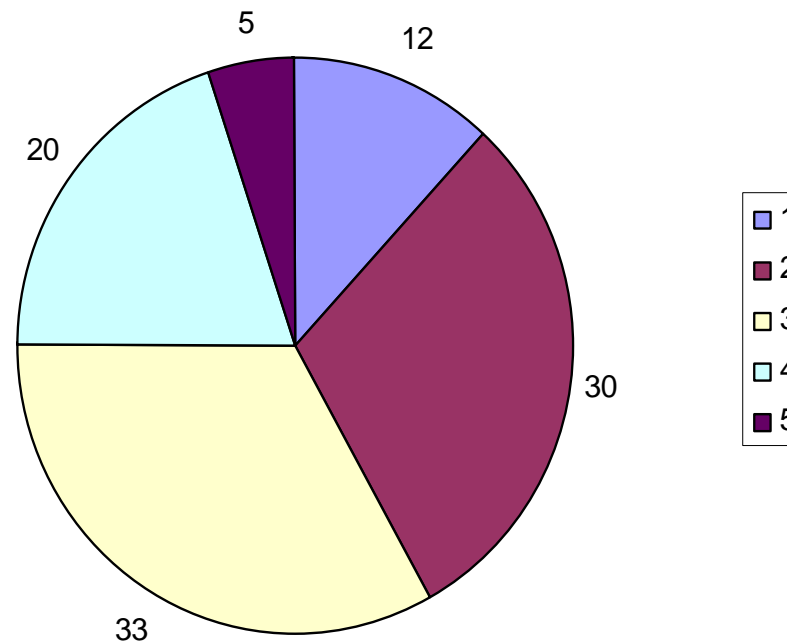
- 3,655 respondents
- 71% Dutch
- 29% minority members (7% Moroccan, 4% Turkish, 3% Surinamese/Antillean, 4% other non-western, 11% western)
- Extensive information about the level of each language spoken, frequency and context of use
- Some information about the background characteristics of the respondents

Number of languages spoken per person



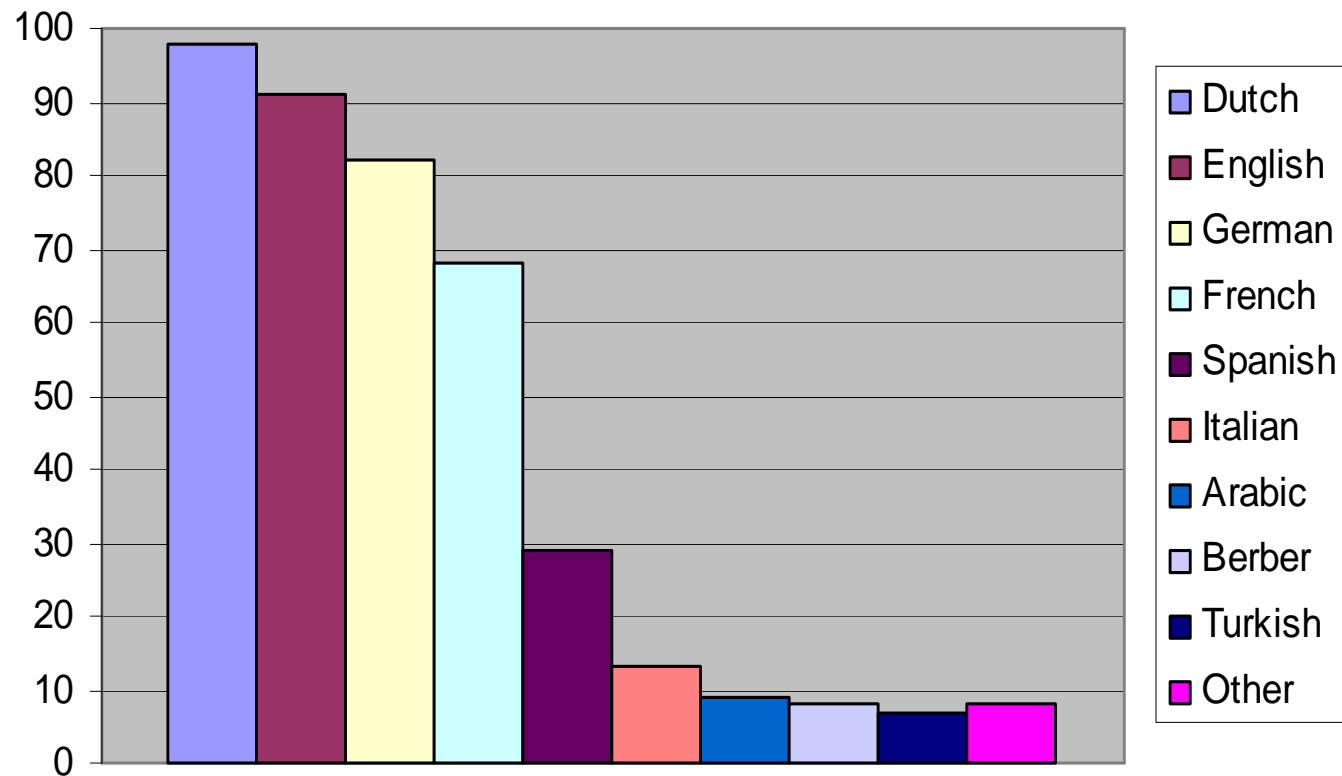
- Only 5 percent of the inhabitants of Utrecht are monolingual.
- 95 % of the inhabitants speak at least 2 languages to some extent, 85% at least 3, and 29% speak 5 or more languages to some extent.

