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Who speaks what language to whom and when – rethinking language use in the context of European Schools

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Abstract: European Schools provide a multilingual international education for children of EU employees. However, despite the multilingual context of these schools, little research has been done regarding students' multilingualism. Employing domain theory and a dynamic perspective on multilingualism, this sociolinguistic study investigates language use and language choice of secondary school students attending a European School in Belgium. The study comprises 56 participants and three different sources of data, i.e. questionnaire, self-recordings, and interviews, during a period of 3½ years. Nexus analysis is used as an analytical tool. The results suggest that the situations of language choice which the participants constantly face appear to be influenced by a taken-for-granted, rational multilingual context, manifested in the principles of inclusion and “the least common denominator”. These principles imply that students choose language based on a combination of their own, and their interlocutors' preferences. The principles are discussed in the light of the multilingual environment of the European Schools. In addition, the results show a discrepancy between the reported results from the questionnaire and the face-to-face interaction in the self-recordings. The home domain is more multilingual than reported, and interaction with peers more monolingual. These results help to elucidate the heterogeneity of the students' multilingualism, while discussing and problematizing domain theory.

Keywords: multilingual teenagers, language use, language choice, European Schools, nexus analysis

1 Introduction

“In globalized societies, multilingual contexts are a fact of life” (Mills 2004: 290), and for many teenagers today, life itself is a multilingual context. One

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group of multilingual teenagers that uses several languages on a daily basis are students participating in international bilingual education. The scenario in which they use and relate to at least three languages in their everyday lives has become far from rare, since many of them live in a country that has another majority language(s) than their L1(s) and attend a school where English is the main language of instruction. In this article, the rather unique form of bilingual international education provided by the European Schools (e.g. Baker 2001; Hayden 2006; Baetens Beardsmore 2009; De Mejía 2002) forms the social setting. In short, this educational establishment could be described as a network of 14 schools closely connected to the European Union, its member states, and its civil servants. Within the field of international bilingual education, the European Schools hold a special position because they are primarily intended for the civil servants of the EU. But the European Schools also hold a special position from a linguistic point of view since they “have been specially designed as multilingual establishments, i.e. where more than two languages function as medium of instruction” (Baetens Beardsmore 1995: 23).

Despite, on the one hand, the increased interest in international education during the last decades (cf. Hayden et al. 2007), and on the other the unique linguistic position of the European Schools, little research has been done in the field of multilingualism in international education (cf. Carder 2007; De Mejía 2002). Rather, research focus has primarily been given to educational, curricular, social and psychological aspects (Rydenvald 2015). One of the circumstances contributing to the sparse amount of linguistic research may be attributed to the alleged connection between students in international education and elite bilingualism. In previous research on elite bilingualism, the multilingualism of teenagers who are part of the international society is viewed as uncomplicated (Baker and Prys Jones 1998), stemming from a free choice (Paulston 1978) and representing an unquestionable advantage (De Mejía 2002). In addition, it is also believed that the teenagers always could return to their home country and its linguistic context, if they experience language related educational difficulties in the country of residence (Skutnabb-Kangas 1981). Thus, in earlier research on elite bilingualism the multilingualism of teenagers participating in international education is perceived to lack the struggle often attached to the multilingualism of many other multilingual groups of teenagers (Rydenvald 2015). This viewpoint tends to place them outside the “ethnic minorities” paradigm” (Blommaert and Rampton 2011: 1) which dominates much sociolinguistic research on multilingualism. However, the group of teenagers participating in international education is increasing in today’s globalized world. This calls for research on their

multilingualism, rather than a marginalizing stance taken on the ground of its alleged unproblematic nature.

Earlier studies regarding linguistic research in the European Schools context, almost exclusively concern language learning and acquisition (Baetens Beardsmore 1993). In the field of language use, Muller and Baetens Beardsmore (2004) have studied communication strategies used by teachers and pupils in a second language class at primary level. In previous studies (Rydenvald 2015, 2016) the reported language use and language attitudes among students at secondary school level in European Schools and international schools were investigated. The results of these studies show that the participating students, on a daily basis, move between and within several languages and several domains exhibiting different dominating languages and different patterns of language use. Furthermore the results from Rydenvald (2015) bear evidence of an actively dynamic multilingualism among the students in European Schools where their linguistic resources and competences explicitly interact.

Nevertheless, the results from these studies illustrate students' reported language use. In fact, we have little knowledge about the ways in which students attending international bilingual education actually navigate in real life in the multilingual arena that constitutes their everyday lives. Drawing on results from self-recordings done by the participants, this article aims at investigating the language use of some multilingual secondary school students with Swedish backgrounds attending the European School in Belgium. Not only are the students multilingual, but they also live in a nationally and educationally multilingual context. Multilingualism is an intrinsic fact of their everyday lives, which forms the premises for the questions in focus for this study: how do the participants describe their multilingualism and language use? Which patterns of language use do they relate to? What influences the many situations of language choice that they constantly face?

2 Educational context

In this section a brief presentation of the European Schools will be provided. (For more thorough documentation of the European School Model see e.g. Baetens Beardsmore 1993, 1995, De Mejía 2002; Housen 2002; Swan 1996). As students in international education tend to be referred to as Third Culture Kids (TCK) and categorized as elite bilinguals, I will briefly touch upon these two notions as well.

2.1 The European School

The European School was founded in 1957 as a result of a parental initiative in Luxembourg (Housen 2002). Today, the European School is primarily intended to cater to the schooling of the children of EU employees. Currently, there are 14 European Schools in 7 different countries, comprising approximately 25,000 students (Euresc 2015) of which a little over 600 are Swedish (Ottosson 2017). All European Schools follow the same curriculum, leading to a European Baccalaureate. In accordance with the language policy of the Council of Europe (Ecml 2015), the European School aims at maintaining the students' L1 and strive towards academic literacy in at least two languages (Baetens Beardsmore 1993; De Mejía 2002). As part of The European School's multilingual education two or more languages function as languages of instruction (Baetens Beardsmore 1995); English, French and German are offered as languages of instruction together with the students' L1. The schools are divided into language sections (Euresc 2016), and depending on the school, Swedish is taught as a subject or used as a language of instruction. In the latter case, mathematics, natural sciences and philosophy are taught in Swedish. In total, roughly 16 lessons per week are taught in Swedish.

