



Masterproef aangeboden tot  
het verkrijgen van het  
diploma Master of Arts in de  
**meertalige communicatie**

# **The language of cycling: an exploration of multilingualism in professional cycling teams**

Door: Elien Prophète  
Promotor: Prof. dr. Elke Peters

ACADEMIEJAAR 2018-2019

- **Code of conduct voor geloofwaardig auteurschap**

- **Correct verwijzen naar bronnen houdt in:**
- dat ik als auteur transparant ben over mijn bronnen, zodat de lezer op elk moment correct kan inschatten welke de bron is van wat beweerd wordt;
- dat ik als auteur geen relevante informatie waarover ik beschik en die een ander licht zou kunnen werpen op de geboden interpretatie of ontwikkelde redenering bewust weglaat;
- dat ik als auteur duidelijk aangeef welke relevante interpretaties ik niet in rekening heb gebracht en waarom dat is gebeurd;
- dat ik als auteur waarheidsgetrouw weergeef wat ik heb geobserveerd;
- dat ik als auteur op de hoogte blijf van evoluties in manieren van verwijzen en het weergeven van referenties en een bibliografie.

Ik bevestig dat ik deze code of conduct heb nageleefd bij het schrijven van deze masterproef.

Naam: Elien Prophète

Datum: 28/06/2019

## Acknowledgements

This master's thesis marks the end of an incredible and very multilingual year. During the past ten months, I was given the chance to teach English at Khon Kaen University in Thailand, learn some Thai myself, interview members of professional cycling teams and gain valuable experience during my internship at the Centre of Language and Education in Leuven. I am very grateful for all those opportunities.

During those ten months, I have also written this dissertation. And of course, completing this thesis would not have been possible without the help and support of a number of people. Therefore, I would like to thank the following people.

First and foremost, I sincerely would like to thank Prof. Dr. Elke Peters for her guidance, support and encouragement throughout the year. She gave me the chance to carry out research on the – in my opinion – coolest and most fascinating dissertation topic ever. It has been an absolute pleasure having her as my supervisor.

I also wish to thank all Lotto Soudal and Trek-Segafredo members who participated in this investigation. I am profoundly grateful to Mr. Arne Houtekier and Ms. Elke Weylandt for distributing the questionnaires and arranging the interviews with the members of their cycling teams. Without their help, this thesis would not have been possible.

I would like to thank my parents for always supporting me and for giving me the opportunity to pursue academic studies. Special thanks go to my sister for always being there for me.

Finally, I would like to thank my friends, housemates and fellow students for their incessant support and encouragement.

# Table of contents

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>Acknowledgements</b> .....                                    | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>Table of contents</b> .....                                   | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>Abstract</b> .....  | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>Preface</b> .....   | <b>7</b>  |
| <b>1. Theoretical overview</b> .....                             | <b>8</b>  |
| 1.1 Defining multilingualism.....                                | 8         |
| 1.2 Multilingualism in working environments.....                 | 10        |
| 1.2.1 Language strategies.....                                   | 10        |
| 1.2.2 Factors influencing the language strategy choice.....      | 11        |
| 1.3 Multilingualism in sports teams.....                         | 15        |
| 1.3.1 Relevance.....   | 15        |
| 1.3.2 Pioneering work.....                                       | 15        |
| 1.3.3 The Innsbruck Football Research Group.....                 | 17        |
| 1.3.4 Further research on multilingualism in football teams..... | 19        |
| 1.3.5 Multilingualism in cycling teams.....                      | 20        |
| <b>2. Methodology</b> .....                                      | <b>22</b> |
| 2.1 Research questions.....                                      | 22        |
| 2.2 Participating teams.....                                     | 22        |
| 2.2.1 Lotto Soudal.....  | 23        |
| 2.2.2 Trek-Segafredo.....  | 23        |
| 2.2.3 Respondents.....   | 23        |
| 2.3 Method.....  | 25        |
| 2.3.1 Questionnaires.....  | 25        |
| 2.3.2 Interviews.....  | 27        |
| <b>3. Results</b> .....  | <b>29</b> |
| 3.1 Multilingualism in the participating teams.....              | 29        |
| 3.1.1 Linguistic proficiency.....                                | 29        |
| 3.1.2 Language training.....                                     | 30        |
| 3.1.3 Language use in the team.....                              | 32        |
| 3.2 Language policy.....   | 36        |

|           |  |           |
|-----------|--|-----------|
| 3.2.1     | Language choice .....                                      | 36        |
| 3.2.2     | Social media and online communication .....                | 39        |
| 3.2.3     | Implementation .....                                       | 41        |
| 3.2.4     | Language learning .....                                    | 43        |
| 3.3       | Language strategies .....                                  | 46        |
| 3.4       | Communication problems and frustrations .....              | 51        |
| 3.4.1     | Quantitative results .....                                 | 51        |
| 3.4.2     | Qualitative results .....                                  | 52        |
| 3.5       | Recruitment and integration .....                          | 57        |
| 3.5.1     | Recruitment .....  | 57        |
| 3.5.2     | Moving for cycling .....                                   | 59        |
| 3.5.3     | Integration .....  | 61        |
| <b>4.</b> | <b>Discussion.....</b>                                     | <b>62</b> |
| 4.1       | Main findings.....   | 62        |
| 4.1.1     | Multilingualism in the participating teams .....           | 62        |
| 4.1.2     | Language policy.....                                       | 63        |
| 4.1.3     | Language strategies .....                                  | 66        |
| 4.1.4     | Communication problems and frustrations .....              | 67        |
| 4.1.5     | Recruitment and integration .....                          | 68        |
| 4.2       | Limitations and recommendations for further research ..... | 68        |
|           | <b>Bibliography.....</b>                                   | <b>70</b> |
|           | <b>List of tables and figures .....</b>                    | <b>73</b> |
|           | <b>Appendix .....</b>                                      | <b>74</b> |

## Abstract

Sinds de Internationale Wielervedunie (UCI) de globalisering van de wielervedsport in 1990 als één van haar topprioriteiten bestempelde, is het professionele wielervedlandschap grondig veranderd. Wedstrijden worden tegenwoordig over de hele wereld gehouden en het peloton bestaat uit meer verschillende nationaliteiten dan ooit. De groeiende internationalisering heeft onder andere tot gevolg dat professionele wielervedploegen met potentiële taalbarrières binnen de ploeg geconfronteerd worden. In deze scriptie werd onderzocht in welke mate meertaligheid zich in wielervedploegen manifesteert en hoe wielervedploegen daarmee omgaan.