Number of languages spoken *well* per person



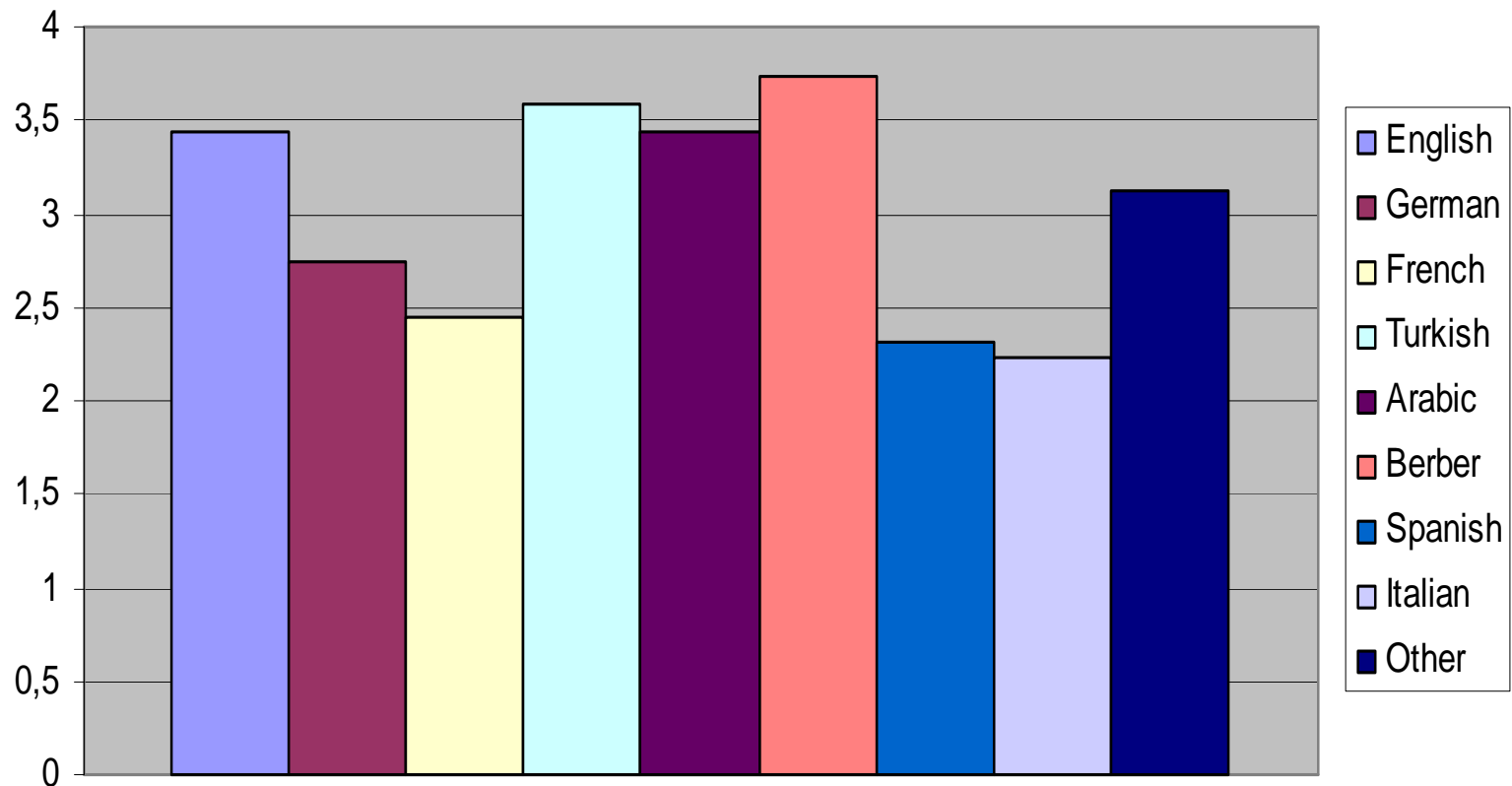
- When looking at languages that are spoken well, the percentages are somewhat lower, but nevertheless substantial.
- 12% of the inhabitants are monolingual.
- 88% of the inhabitants speak at least 2 languages well; 58% at least 3; 5% speak 5 or more languages well.

Most commonly spoken languages in the city



- The most commonly spoken language in Utrecht is, as expected, the official language of the Netherlands: Dutch. 98% of the inhabitants speak it.
- English is in the second place, with 92% of Utrechters speaking it.
- Other widespread languages are German and French, followed by Spanish, Italian, and the main non-Western minority languages in the Netherlands: Arabic, Berber and Turkish.