2.2 TCK and elite bilinguals

The students in European Schools, like students in international education in general, are often characterized as globally mobile children (e.g. Baetens Beardsmore 1979; Hayden 2012). During the last decades, the term *Third Culture Kids* (TCK) has become a common and widely used term for the group of children and teenagers growing up in the international community. The term itself (TCK) refers to the belief that TCK grow up neither in their parents' home culture (first culture), nor in the culture of the host country (second culture) but in the international society's conglomerate of cultures, the "third culture" (Pollock and Van Reken 2009).

In addition, TCK do not only grow up in multicultural international environments, but also in the presence of several languages. It is not unusual that TCK in general, and especially TCK with a non-English-speaking background, often are required to relate to three languages in their everyday lives. An example of such a circumstance would be a student who is part of international education with English as language of instruction in a country in southern Europe and whose parents are native speakers of Swedish and Japanese.

As mentioned earlier, it is not unusual that students in international education, i.e. TCK, serve as an illustration of elite bilinguals. The term *elite bilinguals* often applies to voluntary migrants who have become multilingual by their own free choice (Skutnabb-Kangas 1981; Romaine 1995; Boyd 1998) and who are well-educated and proficient in at least one of the languages spoken by the international community (De Meijā 2002). Elite bilingualism (Paulston 1978) tends to be seen rather as a status-driven investment (Butler and Hakuta 2004) towards future access to the global market of work and higher studies, rather than a life sustaining necessity. As de Meijā puts it, “elite bilingualism may be seen as a valuable personal possession which is consciously chosen and worked for” (2002: 41). Baker and Prys-Jones go as far as to argue that elite bilinguals “have continuously accepted that bilingualism causes no problems in thinking, academic achievement or cultural acceptance” (1998: 16). However, contradictory to Baker and Prys-Jones’ claim, my previous research shows that “the alleged free choice and privileged social class of TCK, and elite bilinguals, do not result in a multilingualism more superfluous and less complicated than that of other multilingual teenage groups” (Rydenvald 2015).

3 Multilingualism and language use

This section discusses some perspectives, terminologies and theoretical models of multilingualism that relate to the international globalized society that the participating teenagers in this study are part of.

3.1 Multilingualism and related terminological issues

In the wake of the increased mobility of globalization, the understanding of multilingualism has changed. Aronin and Singleton claim that “[b]ecause multilingualism and globalization are so inextricably intertwined, all the major attributes of the globalization phenomenon characterize multilingualism as well” (Aronin and Singleton 2012: 56–57). One of the keywords of globalization is mobility, which also is found in contemporary sociolinguistics together with keywords such as dynamics, interplay, complexity and unpredictability (Blommaert 2012: 12). In line with the changing perspective, multilingualism has gone from being perceived as a parallel, dualistic (cf. Matarese 2013: 294) system of separate codes which have additive or subtractive effects on each other (Lambert 1977), to being perceived as a dynamic process. With the term

dynamic multilingualism, García (2009) aims at describing how multilingualism is developed through an interplay between the individual's linguistic resources and competences as well as the social and linguistic contexts she/he is a part of.

In the earlier dualistic perspective on bilingualism and multilingualism there was a certain focus on proficiency in defining the concepts. However, in contemporary research on multilingualism there is a tendency to highlight language use as one of the defining criteria, as the following quote clearly illustrates:

'Multilingualism' is here taken to be the use by individuals, groups, organizations or countries in more than one language in everyday life; this includes second, third or multiple languages. 'Bilingualism' is a subcategory thereof and is taken to be any real-life use of more than one language rather than the equally proficient use of more than one language. (Radein Initiative Aalberse et al. 2011).

In this article, I use the term *multilingualism* as an umbrella term for bilingualism and multilingualism. Secondly, I define multilingualism in accordance with the usage based perspective presented in the quote above and define *multilingual teenagers* as teenagers who in their daily lives encounter and need to use two or more languages regardless of their proficiency in them (cf. Axelsson et al. 2005: 8). In this article, I will touch upon proficiency on a couple of occasions, but otherwise I will focus on the usage of language.

Generally, multilingual individuals have at least one *L1* and one *L2*. Both terms, together with the related term *native speaker* are difficult, and have been criticized by many scholars (e.g. Coulmas 1981; Rampton 1990; Firth and Wagner 1997; Fraurud and Boyd 2011). Rampton (1990) for instance, suggests a replacement of the terms native speaker and *mother tongue*, in order to make transparent the connotations of various belongings, e.g. ethnic, national and linguistic, attached to the terms. He instead proposes the terms *language expertise*, *language affiliation* and *language inheritance*, where "language affiliation refers to the attachment or identification they [ESL students] feel for a language whether or not they nominally belong to the social group customarily associated with it" (Leung et al. 1997: 555).

The term *L1* is used in this article to denote the first language/languages learned by the participants from their parents. The term *mother tongue* is not used, in order to avoid the ideological issues attached to the term. Neither is the term *first language* used, since it within the scientific field of international education also is used to denote the language the individual has the highest proficiency in (De Mejía 2002). It is not unusual for multilingual individuals who have done their schooling in another language than their *L1* to become more proficient in the language of instruction than in their *L1*.

The term *L2* is often used to denote the languages the individual has learned after the *L1/L1s* has/have been established. Moreover, the term *L2* often implies that the language in question is a majority language in the society where the individual lives. The individual learns the language because she/he needs it in daily life, as opposed to, e.g. *foreign languages* learned in school context (Hyltenstam 2004: 37). In today's globalized world and especially with the increased use of English it is not entirely unproblematic that *L2* is used as a cover term for *L3*, *L4* etc. (cf. Cenoz and Jessner 2000), neither are the borders between *L2* and foreign languages clear cut and uncomplicated (Jessner 2008: 271), which is clearly illustrated by referring to English as a *lingua franca* in a general sense (cf. House 2003). The terminology simply does not seem to be able to fairly describe the life situation of multilinguals in today's globalized world. Hammarberg (2010: 102) writes that the terms become “misnomers, suggesting a too narrow conception of the notions they stand for”. The participant group could be used as an illustration of Hammarberg's claim, since in many cases their languages do not fit these categories.