Aan de hand van kwantitatieve enquêtes en kwalitatieve interviews werd onderzoek gevoerd bij twee wielervedploegen van het hoogste niveau (Trek-Segafredo en Lotto Soudal). Het onderzoek focuste onder andere op taalgebruik in de ploeg, taalbeleid, strategieën om meertaligheid te overbruggen en mogelijke communicatieproblemen en frustraties. Ook ging er aandacht naar de relatie tussen taalkennis en aanwerving en integratie.

Uit de resultaten blijkt dat het taalbeleid van beide ploegen duidelijk verschilt. Waar Trek-Segafredo eenduidig het Engels als lingua franca gebruikt, functioneren bij Lotto Soudal zowel het Nederlands als het Engels als voertaal. In beide ploegen wordt het gebruik van een (of meerdere) lingua(e) franca(e) aangevuld met strategieën zoals codeswitching en ad hoc tolken of vertalen. Belangrijk is vooral dat de teamleden elkaar kunnen verstaan en zichzelf verstaanbaar kunnen maken; of dat in verfijnde taal of in grammaticaal incorrecte constructies gebeurt, is minder belangrijk. Geen van beide ploegen biedt haar teamleden taallessen aan. Van de teamleden wordt verwacht dat ze indien nodig zelf aan hun taalniveau werken.

Op het vlak van communicatieproblemen en frustraties zijn er opvallende verschillen tussen beide teams. Waar communicatieproblemen bij Lotto Soudal vooral veroorzaakt worden door technische problemen of problemen met de informatiedoorstroming, ligt de beperkte taalvaardigheid van sommige teamleden het vaakst aan de basis van de communicatieproblemen bij Trek-Segafredo. Bij beide teams hebben de renners meestal geen taalproblemen. De teamleden die soms wel met taalproblemen te kampen hebben maken meestal deel uit van de staf, zijn iets ouder en minder hoog opgeleid. Aangezien alle teamleden hetzelfde doel hebben, heerst er grote collegialiteit onder de leden van beide ploegen. Teamleden met een beperkte taalvaardigheid worden vaak geholpen door hun teamgenoten.

Van de teamleden van beide ploegen wordt niet verwacht dat ze verhuizen voor het team. Voor stafleden fungeert taalkennis als een voorwaarde om aangeworven te worden. Voor potentiële nieuwe wielervedrenners is taalkennis minder belangrijk: zij moeten vooral met de benen kunnen spreken. Tot slot blijkt uit de resultaten dat een brede taalkennis een positieve invloed op de integratie van nieuwe teamleden heeft.

## Preface

The Santos Tour Down Under in Australia, the Grand Prix Cycliste de Montréal in Canada, the Gree-Tour of Guangxi in China – whereas up until the 1980s the professional road cycling calendar was entirely dominated by the four European countries France, Belgium, Italy and Spain, the UCI WorldTour Calendar of 2019 comprises races in four different continents. Since the International Cycling Union (UCI) made globalization one of its top priorities in 1990, the cycling landscape has changed profoundly (Van Reeth, 2016, p. 195). Not only did the composition of the UCI calendar change, the internal composition of professional road cycling teams altered as well. According to Van Reeth (2016), the average number of rider nationalities in professional cycling teams grew from 4.1 in 1990 to 10.2 in 2015 (p. 183). This growing internationalization implies that the number of different mother tongues in professional cycling teams has also been on the increase. There, the following question arises: how do the members of professional cycling teams cope with multilingualism and potential language barriers in their team?

Although the concept of multilingualism has been widely studied from a great number of different perspectives, only few studies have conducted research on multilingualism in sports teams. Pioneering work on multilingualism in professional football teams has been carried out by Kellerman, Koonen and van der Haagen (2005) and was later complemented by a number of publications by the Innsbruck Football Research Group (e.g. Chovanec & Podhorna-Policka, 2009; Giera et al., 2008; Lavric, 2012; Lavric & Steiner, 2011; Steiner & Lavric, 2013) and Ringbom (2012). However, investigations focussing on multilingualism in cycling teams remain scarce. Apart from one master's thesis in which the "translation and interpreting needs of Belgian professional cycling teams" were investigated (Van Hoorebeke, 2011, p. 1), there has been no work reporting on multilingualism in cycling teams.

This master's thesis aims to fill this research gap, by investigating how multilingual professional cycling teams are and how they cope with multilingualism within the team. By means of quantitative questionnaires and qualitative interviews, research was conducted at two top-level cycling teams. Topics covered during the investigation include language use in the team, language policy, linguistic strategies used to overcome language barriers, communication problems and frustrations and the influence of language skills on the recruitment and integration process.

The first part of this master's thesis will provide a theoretical overview of the research carried out on multilingualism in general, multilingualism in working environments and multilingualism in sports teams. In the methodology section, the research questions of this paper are formulated and an exhaustive description of the method used in this thesis is given. More information about the participating cycling teams is also provided in the methodology section. Part three describes the quantitative and qualitative results of the investigation. Finally, in the fourth part the results are discussed and the main conclusions, limitations and recommendations of this thesis are presented.