How well the languages are being spoken, among speakers only

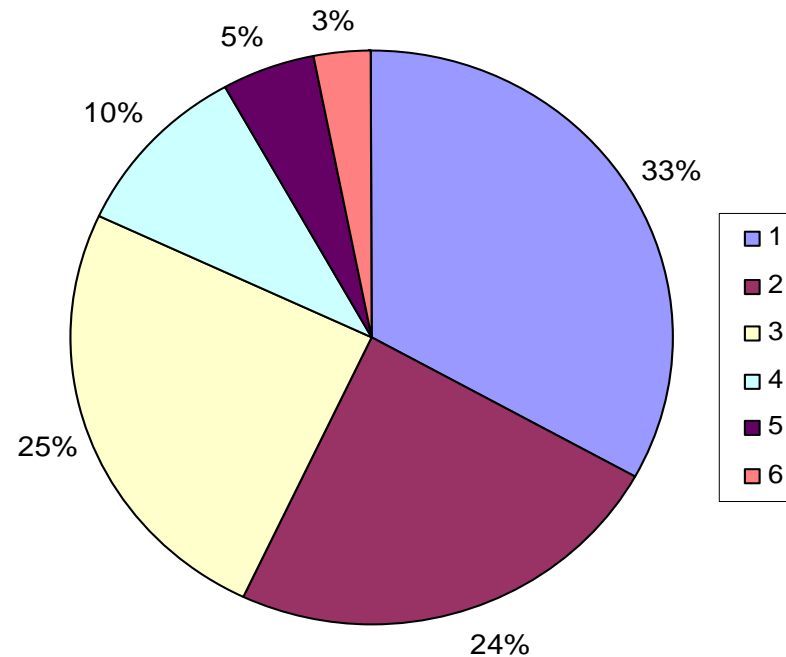


Ethnic group differences in the number of languages spoken

	1 lang	2 lang	3 lang	4 lang	5 lang	6+ lang
Dutch	5	6	18	42	21	8
Other Western	2	9	16	34	28	11
Non-Western	3	24	27	21	17	8

- Dutch inhabitants and foreigners of Western origin tend to speak on average 4 languages.
- Foreigners of non-Western origin speak on average 3 languages.
- Non-Western immigrants enrich the linguistic landscape of Utrecht by bringing along their mother tongues, but are on average less multilingual than other inhabitants of Utrecht.