3.2 Domain theory

Within the vast research fields of language use and language variation early theories tended to aim at “ordering the diversity” (Hymes 1972: 71) of human interaction by explaining its nature and delineating underlying premises, e.g. Hymes (1972) concept of speech events, summarized in the acronym taxonomy SPEAKING, speech accommodation theory (SAT) (Giles et al. 1987: 14) and the audience design theory (Bell 1984). An early theory that describes bilingual language use through a model which organizes, categorizes and operationalizes human interactional behavior is Fishman's *domain theory* (Fishman 1965; Fishman 1971; Fishman 1972a; Fishman 1972b). One contribution put forward by the domain theory is the view of bilingualism as a stable condition rather than a temporary transit period between monolingualism in the native language in the one end, and the target language at the other end (Fishman 1965). In his theoretic model, Fishman refers to the five essential *domains* of *family*, *friendship*, *religion*, *education*, and *work*. These domains are “commonly associated with a particular variety or language” (Fishman 1972a: 44). He defines them in terms of place, subject and the role-relations of the participants (Fishman 1972a: 37). Domains are often referred to as either formal, e.g. religion and work, or informal, e.g. family and friendship. In multilingual settings the majority language is often seen to be related to

the language use in more formal domains and the minority language to the more informal ones (Hyltenstam and Stroud 1991: 47). Fishman also argued that in a multilingual context one language often becomes dominant in a domain, where he equaled dominant language with most frequently used language (García et al. 2006: 12).

Domain theory applies a macro-perspective on language use, also pointed out by Fishman: “Domains are particularly useful constructs for the macro-level (i.e., community-wide) functional description of societally patterned variation in ‘talk’ within large and complex diglossic speech communities” (Fishman 1972b: 44). The macro-level perspective implies a top-down function which describes norms of language behavior, rather than allowing a bottom-up perspective which examines how multilinguals actually use their languages. Seen through the lens of the macro-perspective the domains appear as rather static, i.e. one single language is palpably dominating each domain and the boundaries between the domains are clear and firm.

However, the language use of multilinguals has proved to be more dynamic than the domain theory suggests. Not only do multilingual individuals use different languages in domains, but they also use different languages in the same domain. The premises for the participation in and belonging to different domains are likely to change during a lifetime (e.g. García 2009; Grosjean 2001; Skutnabb-Kangas 1981). The borders between the domains are thus blurred and the domains overlap. For instance, the school domain does not only relate to education but also social life between peers, resulting in the domains of school and friendship domains to be, to a large extent, interwoven. Furthermore, in the super-diversity (Vertovec 2007) that characterizes the globalized society the interpretation of a domain is liable to vary, e.g. the perception and the scope of the family domain. Another aspect that concerns contemporary society are the multitudes of networks an individual participates in, and the fact that networks can stretch over domains, e.g. religion could be practiced at home with friends. The IT-revolution over the last couple of decades in general and, in particular, the explosion of social media have also blurred the boundaries between official and intimate domains.

Despite the fact that domain theory appears to be out of tune with a society characterized by mobility as well as contemporary research on multilingualism, “[d]omains continue to be used as an organizing principle” (Bell 2014: 134). As an instrument for categorization on the macro-level domains may serve a function. However, domain theory is not a sufficient model for describing the complexity of the multilingualism and language use of the participants in this study, and, I argue, nor multilingualism in general in today’s globalized world.

4 Methodology and analytical framework

In order to explore how the participants use their languages in face-to-face interaction, and the underlying discourses that influence their choice of language, *nexus analysis* (e.g. Scollon and Scollon 2004) is used as an analytical framework. Nexus analysis is closely related to mediated discourse analysis (MDA), one of the differences being that MDA represents the theoretical side of the paradigm while nexus analysis represents a methodological and practical side (cf. Hanell and Blåsjö 2014; Norris and Jones 2005). MDA focuses primarily on the actions taken, and, secondly, on the underlying discourses (Norris and Jones 2005: 9), which corresponds well to the purpose of the study which focuses on the action of language use and language choice of the participants. The study will also compare the reported results from earlier studies (Rydenvald 2015, 2016) that show the participants' perception of their language use in regard to different domains. In this case the bottom-up micro perspective of nexus analysis functions as a complement to the top-down macro perspective of domain theory.

4.1 Nexus analysis

Nexus analysis engages exploration of “social action at the intersection of three main elements” (Scollon and Scollon 2004: 19). The three elements consist of *discourses in place*, *interaction order* and the *historical body*. Central to nexus analysis is that nothing happens in a social vacuum, and therefore everything is linked to earlier actions and will result in new actions. *Social action* Scollon and Scollon (2004: 12) see as “any action taken by an individual with reference to a social network”. The social action in this study is the language choice taken by the participants in the networks linked to school and home.

“All places in the world are complex aggregates (or nexus) of many discourses which circulate through them” (Scollon and Scollon 2004: 14). In nexus analysis the element *discourses in place* refers to all discourses that are relevant for the social action, and not only spoken discourses but those in the form of e.g. architectural styles or different material (Scollon and Scollon 2004: 14) as well. In this study I will use the element of discourses in place to denote the participants' thoughts about the reasons for their language choice (cf. Palviainen and Boyd 2013) as they describe them in the interviews.

The element interaction order, originating from Goffman (1983), is in nexus analysis (Scollon and Scollon 2004) used:

to talk about any of the many possible social arrangements by which we form relationships in social interaction. Our interest in the interaction order grows out of the fact that people behave differently depending in part whether they are alone when they act or if they are acting together in consort with other people as they might in having a conversation between friends, taking a university class, or consulting with a lawyer or medical doctor. (Scollon and Scollon 2004: 13)

Metaphorically, interaction order could be described as a genre where certain interactional behavior is expected in the social activities we engage in. In this study I am interested in the language behavior of the multilingual participants, i.e. what languages they use in the certain social arrangements. Interaction order refers here to the social activities between peers in school as well as on their way to and from school, and social activities taking place outside school involving family or friends. In this study interaction order refers to the patterns of language in the self-recordings and in the questionnaire.

The third element is the *historical body*, which refers to the habits, experiences, beliefs and attitudes accumulated by an individual (Palviainen and Boyd 2013; Scollon and Scollon 2004) during the course of her/his life time. The concept of historical body concerns the issue of how the “participants all come to be placed at this moment and in this way to enable or to carry out this action” (Scollon and Scollon 2004: 160). Thus, the historical body does not simply describe the individual’s background, but also incorporates the experiences mounted and embodied by it. The reported results from the survey (Rydenvald 2015, 2016) and the interviews performed in this article describe the participants’ historical bodies.