# 1. Theoretical overview

The concept of multilingualism has been widely studied. The phenomenon has been investigated in many different contexts and from a great number of different perspectives. The theoretical overview of this master's thesis aims to outline the most important contributions that have reported on multilingualism. The overview will be divided into three parts. In the first section, the term multilingualism is specified and the perspective adopted in this thesis will be defined. The second part is concerned with multilingualism in working environments. In this part, the strategies frequently used in multilingual business contexts and factors influencing the strategy choice will be presented. Finally, the third section focusses on multilingualism in sports teams.

## 1.1 Defining multilingualism

As a result of globalization, the growing transnational movement of people and the many technological developments of the last decades, multilingualism is now common practice all over the world (Cenoz, 2013, pp. 3-4). However, it should be noted that multilingualism is not a contemporary phenomenon. On the contrary, it has been in our world since time immemorial (Jessner-Schmid, 2015, p. 65). Still, scholarly attention to the topic of multilingualism has been fairly recent (p. 65). It was not until the 1960s, when the cognitive benefits of bilingualism were discovered, that multilingualism was considered a favourable competence rather than a phenomenon linked to schizophrenia and cognitive handicaps (Jessner-Schmid, 2015, p. 65). Since then, much effort has gone into the investigation of multilingualism. The phenomenon has been studied from various perspectives, including applied linguistics, neurolinguistics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, language policy and educational studies, and can therefore be viewed as a highly interdisciplinary topic (Cenoz, 2013).

Because multilingualism has been studied from so many different angles, it has become rather problematic to define the concept. Also, in the numerous studies reporting on multilingualism, a number of terms which can easily be confused with one another (e.g. bilingualism, multilingualism and plurilingualism) were used. In order to create more clarity regarding the notion of multilingualism and the different terms used in research, Cenoz (2013, pp. 4-7) provided an overview of the different dimensions of multilingualism. In the following paragraphs, these dimensions will be described.

Firstly, a distinction can be made between multilingualism at an individual and a societal level (Cenoz, 2013, p. 5). Individual multilingualism is defined by the Council of Europe (n.d., cited in Cenoz, 2013, p. 5) as the "repertoire of varieties of language which many individuals use", meaning that it is concerned with the individual who is proficient in two or more languages at the same time. The individual can acquire these languages simultaneously or he or she can be raised monolingually and learn the other language(s) at a later point in time (Cenoz, 2013, p. 5). Societal multilingualism, on the other hand, is specified as "the presence in a geographical area, large or small, of more than one 'variety of language'" (Council of Europe, n.d., cited in Cenoz, 2013, p. 5). At this level, a distinction can be drawn between two subtypes. In the case of additive multilingualism, a new language is learnt and given a position



equivalent to the first language (Cenoz, 2013, pp. 5-6). In contrast, when subtractive multilingualism occurs, the new language learnt is aimed to take the position of the first language, thereby rejecting the first language (p. 6). To make a clear distinction between the two types of multilingualism, the Council of Europe (n.d., cited in Cenoz, 2013, p. 5) denotes individual multilingualism with the term *plurilingualism*, while its counterpart, societal multilingualism, is referred to as *multilingualism*.

Secondly, Cenoz (2013, p. 6) distinguishes between the proficiency and use dimension of multilingualism. In the history of research into individual multilingualism, researchers have proposed several requirements to consider an individual multilingual. A first group of scholars argued that individual multilingualism should be assessed by means of one's proficiency level. Nevertheless, as Bassetti and Cook (2011, cited in Cenoz, 2013, p. 6) note, there is no general agreement on the exact proficiency level necessary to define a person as multilingual. Other researchers drew a distinction between balanced and unbalanced multilingualism. They claimed balanced multilingualism to be a requirement for multilingualism, implying that individuals needed the exact same level of all the languages they mastered to be truly multilingual (Cenoz, 2013, p. 6). Today, however, balanced multilingualism is no longer viewed as a necessity to be considered multilingual (Skutnabb-Kangas & McCarty, 2008, p. 2). A third and final view was taken by Lüdi and Py (2009), who rather put emphasis on the use of different languages than on the proficiency level. According to Lüdi and Py (2009, p. 158), "each individual currently practising two (or more) languages, and able, where necessary to switch from one language to the other without major difficulty, is bilingual (or plurilingual)".

The final two dimensions of multilingualism discussed by Cenoz (2013, p. 7) are strongly related to the problem of confusing terminology. Cenoz (2013) aims to create more clarity concerning the dimensions of bilingualism and multilingualism, by reporting on the three different interpretations of the terms occurring in scholarly literature. First, the term *bilingualism* can be considered in an all-inclusive way, meaning that it "generally refers to two languages but can include more languages" (Cook & Bassetti, 2011, cited in Cenoz, 2013, p. 7). Similarly, *multilingualism* can be regarded in a general way as well, when referring to "two or more languages" (Aronin & Singleton, 2008, p. 2). In this view, multilingualism acts as a hypernym with terms such as bilingualism and trilingualism as its hyponyms (p. 2). Third, bilingualism and multilingualism can be seen as distinct but complementing terms (Cenoz, 2013, p. 7). In this case, *bilingualism* is only used to refer to two languages and *multilingualism* solely refers to three or more languages (p. 7).

As described above, the concept of multilingualism has been investigated from many different perspectives. As a result, the term has been defined in a plethora of ways and the terminology used to describe the phenomenon has become fairly confusing. To avoid any ambiguity, the perspective adopted in this investigation will now be specified. Reporting on multilingualism in sports teams, this thesis will focus on multilingualism on a societal level. The term multilingualism will be used in the second interpretation provided by Cenoz (2013), meaning that multilingualism will be viewed as a general term, i.e. referring to two or more languages, with bilingualism as one of its hyponyms.