Number of languages spoken in small & medium-sized companies

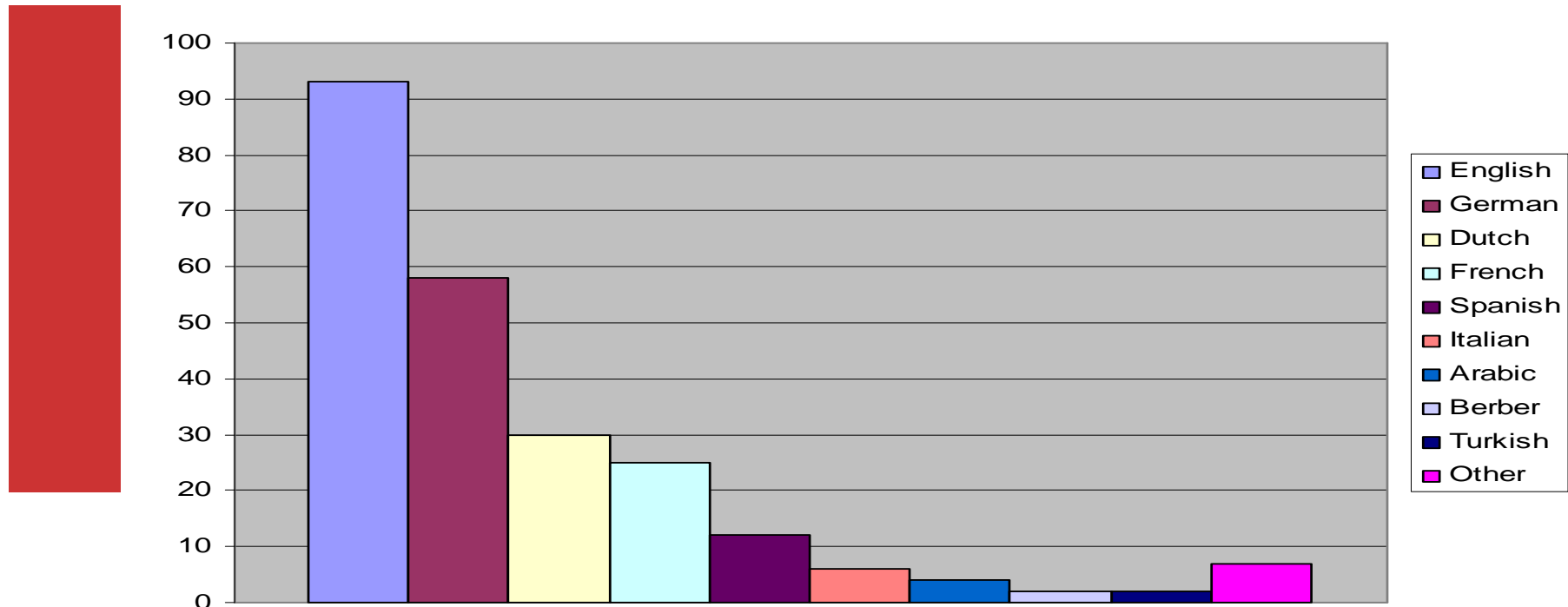


- 33% of the companies in Utrecht use only one language for work purposes. 67% of these companies are multilingual and use at least two languages.
- 43% of the companies communicate in three or more languages, and 8% rely on even five languages or more.