4.2 Data and participants

Another advantage granted by nexus analysis is that both reported quantitative data and qualitative data from face-to-face interaction can be incorporated in the same analysis. Within MDA, triangulation is preferably accomplished with data from the following four sources: (1) participants’ generalization, e.g. interviews or surveys where the participants makes statement about their actions; (2) “neutral” observations, e.g. recordings of actions; (3) individual participants’ experiences, e.g. life histories from interviews; and (4) observer’s interaction with participants, e.g. discussions with participants about results from earlier data collection (Scollon 2001; Blåsjö 2013). As will become evident from the discussion below, data from these four sources constitute the material in the present study. (1) In the survey the participants have answered questions about language use, attitudes and preference in regard to different domains. In the

interviews the participants also discuss their actions in the recordings. (2) The participants have recorded their own language use in different social settings. (3) In the interviews the participants describe, for instance, how their multilingualism has changed over their lives. The background questions in the survey also constitute a form a life history concerning language use, migration and schooling. (4) During the years of the data collection, I have had an ongoing dialogical interaction with the participants, presenting and discussion results.

The data in this study thus consists of self-recordings, interviews and a questionnaire. The data has been gathered over a period of 3½ years. The participants in the study consist of 56 secondary school students in a Swedish section in a European School in Belgium. They were between 15–19 years old at the time the data was gathered. All but one have at least one parent who has Swedish as L1, and the majority (N = 32) come from families where both parents have Swedish as L1

The purpose of the questionnaire was to provide an overview of the participants' perception of their multilingualism and language use. It was answered by 49 participants in October 2012. As a complement to this reported data, self-recordings of face-to-face interaction were done by the participants. The second data source thus consists of self-recordings done by a subset of 15 students from the population of the survey in December 2014. Of these, 7 had not answered the questionnaire at the previous occasion but did so by this data collection session. The 15 students recorded conversations in school, at home, on their way to and from school, and in their spare time activities. In school, recordings were done in corridors, recreation areas, canteen, and school yard. Only one recording took place in class, as the school administration was not receptive to recordings done during lessons. The self-recordings cannot be regarded as representations of the participants' entire repertoire. Rather, they represent a sample of their repertoire. The participants did 72 recordings that comprise a total of 20 hours 46 minutes and 51 seconds. The recordings were analyzed with regard to where the conversations had been held, whether the interlocutors present in the conversation came from networks of family or friends, and what languages were used. Simple transcripts were made of some passages.

The third data source consists of semi-structured individual and group interviews conducted with a subset of students that participated in the self-recordings. The interviews take their starting point in the language use from the self-recordings, but they also generate a general discussion about multilingualism and language use. The interviews were made in March 2016 with 9 students and then transcribed. These 9 students were a subset of the population of the 15 students in the self-recordings. The individual interviews were made with the students, whose self-recordings revealed a multilingual situation in the home

domain, comprising a total of 6 interviews with 4 students. Group interviews were done on two occasions with all 9 students. Together the individual and group interviews comprise a total of 2 hours, 30 minutes and 26 seconds, divided into individual interviews (1 hour, 16 minutes, 20 seconds), and group interviews (1 hour, 14 minutes, 6 seconds). The interviews have been transcribed. In connection to each data gathering session the informants have given their permission to participate and for the data to be used. The informants and other participants in the recordings as well as the interviews have been anonymized. They have been given new names that, like their own given names, function in a Swedish, English, and French context. The excerpts used in this article have been translated into English.

As mentioned, throughout the 3½ years of data gathering, I have had an ongoing discourse with the students, their Swedish teacher as well as teachers in other subjects, the school principal and responsible authorities in Sweden, e.g. the Swedish National Board of Education. At the time for the third data collection visit the study based on the survey was finished and had resulted in a publication (Rydenvald 2015), which was presented to and discussed with the students and the principal. The students participating in the self-recordings and their teachers have also read and commented on this article.

5 Results and analysis

As accounted for in the previous section, the social action in this nexus analysis is defined as the language choice taken by the participants in the nexus of family and friends in the social settings of home and school. The analysis of the results will be performed in relation to the three elements that intersect in the social action; historical body, interaction order, and discourses in place. Figure 1 describes how these elements correspond to the data in the study.

5.1 Historical body

The historical body aims at explaining why the participants actually are in the site of engagement executing the social action. The European School is primarily intended for the children of the civil servants in the European Union, and thus the parents' work constitutes an important common feature among the participants. In addition to the parents' professional connection with the EU, the participants show similarities in socioeconomic family background; 92% live

Figure 1: Nexus analysis as used in this article.

with both their parents, 88% of the parents work and 89% of the parents have a university education (Rydenvald 2015). They also show similarities in their migrational background as the majority of the participants was either born in the country of residence ($N=11/56$) or immigrated there before the age of six ($N=33/56$).

Moreover, the participants share a common linguistic family background. The majority ($N=32/56$) of the participants have Swedish as their only L1 or together with another L1. In the families ($N=23/56$) where the parents have different L1's, the majority language of the country where they live is only present in six families. The exception being one participant who comes from a family in which neither of the parents have Swedish as L1. This participant was born in Sweden and was raised there until eight years of age when the family emigrated from Sweden to the country of residence. This participant reports Swedish as L1 together with the parents' L1. All participants report a close contact with Sweden which could be seen as a linguistic extension of the family. The majority reports several visits to Sweden each year, the majority have summer residences in Sweden where they also spend a period of at least three weeks during the summer.

Finally, the participants share an educational background. The majority ($N=36/56$) has had their whole schooling in the European School. Another four started in Year 2 at primary level and yet another two have been away as exchange students for one year. In sum, 75% of the participants have attended the European School in which data has been collected since their second school year. The school is situated in a European country where French is a national majority language. However, in school the participants belong to the Swedish

section; one of the nine language section in the school. The participants have Swedish as their L1 language of instruction, and the majority of them has English as their L2 language of instruction. Thus, linguistic and national belongings interact in the participants' historical background and the interviews show that they are aware of this interplay, which excerpt (1) exemplifies:

- (1) Maud: yes but if I for example say should say I am Swedish but I have never lived in Sweden then they ask eh where have you lived and I was born and grew up in Belgium okay yes do you speak Belgian then

The majority of the participants have been raised outside Sweden, in one or several countries. Many students participating in international education, i.e. TCK, lead mobile lives (Pollock and Van Reken 2009), which also applies to the participants in this study. The results show that 43% of the students have lived in one or more countries in addition to the country of birth and the country of residence. The pattern of migration for these families follows two paths: either they have lived in a series of countries before moving to Belgium, or have Belgium as a residential base which they leave for another country for a period of years before returning. In both cases, the majority of the countries concerned have been hosting major EU institutions.