## 1.2 Multilingualism in working environments

In the previous section, the concept of multilingualism and the abundance of different perspectives on the phenomenon have been discussed. The following section will focus on multilingualism in one specific context: working environments. As a result of globalization, the number of situations in which people with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds have to communicate with one another has been on the increase (Chovanec & Podhorna-Policka, 2009, p. 190). Especially in work contexts, individuals are typically brought together on the basis of their expertise rather than their social preferences, which implies that employees are often forced to work together with people with different linguistic backgrounds (Chovanec & Podhorna-Policka, 2009, pp. 190-191). According to Lüdi (2013b, p. 144), a team's mixed composition is not necessarily detrimental to its work performances. On the contrary, Lüdi (2013b) points out that "mixed teams have greater resources, knowledge and experience, which makes them more efficient, more dynamic and more innovative and creative" (p. 144). However, it should be taken into account that the benefits of linguistic diversity in work contexts can only be enjoyed if an efficient way of intercommunication is found (p. 144). Therefore, many companies have developed their own strategies to deal with multilingualism.

### 1.2.1 Language strategies

A great deal of research has focussed on multilingualism in the internal and external communication of companies. An overview of the many publications linked to multilingualism in work contexts was provided by Coray and Duchêne (2017, pp. 55-69). In their contribution, Coray and Duchêne point out the importance of language choice<sup>1</sup> within a company, as they state that "from a business perspective, language choice is always a strategic choice, by means of which certain markets can be reached" (2017, p. 56). They refer to Vandermeeren (1998, cited in Coray & Duchêne, 2017, p. 56), whose three basic options of language choice are widespread. Vandermeeren's first option, adaptation, refers to the "adaptation to the language of the other" (1998, cited in Coray & Duchêne, 2017, p. 56). In a selling context, this would mean that the employee of the selling company adapts himself to the customer, by shifting to the customer's language. Second, there can also be non-adaptation (Vandermeeren, 1998, cited in Coray & Duchêne, 2017, p. 56). This strategy implies that one keeps using his own language when communicating with foreigners. Finally, one can opt for standardization, which means that a language is chosen in which all participants are proficient (Vandermeeren, 1998, cited in Coray & Duchêne, 2017, p. 56). In most cases, this *lingua franca* will take the form of English (Coray & Duchêne, 2017, p. 56). However, other languages can certainly act as a *lingua franca* as well (Lüdi, 2013a, p. 12).

In recent years, there has been a trend towards multilingual strategies, which should complement or even replace the three basic strategies provided by Vandermeeren (1998, Coray & Duchêne, 2017, p. 55). Lüdi (2013b, pp. 153-154), for instance, argues that English as a *lingua franca* should no longer be considered the most efficient strategy in any situation. As an alternative to English as a *lingua franca*,

---

<sup>1</sup> The term *language choice* is in scholarly literature also often referred to as *code choice*.

Lüdi (2013b, pp. 153-154) proposes the use of multilingual strategies, such as *lingua receptiva* and *codeswitching*<sup>2</sup>. These strategies will be further specified in the following paragraphs.

Lingua receptiva can be defined as a communication mode in which “participants speak different languages within one conversation, while understanding the language of their interlocutors” (Blees, Mak, & ten Thije, 2014, p. 175). The participants in a conversation can thus both speak their own language, because the other has enough passive knowledge of that language to understand what is being said. Lingua receptiva is often used when participants’ mother tongues are related (e.g. Swedish and Norwegian), but the strategy can also be used in contexts in which participants have simply gained enough proficiency in the other language (e.g. Russian and Estonian) (Blees, Mak, & ten Thije, 2014, p. 175). The term *lingua receptiva* was first used by Rehbein, ten Thije and Verschik (2011) and is also sometimes referred to as “intercompréhension” or “semicomunication” (Rehbein, ten Thije, & Verschik, 2011, p. 249).

Another strategy frequently used in multilingual contexts is codeswitching, which refers to the “change in languages within a single speech event” (Saville-Troike, 2003, p. 48). The strategy is often used to ensure that the receiver fully understands the sender’s message (Charles, 2006; Gunnarsson, 2014; both cited in Coray & Duchêne, 2017, p. 60). At the same time, codeswitching can be viewed as a way to show solidarity and to express one’s own cultural identity (Jenkins, Cogo, & Dewey, 2011, p. 284). Despite its benefits, the use of the strategy is still considered ambivalent. As codeswitching is often seen as “a sign of lacking language proficiency” (Angouri & Miglbauer, 2014, cited in Coray & Duchêne, 2017, p. 60), companies tend to restrict its use to internal communication (Bach Baoueb, 2009, cited in Coray & Duchêne, 2017, p. 60).

Coray and Duchêne (2017, p. 55) note that, in addition to *lingua receptiva* and codeswitching, professional translators and interpreters are also sometimes used in business contexts. However, Lesk, Lavric and Stegu (2017, p. 279) point out that external translators and interpreters are only rarely employed, as they lack knowledge of the specialized terminology used in a certain company and therefore sometimes produce inaccurate translations. According to Lavric (2012, p. 170), translators and interpreters even have a “bad reputation” in business contexts, because they do not know how to translate specialized terminology.