Languages used externally by companies

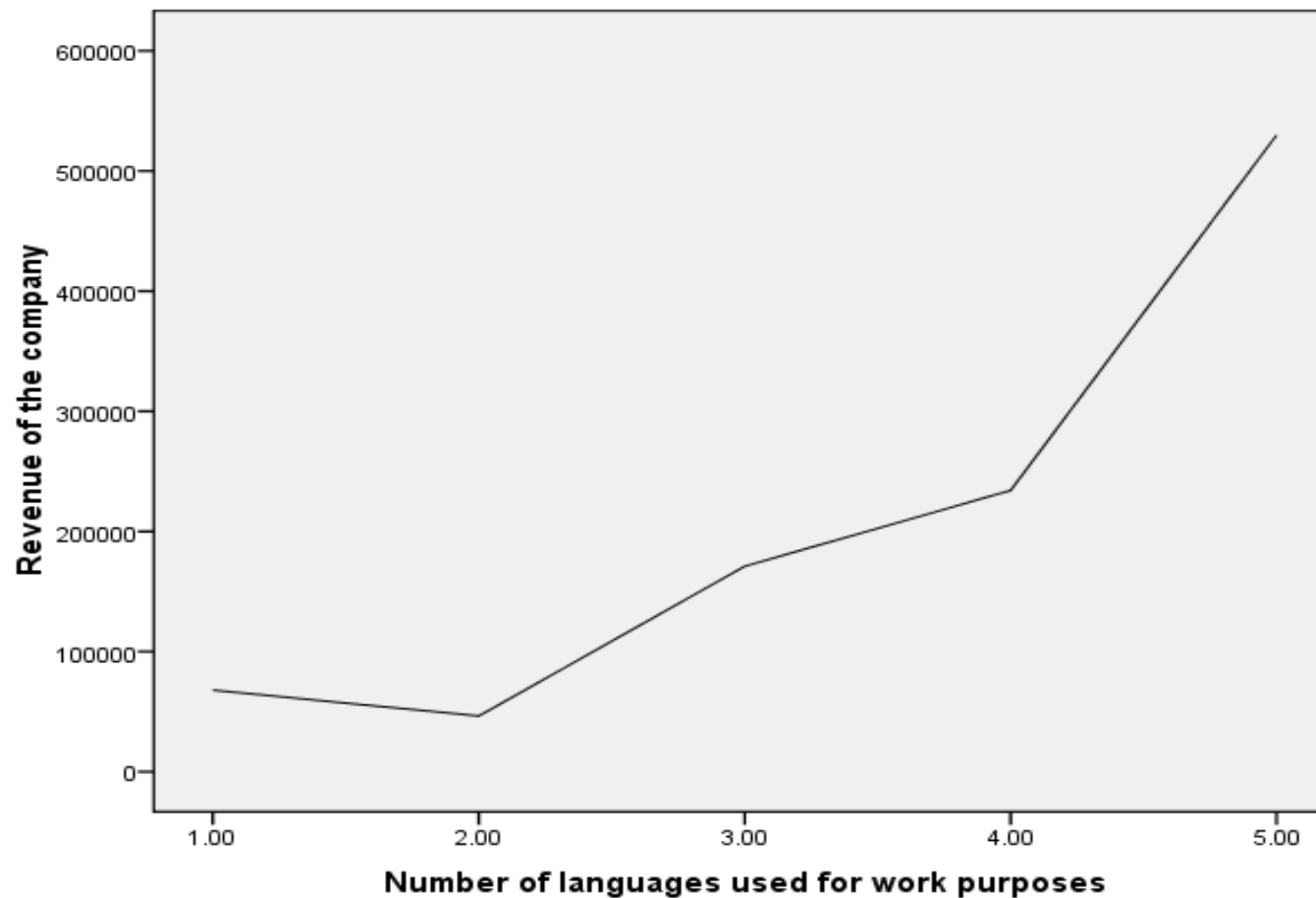


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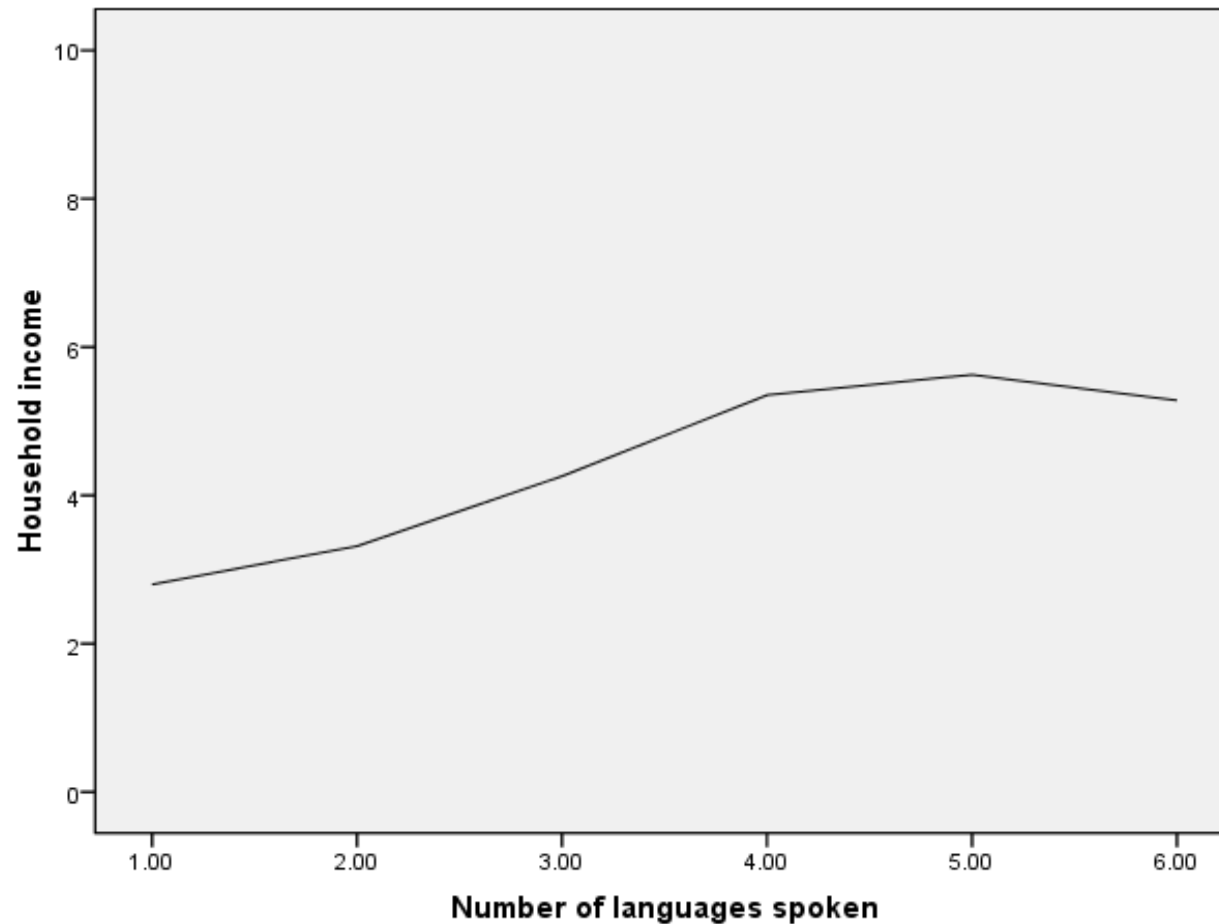
- 58% of the Utrecht companies use other languages next to the main language for external purposes, i.e. during contact with clients and suppliers. This is 23% more than for internal communication.
- 93% of them use English outside the company and 58% use German.
- 30% of the companies use Dutch outside the company and 25% also use French. Spanish is used by 10% of the companies, and only a small percentage of the companies use Italian, Arabic, Berber, Turkish or other languages for external communication.