To sum up, both the quantitative results from the survey and qualitative results from the interviews show that the participants share many features in their historical bodies, e.g. family background, relating to parents' professional careers as well as linguistic and migrational aspects, and educational aspects. The majority of the participants have done the entire or most of their schooling in the European School, with Swedish and English as languages of instruction.

5.2 Interaction order

The interaction order could be described as an interactional behavior within a given social activity. The interactional behavior differs depending on which sort of social activity the interlocutors engage in. Furthermore, the interactional behavior changes depending on where the social action takes place and the relation to other interlocutors and the numbers of interlocutors participating in the conversation. Finally, our historical body plays a part in our interactional behavior, in that our previous knowledge, experience, and beliefs about the interaction order have an impact on our behavior. In this study the interaction order is concerned with the different languages the participants use in different

social activities. The social activities referred to in the nexus analysis are those that are present in the self-recordings done by the participants. Comparisons are also made with the reported results from the questionnaire.

The majority of the self-recordings are done in participants' homes, in school or on their way to or from school. Some recordings are done in the homes of friends or relatives, in stores or when the participants are out walking with friends or dogs. In the recordings done at home the participants talk with parents, siblings and pets, but also with friends, girlfriends and boyfriends. In some cases they talk to friends of their parents. The recordings done in school mostly consist of conversations among friends and peers. The majority of the conversations took place in either groups, i.e. four or more interlocutors, or in pairs.

5.2.1 Interaction orders at home

The results from the self-recordings display an interaction order in the homes of the participants which is more dynamic than the results from the survey on the reported language use in the home domain. According to the results from the survey, 85% of the participants report that parents most frequently use their L1 as means of communication with the participants. The recordings are to a certain extent contradictory to this interaction order. Swedish appears to function as a default language, but this interaction order tends to be valid only as long as all interlocutors present understand the language and/or have enough command of the language to engage in a conversation. The tendency in the results from the self-recordings is that the participants' language use at home is more multilingual than the results from the survey expected.

The recordings the participants have done in their homes reveal that the family members may use the same language for communication, but this interaction order is changed when non-family members are present. On the one hand Swedish could be interpreted as a default language, but on the other hand Swedish only is spoken in the recordings in the families where both parents have Swedish as L1 and when no other people are present. Eric and Robin, who come from families where both parents have Swedish as L1, serve as examples of this interaction order, as well as the discrepancy between the results from the questionnaire and the recordings.

In the questionnaire, Eric and Robin answer that they and their parents use Swedish as language of communication. However, Robin's parents divorced and his mother has a new partner, José, who lives with her, Robin and his sister. In the recordings Robin uses English with José and also with his sister

when she is part of the conversation. When José is not involved in the conversation, the siblings use Swedish between them. Robin uses Swedish with his mother but she answers him back in English most of the time. All family members speak French with the dog. Robin also uses English at home with friends. For example, in one of the recordings Robin goes to his room, after having dinner with the family, in order to do his homework in physics in Swedish. While doing that he calls a friend on the computer and chats with him in English.

Eric uses Swedish with his mother in the recordings done at home, but when his non-Swedish speaking girlfriend is present they all use English. In one recording done by Eric they are looking at the finals of the Swedish version of the TV-show “Idol”. The program is in Swedish but Eric and his mother are discussing, commenting and explaining what goes on in the program in English since the girlfriend does not understand Swedish.

5.2.2 Interaction orders in school

Also the recorded data in the school domain shows a slightly different result than the reported results. The results from the survey of the reported language use with friends show that the participants have a multilingual language practice with their friends. Around 80% of the participants report that they most frequently use several languages with friends in school as well as in their spare time. Furthermore 46% report that they most frequently use Swedish in school. The majority of the self-recordings outside the participants’ homes are done in school. The results from the self-recordings indicate an interaction order where Swedish is used with two or three peers, and English is used in groups of three or more peers. Very little French is used in the recordings, but according to the results from the interviews the participants use French with friend in their spare time, i.e. outside the school domain. In the recordings the participants use English to a substantially larger extent than what they have reported in the survey.

The recordings done in school take place outside the classroom in recreation areas, corridors and the canteen. The communication is mostly done in groups with friends. There are no adults present in these recordings. Some recordings are done on the participants’ way to and from school, and the majority of these conversations takes place in pairs. In the typical scenario a group of students leave school and then split up in different directions, where the participant who is recording continues with one friend on the bus, the metro, or by foot. In many recordings they pass by a grocery store on their way home.

The general patterns of language use with friends in the school displayed in the recordings are that the participants use English as language of communication in groups. Swedish is typically used when the participants are together with only Swedish speaking peers. The most common example of this scenario in the recordings is when a participant has a conversation with one friend on their way to or from school. The interaction order displayed in the recordings also indicates that the language use of the participants cannot be neatly tucked and packed into different domains. The domains interact, e.g. the social life with friends is not something that takes place in a domain of its own but is part of both the school and home domain. Furthermore, the participants use several languages together with their friends and peers, as well as in public spaces like streets and grocery stores. Finally, it becomes relatively clear that the perception of the minority language as a dominating language in intimate domains, such as home, is more of a top-down theoretical construct than a reality in the participants' lives. Swedish may be seen as a default language in private contexts, but other languages frequently enter the home domain. In line with this argument expressions such as home language could be questioned.

5.3 Discourses in place

The third element of the nexus analysis that influences the social action is called discourses in place, referring to all discourses that are relevant for the social action, which in this case is the language choice of the participants. In this study the discourses appear mainly through the interviews with the participants based on the language use in the self-recordings. From the analysis, two principles emerge that dominate the discourses in place, namely the principles of *inclusion* and, what I metaphorically define as, “the least common denominator”.

5.3.1 The principles of language choice

In the case of the participants, language choice is of interest as multilingualism is a firm part of their historical bodies as well as the interaction orders they are likely to meet in their everyday lives. They are multilingual, they live in an officially bilingual country, their parents work for a supranational multilingual institution and they are students of a bilingual educational form. On the one hand their multilingualism provides them with the possibility to choose, but on the other hand the multilingual context they are part of

requires language choice. In excerpt (2) below, Robin's language choice could be said to be based on the principle of "the least common denominator". His aim is to keep the conversation going as smoothly as possible, which he assesses to be done the most successfully in French with the interlocutor in question.