### **1.2.2 Factors influencing the language strategy choice**

Having provided an overview of the different strategies which may be used in multilingual contexts, the following paragraphs will focus on the choice of language strategy. According to Kleinberger Günther (2004), a company’s language choice is influenced by a number of different factors, which she grouped into four categories. The first category consists of factors related to a company’s economic situation: sector, company size and national/international orientation (Kleinberger Günther 2004, pp. 36-37). For instance, research by Kleinberger Günther (2003, cited in Kleinberger Günther, 2004, p. 37) has shown

---

<sup>2</sup> Lüdi (2013b) used the term *multilingual speech* to refer to the multilingual strategy which is also widely known as *codeswitching*.

that Swiss companies active in the services sector tend to opt for English as a lingua franca more frequently than Swiss companies in the manufacturing sector. Also, large, internationally oriented companies seem to promote the English language more than smaller businesses with a national orientation (p. 37). Second, Kleinberger Günther notes that a difference in language choice should be made between internal and external communication (p. 37). External communication should always have an appellative aspect, whereas internal communication should be mainly functional (p. 37). As a result, companies may want to use the language of their clients in their external communication (Lavric, 2008, p. 159). In the third category, a distinction is made between oral and written communication (Kleinberger Günther, 2004, p. 37). In the Swiss companies where Kleinberger Günther conducted research, the regional language (German) was the main spoken language, whereas English was only rarely used orally (p. 37). In written communication, however, the use of German and English was evenly divided (p. 37). Fourth and finally, Kleinberger Günther states that the individual language competences of a company's employees play an important role in a company's language choice (p. 37). For instance, choosing English as the main working language within a company will only pay off if the employees are indeed proficient in English.

Another, more elaborate model of language choice in business contexts was proposed by Lavric and Bäck (2009). Lavric and Bäck (2009) conducted research on code choice at three Austrian companies with clients in Romance language speaking countries such as Italy, France and Spain. Although many previous quantitative studies had investigated language use in business contexts (e.g. Hagen, 1999; Minkinen & Reuter, 2001; Reuter, 2003; Vandermeeren, 1998; all cited in Lavric & Bäck, 2009, p. 40), little was known about the motives underlying a company's choice for a specific language. In order to fill this research gap, Lavric and Bäck (2009) carried out a number of qualitative interviews with the employees of the participating companies (p. 42). The results of those interviews were used to illustrate Lavric and Bäck's model of code choice in business contexts, which was first presented in Bäck (2004, cited in Lavric & Bäck, 2009, p. 43).

Lavric and Bäck (2009) state that by means of their model, "code choice can be predicted in each specific case, provided all relevant factors are known" (p. 43). The model is based on Vandermeeren's three basic options of language choice (1998, cited in Lavric & Bäck, 2009, p. 41) and thus takes multilingual strategies to a much lesser extent into account. According to Lavric and Bäck (2009, p. 43) the factors influencing code choice in business contexts can be found on three different levels. The factors at the most general level, the so-called macro-factors, refer to the political and economic context in which the code is chosen (p. 56). Second, at the meso-level, factors related to a company's sector and the company itself play an important role (p. 56). Finally, at the micro-level, the factors are concerned with the situation at a specific department, or even with individual skills and preferences (p. 56). The factors at this level were subdivided into three categories: dispositional factors, motivational factors and situational factors (p. 43). Figure 1 (see p. 13) provides a graphic representation of the entire model. The different factors distinguished by Lavric and Bäck (2009) will be further described in the following paragraphs.

As stated earlier, the macro-factors in Lavric and Bäck's model are concerned with the economic and political aspects of language choice (2009, p. 43). Examples of macro-factors include national language policies, the importance of bilateral trade and the worldwide importance of a language. It is, for instance, very unlikely that a regional variant of German would be used during business negotiations between a German and a Spanish company. Also, the general language competence in Europe can play a role in code choice (p. 45). For example, as the knowledge of English in Romance language speaking countries is generally rather poor (Eurobarometer survey, 2001, cited in Lavric & Bäck, 2009, p. 46), using English as a lingua franca would probably not be the most efficient way of communication between a French and a Spanish enterprise.

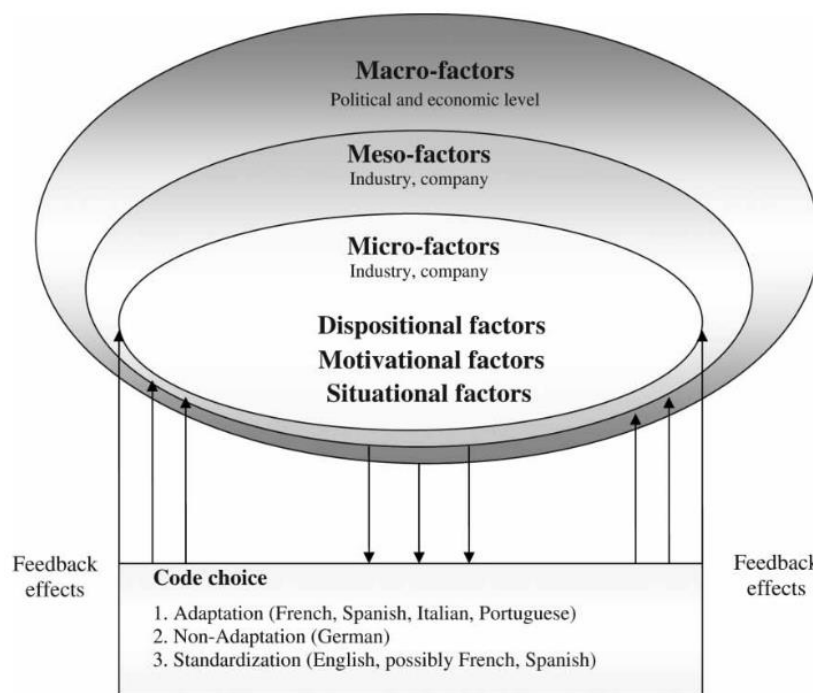


Figure 1: Factors of Code choice: three-level-model (Bäck, 2004, in Lavric & Bäck, 2009, p. 43).