Languages and the economic success of companies



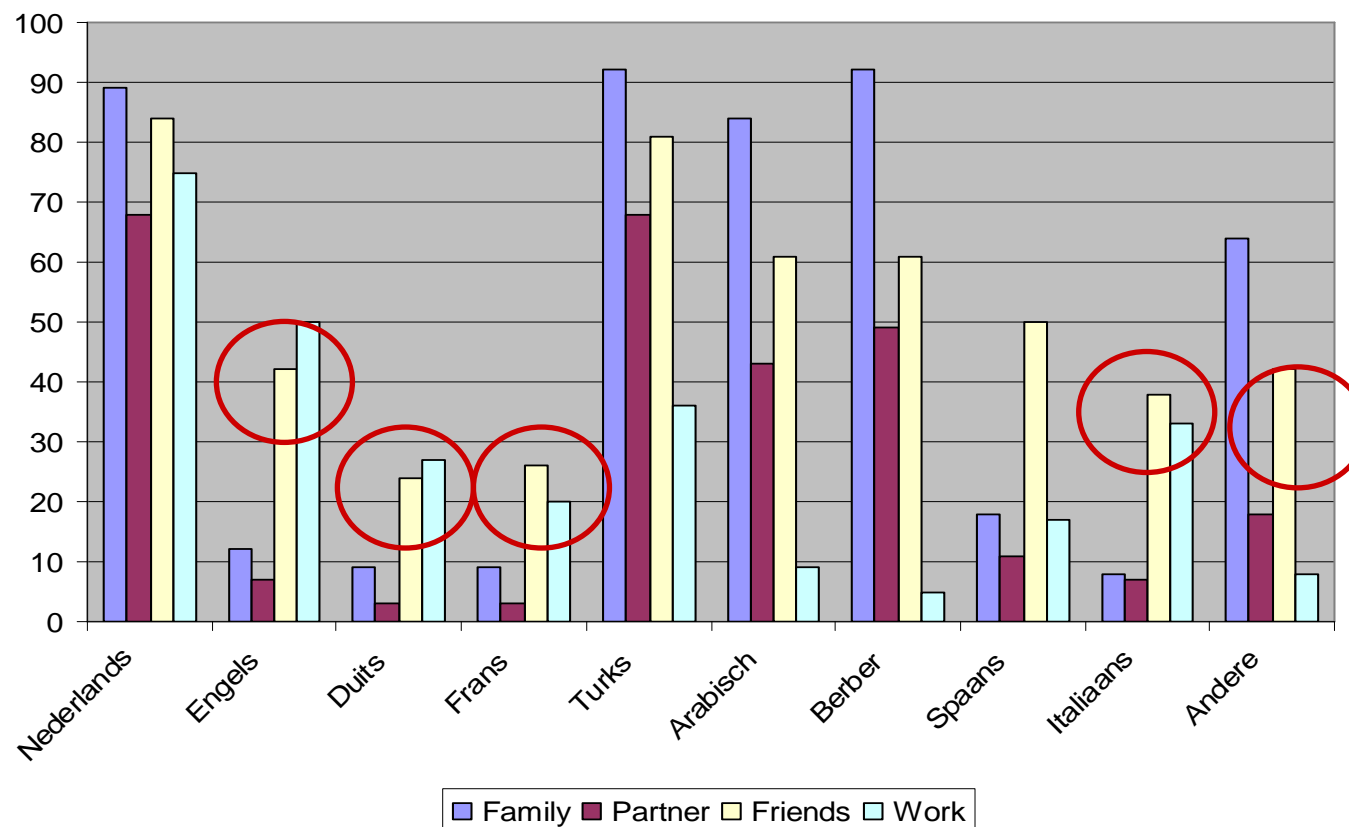
- Multilingualism is profitable for companies: those that communicate in more languages for work purposes tend to have higher revenues.

Languages and personal income



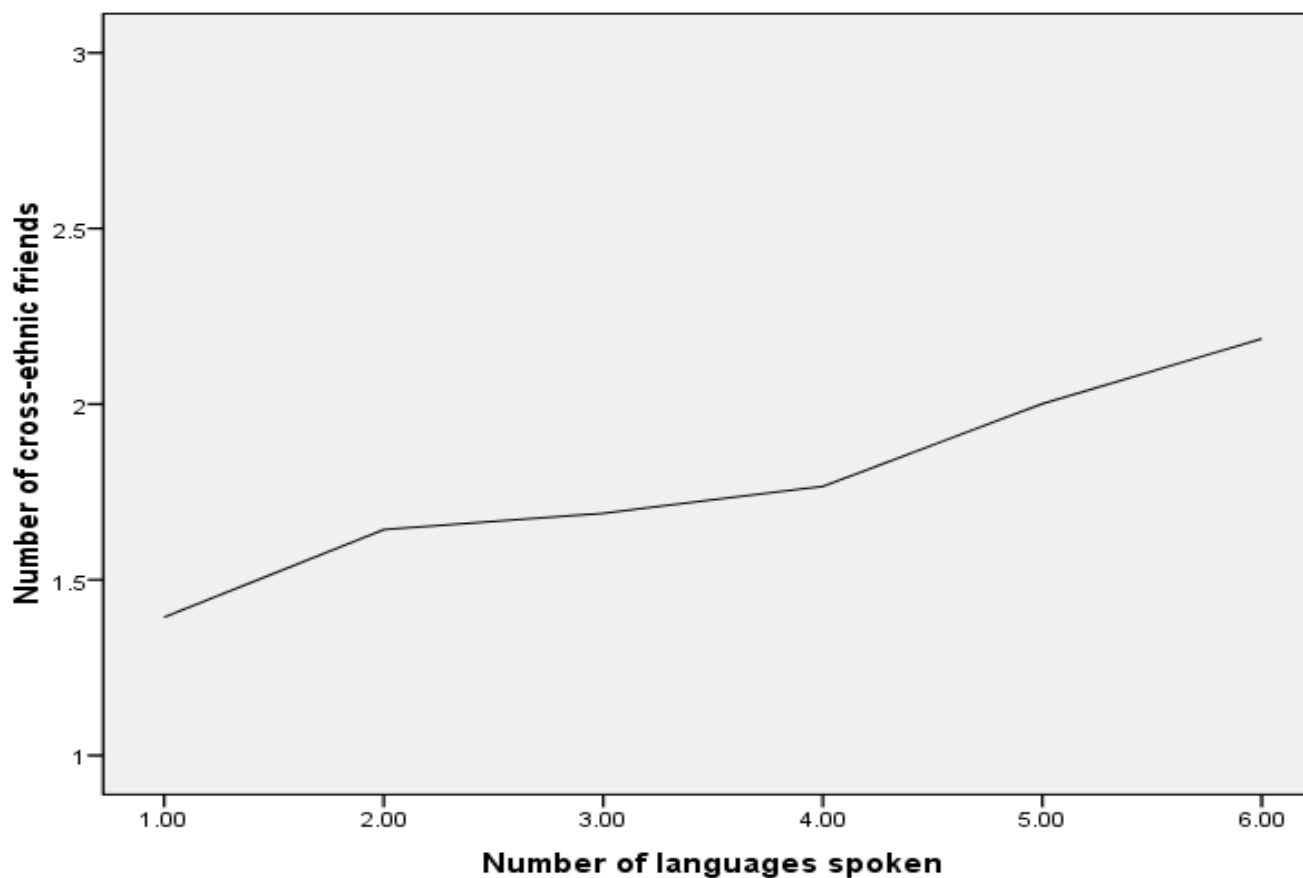
- Multilingualism is profitable for individuals: people who speak more foreign languages tend to have a higher income.