- (2) Marie: when you are about to initiate a conversation or address someone
how do you choose language then
Robin: then I use the language that the person I am talking with knows
the best so if I am going to talk to my Italian friend Fabio who I use
to talk French with all the time because he knows French best and
I don't speak Italian
Marie: I see
Robin: and he knows French better than English so then I choose French
with him
Marie: okay eh and the reason for you to do that is that it's easier you said
it's easier
Robin: it flows better if like the person you are talking with understands
straight away what you are saying the conversation flows sort of
better

Robin is proficient in Swedish, English and French, which enables him to choose between the three languages. His multilingualism could be described as a pool of linguistic resources (cf. Fought 2006: 21) from which he chooses the language which he assumes to best suit the conversation and its participant(s), which in this case is French. This pool of linguistic resources and the possibility to choose the language assumed to best facilitate the interaction could be seen as a parallel to the theoretical view on multilingualism as dynamic.

As excerpt (2) shows, Robin does not only assess aspects of the interlocutor's repertoire, but also assess his own repertoire in order to find the best mutual language. This is further illustrated in excerpt (3) below where Maud explicitly includes both the perspective of the interlocutor and herself in the language choice based on the principles of "the least common denominator". Maud says that in the language choice her command of the language as well as her feeling of being comfortable with the language are taken into consideration. She is not prepared to choose a language preferred by the interlocutor, but which she herself is not comfortable with. Excerpt (3) illustrates that choice of language is a joint action rather than an adjustment to other interlocutors.

- (3) Maud: if it is someone who speaks Swedish I want to speak Swedish with that person if it is someone who prefers to speak English I speak English and if it is someone who prefers to speak French I can speak French with that person
Marie: now you say what that person prefers
Maud: yes those which I am
Marie: able to
Maud: am comfortable with like I can talk
Marie: so it's partly based on that you are comfortable with the languages and then you can steer into [a language] you think believe the other person is the most comfortable with
Maud: yes

Closely connected to the principle of “the least common denominator” is the principle of inclusion, which excerpt (4) below exemplifies. In this excerpt (4) Eric explains that one reason he speaks English with his mother, although he in the survey answered they speak Swedish, is that his mother has explicitly requested everyone to speak English when Eric's girlfriend Sheila is present. He believes this interaction order to be based on consideration for Sheila, and her feeling of being included in the conversation. Vincent supports the idea of language choice based on inclusion. Both Eric and Vincent express the goal to be that of understanding. In Eric's case this goal is directed to the interlocutor's view and in Vincent's case towards the subject.

- (4) Eric: so I suppose that's why I often speak English with my mum why we use that [English] when it's just us talking but it's mostly because she wants me to speak English with her when she [Sheila] is there that's it I suppose but then
Marie: maybe it's a stupid question in a way but why does your mum want you to speak English when Sheila is there
Eric: I don't know but I suppose she wants her to feel included sort of I don't really know
Vincent: but you know that's at home also if you are at someone else's house and their parents use another language than the person you are with it's bett.. it is more fun for you and nicer for you if you understand what they are talking about

Besides Eric's mother, who wants the family to use English when Sheila is around, few parents have explicitly voiced an interaction order at home. Nevertheless, the interviews show that the participants agree to the

interaction order where they at home are expected to use a language that everyone present can understand, i.e. to use the strategies of inclusion and “the least common denominator”. In Louise’s family the parents have not explicitly formulated a language policy for the family, but the parents have acted toward the *OPOL* strategy, i.e. *One Person One Language* (cf. Palviainen and Boyd 2013). Louise’s father mainly uses his L1 French with the children and her mother uses her L1 Swedish. Her father understands Swedish and her mother has a good command of French. One exception to the interaction order of the parents are when Louise’s mother says something important which is vital that the whole family understands, then she speaks French. Excerpt (5) could be seen as an example where the language policy, albeit implicit, has to yield for the principles of inclusion and “the least common denominator”.

- (5) Marie: oh yeah but is it also AT HOME do you have any explicit like rules about using one language with one parent for instance Swedish has your mum said that you should speak Swedish with me
- Louise: no it’s more like she ALWAYS has spoken Swedish with us and dad has ALWAYS spoken French with us of course they cheat and would just all of a sudden have a discussion in Swedish between the two of them and dad says Louise something in Swedish but otherwise it is
- Marie: but hey ah but apart from that what language do you use at home if you are together all of you if you are having dinner together do you have a common language or is it like you
- Louise: it’s not one single language so it’s not one language around the dinner table but sometimes mum says now I am going to use French to all of us just because ah dad has to listen to this too it is important and then she doesn’t have to say it twice

Implicitly in the excerpt Louise also touches on the exception to the principle of inclusion in language choice that tends to be accepted by the participants: if you don’t expect a person to be interested in the topic you don’t need to adhere to the strategy of “the least common denominator”. Eric and his father make another example of this exception. They are engaged in a sport on elite level, and when they discuss this sport they usually use Swedish even when Eric’s girlfriend Sheila is present since Eric says the subject is of no interest for her.

5.3.2 The languages in place

As already mentioned, there is a discrepancy between the participants' reported language use and their language use in the recordings. In the home domain the participants use less Swedish than reported, and in the school domain their language use tends to be less multilingual than reported. Partly the principles of inclusion and of "the least common denominator" contribute to this discrepancy. For example, excerpt (3) above where Maud explains the basis for her language choice, does not only serve as an example of the principles of inclusion and "the least common denominator", but also illustrates an interaction order of languages which tends to be valid for several of the participants. Maud starts the excerpt by saying: "if it is someone who speaks Swedish I want to speak Swedish with that person if it is someone who prefers to speak English I speak English and if it is someone who prefers to speak French I can speak French with that person".

As Maud phrases it, in accordance with the interlocutor's preferences she wants to speak Swedish, neutrally states that she speaks English and says that she can speak French. As discussed earlier, Swedish can on the one hand be perceived as a default language, but on the other hand the opportunities to use Swedish as means of communication are fairly limited. The principles of inclusion and "the least common denominator" tend to limit the conversations to situations where only Swedish speaking peers, parents or other persons are present in small groups.