The factors playing a role at the level of a company or a company's sector are referred to as meso-factors (Lavric & Bäck, 2009, p. 47). One example of a meso-factor is the importance of the leading market in a certain sector. For instance, Lavric and Bäck (2009, p. 47) describe the influence of Italy's leading position in the timber industry on foreign language learning. Because Italy is such an important player in the timber sector, Austrian students specialising in this topic at secondary school are offered Italian languages classes (p. 47). Another relevant factor at this level is the power balance between seller and buyer (p. 50). Although there are exceptions (Lavric, 2008, p. 161), in most sectors, the seller of a product or service must do its very best to stand out against its competitors (Lavric & Bäck, 2009, p. 50). The selling company finds itself in a weaker position than the buyer, usually causing it to adapt to the language of the buyer (p. 50). Lavric (2008, p. 158) points out that there are several ways for a company to adapt to the language of its client. Of course, there can be direct contact between the selling company and the customer (p. 158). If the company does not dispose of the necessary language skills for the communication with foreign clients, this may be problematic. However, a company can turn this

external communication issue into an internal matter, by employing foreign sales agents or by founding a distribution subsidiary in one of their export markets (Lavric, 2008, p. 158). In that case, the sales agents or employees of the subsidiary are certainly fluent enough to professionally communicate with the customers. The system of course only works if an efficient way of internal communication within the company is found.

The third group of factors, the micro-factors, are active at a departmental or individual level (Lavric & Bäck, 2009, p. 50). Within this category, a subdivision is made between dispositional, motivational and situational factors (p. 50). The dispositional factors not only refer to “the language competence of each individual employee”, but also to “the employees’ attitude towards the different countries, cultures and languages they usually deal with” (Lavric & Bäck, 2009, p. 50). For instance, if an employee has a fondness for a certain country, culture or language, it is much more likely that he or she will do an effort to learn the language and use an adaptation strategy in communication with speakers of that language (p. 51).

Lavric and Bäck (2009, p. 51) distinguish four motivational factors influencing code choice at an individual level. The first factor, *natural choice/efficiency*, can be linked with Myers-Scotton’s notion of “unmarked language choice” (1983, cited in Lavric & Bäck, 2009, p. 51). Myers-Scotton argues that, if participants do not have the same mother tongue, they will choose “the language for which the product of their competences is highest” (1983, Lavric & Bäck, 2009, p. 51). Natural choice thus refers to the idea that two participants in a conversation pick the language which feels the most natural to use. The second factor, *compliance*, is related to the concept of adapting your language use to your conversational partner (Lavric & Bäck, 2009, p. 52). Referring back to the unequal power balance between seller and buyer, it is most likely that the seller would adapt his language to the customer. Third, the factor *language practice* can be seen as the reversed form of compliance. If this factor has influence on the code choice, it means that a certain language is chosen not because it is the easiest way to communicate, but because one of the conversational participants wants to practice it (p. 53). Lastly, the factor *prestige* refers to the situation in which a participant wishes to use a certain language to earn the esteem of the other (p. 54). Conversely, the factor *fear of losing face*, prompts an individual to not speak a certain language, because he or she believes this would lead to a loss of face (p. 54).

Finally, Lavric and Bäck (2009, pp. 54-55) describe a number of situational factors which may have an influence on code choice in business contexts. These situational factors include for instance the people present in a specific situation, their language skills and their personal preferences. Also, the type of interaction (e.g. a presentation, negotiations, a meeting, ...) and the subject (e.g. small talk vs. business talk) may have an impact on the code choice. The final three situational factors described by Lavric and Bäck (2009, pp. 54-55) are time (e.g. early in the morning vs. late in the evening), place (e.g. the country in which the conversation takes place) and medium (e.g. a face-to-face meeting vs. email). (Lavric & Bäck, 2009, pp. 54-55)

This section has reported on the strategies most frequently used to overcome language barriers in working environments and business contexts. Moreover, this thesis has provided an overview of the

most important factors influencing the choice of a certain strategy. In the following section, we will shift perspectives and focus on multilingualism in a different context; i.e. multilingualism in sports teams.

## **1.3 Multilingualism in sports teams**

### **1.3.1 Relevance**

Whereas numerous publications have focussed on the topics of multilingualism in general and multilingualism in business contexts, only few publications can be found on multilingualism in professional sports teams. This is not completely nonsensical, as one might ask oneself what the added value of an investigation into sports, often defined as “the most important secondary matter in the world” (Van de Vooren, 2017) may be. However, the Czech scholars Chovanec and Podhorna-Policka (2009) claim that research into multilingualism in sports teams is relevant, as they state that “professional sports teams can be approached as specific instances of multilingual working environments” (p. 191).

Chovanec and Podhorna-Policka (2009, p. 190) argue that, similar to business working environments, the composition of sports teams is principally based on people’s talents and availability. Social preferences are not (or to a much lesser extent) taken into account during the recruitment process. This of course implies that the members of professional sports teams do not have the privilege of choosing their team members and, by extent, the languages spoken by those team members. The “forced multilingual environment” in which members of international sports teams thus find themselves could, in a certain way, be compared to the situation of refugees in refugee camps or asylum seeker centres (Chovanec & Podhorna-Policka, 2009, pp. 190-191). In those camps, fugitives are necessitated to closely live together and communicate with people with a different linguistic and cultural background, which can sometimes be problematic. Insights resulting from research on multilingual sports teams could be useful in order to find solutions to improve migrants’ situations in those kinds of camps.

A similar view is adopted by Giera, Giorgianni, Lavric, Pisek, Skinner and Stadler (2008), whose contribution specifically focusses on professional football teams. Giera et al. (2008) consider the football team as “a micromodel of a pluralistic society, where people from different cultures meet to constitute a new multicultural society” (p. 387). They believe that the analysis of multilingual and international football teams can lead to new insights which might even help to tackle the migration issues the world is currently struggling with (p. 387).