Languages and cross-ethnic contact



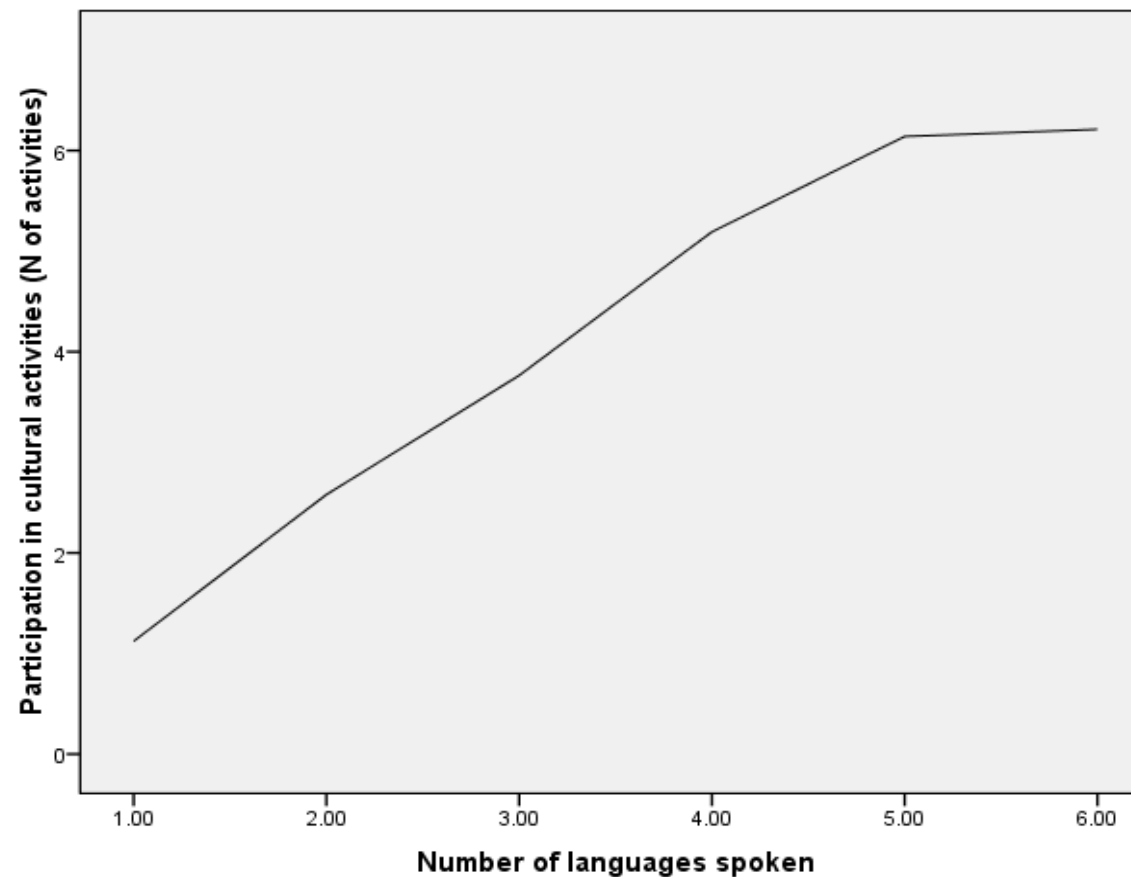
- Knowledge of foreign languages facilitates communication with people of other ethno-linguistic backgrounds.
- While languages that for most people in Utrecht are their mother tongues (e.g. Dutch, Turkish, Arabic, and Berber) are unsurprisingly often used for communication with friends, what is striking is that other foreign languages – English, German, French, Spanish and Italian – are also by many inhabitants used in communication with friends.