- (6) Victor: in most cases English if I don't talk to any of these guys [Swedish peers]
 Eric: if there is just one Swedish person I address them in Swedish or if it's only the two of us it's going to be Swedish if we are several people and there is someone who is sort of like my girlfriend then I address them in English and then... it's the fact that I almost never address someone who is not Swedish in any other languages than English

In the self-recordings mostly Swedish and English are used. As Maud says in excerpt (3) above that if anyone prefers to speak French she can do that. The majority of the informants can speak French and in the interviews Daniel, Louise, Maud, Robin, Scott, and Stella, say they use French with friends in their spare time, which the following excerpt (7) illustrates:

- (7) Daniel: I wake up and speak Swedish with my family get here [school] speak mostly English and Swedish and then I get back home and speak Swedish and then I meet my friends and speak French

French is one of the national languages in the country where the participants live. In a strict sense French is thus an L2 for the majority of the participants. Despite the status French has as an L2 for the participants and the fact that the majority knows and uses French, there is not much French spoken in the recordings done at home or in school, Louise's recordings being the exception as French is an L1 for her. One recording, however, is done in a sports activity, where the language used is French. Parallels could be drawn to the results from the survey (Rydenvald 2015) where 41% report that they participate in sports activities in French. In excerpt (8) below Eric says that not participating in a sports activity has had a negative impact on his French, which is also confirmed in excerpt (6) above where he says he very seldom chooses French to start a conversation.

- (8) Eric: but now I don't play football any longer so my French has deteriorated quite a lot and I hardly speak any French at all

Regardless the participants' proficiency levels of French or frequency of use, the participants consistently position themselves towards French in the interviews. They comment on e.g. who they speak French with, if they can or cannot speak French and if their friends and parents speak French. In the interviews it becomes evident that French is a language in the participants' multilingualism irrespective of their knowledge of the language. They have an affiliation to the language (cf. Rampton 1990). Tentatively, the participants' affiliation to French could also be a contributing factor to the discrepancy between the results from the survey indicating a language use with friends that is multilingual to a larger extent than the language use in the self-recordings. English is a frequently used language in the recordings, and as the analysis of the interaction order above showed, the participants use more English in the self-recordings than what they have reported in the survey. The most frequently used language in the recordings done in school is English. As excerpt (9) below illustrates, the participants also confirm this interaction order.

- (9) Scott: ehum yes depending on who I am talking with but usually it is Swedish and English it is often people from school
 Louise: because English I often speak in school with friends who don't speak Swedish or French

Theo: eh phu yeah since English then is like it is you know so to speak the majority it takes over sort of I can't imagine a situation where I sort of have to think that now I have to speak another language

Regardless the participants' multilingualism and the fact that the major discourses in place consist of the principles of inclusion and the least common denominator, English tends to be a safe common language to land in for the participants. The prime reason for this, I claim, is not that English is a *lingua franca* in the international society, but the dominating second language in the European School which the participants attend. In the excerpt (10) below Stella shows an awareness that English functions as an L2 in school.

(10) Stella: then most people have English as a second language [L2] in school not always but in most cases you can presume that the person knows English better than French so then maybe it becomes sort of slightly more natural to speak English

In the European School the participants attend there are nine different language sections which the students are grouped in according to their L1's. In addition, in the year group of the participants 75% of the students have English as their L2 language of instruction. In this light, an underlying discourse could be that English, as the dominating second language, becomes a language which most students are supposed to be able to speak. Not only is English chosen according to the principle of "the least common denominator", but it also safe to use English as a common language. The choice of English would probably not endanger the conversation, nor create any awkward situations between the interlocutors.

The status of English as a dominating L2 could also tentatively be linked to the international society, which the participants are a part of, and to which English is attributed a common language. Whether or not English could be seen as a *lingua franca*, in the sense of "a useful instrument for making oneself understood in international encounters" (House 2003: 559), in the international society could be discussed, but for the participants it becomes more than a *lingua franca* through its status as an official L2 in school.

In excerpt (11) below, English is given an unquestioned priority over French which, besides the principles of inclusion and "the least common denominator", might illustrate its prevailing position as the default language of the international society. In Maud's family all speak French except her father. If Maud has French speaking friends at home, the family speaks

French. If her father is present they all, including the French speaking friends switch to English in order to include him in the conversation. It appears to be an uncriticized, legitimate switch. As such, it could be perceived as a positioning in regard to the power of the discourse (Harré et al. 2009) of English as dominating L2.

- (11) Maud: then everyone changes over to English but in my family we all speak French except my dad so then if I invite someone home no matter if the person speaks French or English we speak English because he can't speak French

Furthermore, the interviews display a tension between English and French, where French is pictured by the participants as a language spoken in school mainly by the students that are native speakers of French or other Romance languages. This tension might be related to the presence of an international society parallel with the national majority society. In the excerpt (12) below Robin is of the opinion that the native French speakers do not need English as much as other (non-francophone) speakers.

- (12) Robin: the French and the Italians seem to be the only ones that manage well without necessarily speaking that much English there are many French many Italians and very often you hear them speak only French they can communicate with others too in French since we live in Belgium yes they don't need English in the way many others do

In the excerpt (13) Robin also indicates that for many non-francophone students in international education English is a necessary language. Students in international education, i.e. TCK are often referred to as elite bilinguals. As mentioned, elite bilingualism (Paulston 1978) tends to be regarded as a voluntary (Romaine 1995) and uncomplicated (Baker and Prys-Jones 1998: 16) form of bilingualism which has the function of a status driven investment (Butler and Hakuta 2004) resulting in future access to the global market of work and higher studies, rather than a life sustaining necessity. In excerpt (12) above, Robin contradicts this opinion as he implies that being a part of the international society requires knowledge of English. English might be an investment for the future, but it does not appear to be as voluntary and uncomplicated for TCK as claimed.

Paradoxically, the status of English as dominating L2, could also provide one plausible explanation to the existing discourse in place of inclusion, as well as adding an explanation to why the participants position themselves as more multilingual in the survey than they give proof of in the self-recordings. The European Schools offer a bilingual international education. In the school of the participants there are nine official first languages, a situation that sets the multilingual normativity. English and French constitute L1 languages among these languages, i.e. they are included within the nine L1 languages. But the English native speakers do not own the English language as it is a dominating L2. The shared ownership of English as L2 allows an inclusion in a language that belongs to everybody.