### **1.3.2 Pioneering work**

As stated earlier, research on multilingualism in sports teams is still scarce. The first studies relating to sports and language were published by Digel (1976, cited in Giera et al., 2008) and Schilling (2001, cited in Giera et al., 2008). In 1976, Digel (cited in Giera et al., 2008) described the language and communication used in a handball team and a few decades later, Schilling (2001, cited in Giera et al., 2008) wrote a book on the communication between trainer and players in amateur football. However, as emphasized by Lavric and Steiner (2011, p. 101), none of these studies is actually concerned with multilingualism or communication problems.

It was not until 2005 that the first contribution truly covering the topic of multilingualism in sports teams was published. Amazed by the foreign language proficiency of international sports stars such as Kim Clijsters and Thierry Henry, Kellerman, Koonen and van der Haagen (2005) aimed to investigate how foreign football players manage to adapt to the linguistic situation of their new football club. They carried out research at 28 Dutch football clubs playing in the top division or second division, in order to find out which languages the players and staff used and what language facilities the clubs provided (p. 203). The investigation was conducted by means of telephone questionnaires for the club management, written questionnaires for the foreign players and interviews with two coaches, two teachers of Dutch and one press officer (p. 203).

The results indicate that most Dutch clubs find it important that their foreign players are proficient in Dutch, primarily because they consider the command of Dutch necessary for efficient communication at the club, but also because it would help the players to integrate into Dutch society (Kellerman, Koonen, & van der Haagen, 2005, p. 204). In order to help the foreigners to learn Dutch, 68% of the cooperating football clubs offered “some sort of language instruction” (p. 204). Whereas most of the clubs in the top division offered these language learning services, only fewer than half of the clubs playing in the second division did so as well. This was probably due to a lack of financial means (pp. 204-205). Some clubs hired their own language teachers, while others collaborated with neighbouring schools or specialised institutions (p. 205). As clubs were aware of the fact that language learning was probably not the main priority for many foreign players, most of the clubs offering language instruction made those classes compulsory (p. 205).

Interestingly, 37 out of the 38 participating foreign football players considered a command of Dutch important (Kellerman, Koonen, & van der Haagen, 2005, p. 207). However, at the same time, some of the English-speaking players mentioned that they “did not really see the need to learn Dutch at all”, mainly because most people in the Netherlands speak English as well (p. 203). About a third of the responding footballers declared to speak Dutch “well” or “very well” and 50% stated to use Dutch during training sessions (p. 206). Although not explicitly mentioned, it can be derived from Kellerman, Koonen and van der Haagen’s publication (2005) that English would most likely be the alternative to Dutch.

In addition to their investigation on Dutch professional football teams, Kellerman, Koonen and van der Haagen (2005, p. 208) sought to conduct a similar inquiry at a number of English teams, but most of the English professional football clubs which were contacted were not willing to participate. Nevertheless, the cooperation of a top division football team (Arsenal) provided some interesting insights. In 2005, Arsenal was led by the Frenchman Arsène Wenger. Wenger had introduced a strict English-only policy and it was even specified in the players’ contracts that they had to learn English. In order to support the players to learn English, the club provided a teacher. This English-only policy was connected to Wenger’s view on integration into a new team. Wenger was convinced that it would take at least six months for a new player to start to feel at home. In order to promote this integration process, he wanted to create a “club culture”, with its own norms and values (p. 211). The English-only policy logically contributed to the creation of this club culture. To summarize Wenger’s view: “successful language



learning is a prerequisite for acclimatisation – and an acclimatised player will give of his best” (Kellerman, Koonen, & van der Haagen, 2005, p. 211).

### **1.3.3 The Innsbruck Football Research Group**

The most prominent research project concerned with multilingualism in sports teams was set up in 2008 by Lavric and her colleagues at the University of Innsbruck. The Innsbruck Football Research Group took the pioneering work of Kellerman, Koonen and van der Haagen (2005) as a starting point for their project “Communication strategies in multilingual football-teams: Achieving exemplary practise” (Giera et al., 2008, pp. 375-376). The investigation is to date still ongoing, but the progress of the research project has been reported on in several contributions (for instance, Chovanec & Podhorna-Policka, 2009; Giera et al., 2008; Lavric, 2012; Lavric & Steiner, 2011; Steiner & Lavric, 2013).

The Innsbruck Football Research Group have three main goals. The first research objective consists of finding out how the communication in professional and multilingual football teams works. Second, the group members seek to identify and analyse the different strategies and structures used by football teams in order to communicate in a successful way. Although “the starting point of the study is the hypothesis that successful clubs have also developed successful strategies to overcome difficulties” (Giera et al., 2008, p. 377), the researchers believe that those strategies can always be improved. Therefore, as a third objective, they aim to enhance the communication efficiency and promote the integration of new players at professional football clubs, by finetuning the strategies and structures they discovered earlier (Giera et al., 2008, pp. 376–377).

A pilot study was set up in 2008 to explore the topic of multilingualism in football teams (Giera et al., 2008, p. 376). Lavric and her colleagues conducted research at three Austrian football clubs, to provide some preliminary insights, but also to develop the best possible way to collect data for further investigations (p. 376). The group members concluded that the most functional way of gathering data would be the combination of observations during training sessions and team talks (sometimes by means of video recordings) and interviews with trainers and players. This combination later became the method used during the main study, which was planned to take place at major international football clubs in Germany, France, Italy, Spain, England and Russia (p. 377). At the end of 2008, two Czech linguists joined the Innsbruck Football Research Group. Consequent to this group expansion, research was carried out at a number of Czech professional football teams as well (Chovanec & Podhorna-Policka, 2009, p. 192).