Languages and the number of cross-ethnic friends



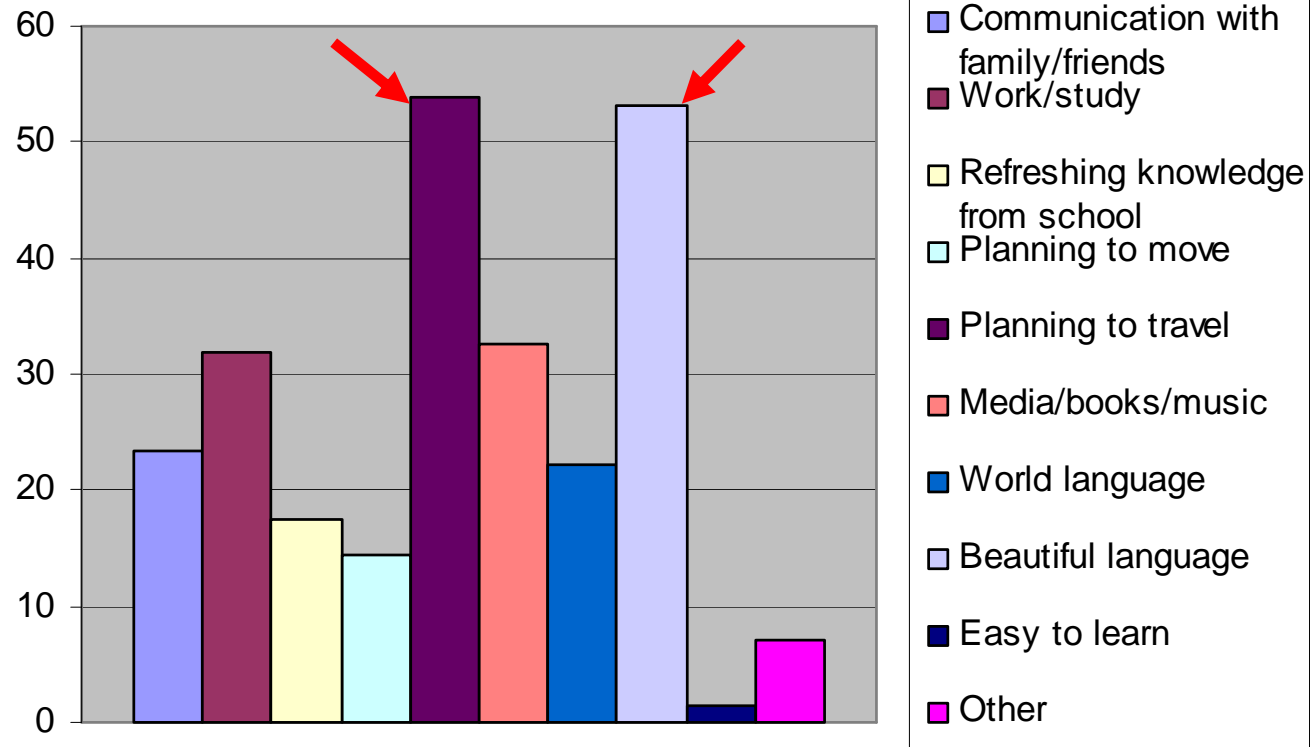
- People who speak more foreign languages tend to have more friends of other ethno-linguistic background.

Languages and cultural participation



- People who speak more languages participate more in cultural events, such as festivals, concerts, theatre, cinema, exhibitions etc. As many of these events involve music or text in foreign languages, it is assumed that for multilingual people such events are more easily accessible.

Reasons for learning a new languages



- More than half of the people who enroll in a language course (54%) do so in order to be able to use that language when traveling abroad.

Where are we now?

- We are just beginning to tell the story about multilingualism
- We have to work hard on “where is our laboratory about?”
- Can we make use of our new understanding about motivations and relations?

What did we also do in 2009?



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- Collecting images of multilingual landscaping
- Expert meetings
- Collecting ideas form other cities
- Neighborhood art project
- Network building / search for cooperation partners
- Language courses overview
- Participating in international conference
- Communication / Newsletters
- Weblog / Website
- Made it one of the “principles” in the Peace Treaty of Utrecht 2013

Focus 2010



- Neighborhood based projects (art)
- International school
- Translation project Utrecht Musea
- Frontdesk projects inside the municipality
- Working group of institutions involved in multilingualism
- Introduction for new generation of politicians
- International cooperation / sharing ideas & research
- Long-term planning: Cultural Sunday 2011, European Youth Olympic Festival 2013, European Capital of Culture 2018, ...



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Some questions ...

- Attractive & intelligent cities are 3 lingual and growing to 4 lingual?
- Can we make neighborhoods more tolerant by inviting them to learn and use more languages?
- How to make more use of intrinsic motivations in stimulating learning a new language?
- How can we create European cooperation for research and policy strategies at the level of our urban laboratories ...
- Do we need more quantitative data?
- What can new technologies do? What about augmented realities?