A tentative comparison could be made with international schools, where English also often becomes a dominating language. Unlike European Schools, international schools are firmly anchored in the English-speaking world; often the curriculum is modelled from an English-American foundation, school leaders and teaching staff are English native speakers and English is used as the single language of instruction (Carder 2007). The picture given is that English in international schools holds the position of an L1 language to strive towards, rather than, as in the European Schools, a dominating L2 offering a common language to meet in. Implicitly, using English as the dominant language of instruction may also place the students' L1's in an inferior position, signaling that multilingualism is less valued than native-like proficiency in English. Carder goes as far as to argue that international school students' "bilingualism is often incidental" (Carder 2007: xii), which is not, as becomes clear in this study, the case of European School students.

6 Conclusion

I summarize below the main findings in relation to the questions addressed in the study. How do the participants describe their multilingualism and language use? Which patterns of language use do they relate to? What influences the many situations of language choice they constantly face? The social action (Scollon and Scollon 2004) investigated in this study is the language choice of the participants. Nexus analysis shows that their language choice is primarily influenced by the principles of inclusion and, what I metaphorically define as, "the least common denominator". Concerning the principles, two aspects deserve to be noted. First, the rational and efficient nature of the discourses in place (Scollon and Scollon 2004). Surprisingly, no ideological discourses seem

to be connected to the language choice of the participants. Rather their language choice seems influenced by a taken-for-granted, rational multilingual context. They choose language in order to facilitate the conversation itself as well as the participation of all interlocutors in the conversation.

Second, there is a striking consensus among the participants regarding the principles of inclusion and “the least common denominator”. One plausible explanation for their consensus could be found in the similarity of school background in their historical bodies. The vast majority of the participants have attended the European Schools for their entire, or nearly entire, school history. In short, through their socialization into the school milieu they have a shared frame of reference, through which they also learn interaction orders from each other, as well as discourses about language behavior, attitudes, and beliefs. Moreover, the participants’ parents’ employment by the EU, in addition to the participants attending the European School, is liable to reinforce the family’s belonging to the international society.

One interesting result brought forward by the nexus analysis is the discrepancies between the participants’ reported patterns of language use and the patterns of language use displayed in the recordings by the same participants. In the recordings done in the participants’ homes, the parents’ L1s, but Swedish in particular, are used to a lesser degree when compared to the reported results. Swedish could be considered as a default language at home, but the self-recordings show that it consistently yields to other languages that are brought into the homes, primarily by other sources than family members. Secondly, the reported results from the survey portray the participants as engaging in a thoroughly multilingual practice with their friends, while, in the recordings English is to a large extent used as a language of communication between friends and peers.

These discrepancies could be discussed in the light of domain theory (Fishman 1965, 1972a) and the principles of language use. In the questionnaire, domain theory has been used as an organizing principle, i.e. the questions relate to inter-domain subjects, places and role-relations of individuals, e.g. food, home and siblings in case of the home domain. Relying on the domain theory and its top-down macro-perspective (cf. Fishman 1972b) restricts the possibilities to investigate language use as it might be performed in face-to-face interaction. Already the reported results indicate a heterogeneous language use within the domains, but the reported results do not account for external factors, e.g. languages brought into the domain, that have an impact on the language choice in the domains, since only domain specific factors are asked for. The top-down perspective inherent in domain theory attributes a static quality to the domains. This is not compatible with the perspective of dynamic multilingualism (e.g.

García 2009; García and Wei 2014), which has gained currency within contemporary research on multilingualism. The static perspective of language use could bring forth participant bias in the reported results: the participants answer in accordance to general beliefs of domain related language behavior, i.e. they answer towards the norm. Interestingly enough, the triangulation of data in the nexus analysis shows that, in the case of the participants, the bias works in both directions. In the recordings, the home is more multilingual than reported, and the interaction with peers more monolingual. In sum, domain theory does not appear to be sufficient for describing the patterns of language use the participants relate to.

The discrepancy concerning language use with friends and peers could also be discussed in relation to the principles of inclusion and “the least common denominator”, as well as the status English holds in the European Schools. In the self-recordings, English is used in conversations with friends and peers to higher degrees than is shown in the reported results. English is also the major L2 in the school of the participants. When, in facing a language choice, the participants assess their linguistic repertoires as well as the other interlocutors’ linguistic repertoires, English becomes a safe and convenient language to meet in, as the majority of the school’s students speak it. Furthermore, the status English has as L2 in school could imply that the students do not have to live up to native speaker norm. Finally, English is also the lingua franca of the international society (Seidlhofer 2011) which both the participants and their parents are part of through school and work. Tentatively, English is incorporated in many of the interaction orders (Goffman 1983) encountered by the participants in their everyday lives, which may add to the acceptance of English as a common language for mutual interaction.

Paradoxically, the fact that English is officially an L2 in the European Schools (Euresc 2016) could also contribute to an explanation of why the participants, according to the reported results, perceive themselves as having a more multilingual practice with friends than they actually give proof of in the self-recordings. The school promotes multilingualism and recognizes all students’ L1s through the language sections. The languages are thus not consigned to the position of minority languages. The participants also live in a country that has more than one official language. Their parents work for the EU, which is a multilingual institution. Some of the participants have parents with different L1’s. Multilingualism is thus represented in all elements of the nexus (Scollon and Scollon 2004), i.e. historical body, interaction order and discourses in place. It is highly probable that multilingualism becomes the norm for the participants. As multilingualism constitutes the norm, the participants are likely to act towards that norm, and as a result include all the languages they have to relate

to regardless the frequency of use. For example, French is a national language and an official L2 in school, and in the interviews the participants clearly show that they relate to French, no matter how little they use it. However, the affiliation (Rampton 1990) of the participants to French could be viewed as a manifestation not only of their multilingualism, but also of their attachment and identification (Leung et al. 1997) with the francophone setting of their international lives.

Students in international education are often categorized as elite bilinguals. As such they have not attracted much attention in research on multilingualism. This lack of interest is presumably linked to the believed voluntary (cf. Paulston 1978; Romaine 1995) and unproblematic (Baker and Prys Jones 1998) nature of their multilingualism. However, this study shows that multilingualism is an inextricable part of participants' lives where they are required to use several languages on a daily basis, i.e. a common language situation shared by many teenagers around the world. Linguistic research, conducted beyond the biased notion of elite bilingualism, on the multilingualism of students in international education would not only deepen our understanding of their multilingualism, but also of multilingual teenagers in general.

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