In 2011, Lavric and Steiner published an article in which they presented the project’s findings up until then. By that time, the team had conducted 40 interviews, at 11 different football teams in Austria, Germany and Italy (Lavric & Steiner, 2011, p. 102). The interviews were complemented with observations and audiovisual recordings. A wide spectrum of different views and experiences was created by interviewing people with different profiles, including both professional and amateur referees, coaches, assistant coaches and football players (p. 102). The interviewed players all had different ages,

nationalities and positions on the field (p. 102). The most important results will be described in the following paragraphs.

It is well-known that a basic command of the main language spoken at the football team, often the official language of the region where the club is located, is indispensable (Lavric & Steiner, 2011, p. 104). However, an advanced proficiency of that language is strictly speaking not necessary. As one can assume that all players know how football works and what the rules are, foreign players only need some basic commands (e.g. left, right, run, shoot) to be fully employable on the field (p. 104). Nevertheless, foreign players still might want to take the opportunity to become more advanced in a foreign language, particularly with reference to integration. Being employable on the field is one thing, but integrating into a new team and country is another, especially because most football clubs seem not to be too concerned with the integration process of new foreign players (Heinz Peischl in Lavric & Steiner, 2011, p. 107). Learning the language used in a foreign player's new environment may therefore be very beneficial to the integration process.

Whether concerned about the integration of foreign players or not, finding a successful way of communication with foreign players is vital to every football club. Therefore, most clubs organize their own courses or send their foreign players to schools or institutions in the neighbourhood (Lavric & Steiner, 2011, p. 109). Lavric and Steiner (2011, p. 110) discovered that those classes are generally not very popular among foreign players, who claim to be too tired or too busy. Similar to what Kellerman, Koonen and van der Haagen (2005, p. 205) described earlier, many football clubs realize that foreign players are often not motivated to learn a new language and therefore make their language courses obligatory (Lavric & Steiner, 2011, p. 110).

Of course, there are clubs which do attach great importance to welcoming and guiding foreign players as well. Those clubs sometimes provide the new players with an individual interpreter or, even more commonly, with a so-called "factotum" (Lavric & Steiner, 2011, p. 107). This factotum can be considered a personal assistant who is both proficient in the main club language and the foreign player's mother tongue. He or she combines the roles of interpreter and language teacher and has a supportive role in arranging the practical aspects of moving to a new country, including the search for a home and administrative work (pp. 107-108). Finally, it is also common for a football club to appoint the club manager or an ex-player as a mentor to the newcomer (p. 108). This mentor most likely does not have a linguistic background, but he or she is very familiar with the football world and the particular club.

The results of the research project also indicate that foreigners' integration process becomes easier if there already are other players with the same nationality at the club (Lavric & Steiner, 2011, pp. 108-109). These fellow-countrymen both play an important role in the linguistic and cultural adaptation of the newcomer. According to footballer Tomas Jun, it is very common for those players to act as an interpreter, for instance during training sessions (Lavric & Steiner, 2011, p. 109). Also, they unofficially function as a cultural mediator, as they often try to familiarize the new foreigner with the customs of his new environment (p. 109). As a result, football clubs may be rather inclined to recruit new foreign players with the same mother tongue as one of their own players (p. 109).

As indicated earlier, most clubs strive to use the main language in its region as the working language (Lavric & Steiner, 2011, p. 105). However, this is not always the case. Despite the efforts of many international clubs to support their foreign players in language learning, the proficiency level of those players sometimes remains too low to communicate successfully. Therefore, certain clubs opt to use English as a lingua franca instead of the national language (p. 105). In other clubs, where the national language is maintained as the working language, strategies such as codeswitching (i.e. switching between languages during a single conversation (Saville-Troike, 2003, p. 48)) are common practice. Players attempt to express themselves in the working language, but often have to fall back on English, other languages or gestures to convey their message in a successful way. This strategy of “putting bits together” is often referred to as “bricolage” by the members of the Innsbruck Football Research Group (for instance, Lavric, 2012, p. 183). Commenting on this phenomenon, Lavric and Steiner (2011) wrote the following:

“What is most important is that the message is conveyed. How that happens is unimportant, meaning that in principle everything is permitted. One may mix bits of English with bits of the national language and add facial expressions/gestures or drawings – the main point is, that one understands and is understood.” (pp. 104-105)

The language used on and around football fields may thus not be the most aesthetical ever produced. However, in a sports context the only thing that really counts is the functionality of communication. This leads us to possibly the most important ingredient of successful communication in sports: team work. The members of a football team all have the same goal. As a result, it is in everyone’s benefit to find the best possible way to communicate (Lavric & Steiner, 2011, p. 114). Whether this implies that a player has to learn a new language, translate for another or adapt to the lower proficiency level of another, the common goal often creates an extra motivation for all team members to do their very best and to make the communication system work.

#### **1.3.4 Further research on multilingualism in football teams**

In the research area of multilingualism in sports teams, the focus clearly lies on football. In 2012, Håkan Ringbom carried out a case study of the football club IFK Mariehamn, which is active in the Finnish league. The club’s home base can be found on the Finnish Åland Islands, which are located between Sweden and Finland. Although the Ålands form part of Finland, Swedish is the main language spoken on the islands. In 2010, IFK Mariehamn had an international team of players with six different mother tongues (Ringbom, 2012, p. 189). The unique linguistic position in which IFK Mariehamn found itself inspired Ringbom (2012) to conduct an investigation into language use and communication at the club.

By means of a written questionnaire, Ringbom (2012) aimed to find out about the linguistic competences of the players and staff, the language strategies used and the potential communication problems at the club. The results show that most players were proficient in Swedish and English. Fewer players had a command of Finnish, the most important language in the league IFK Mariehamn was active in (p. 185). As not all players were proficient in the language being used during training sessions (Swedish), and

some players could not speak English as well, misunderstandings and frustrations often occurred on the field (p. 185). IFK Mariehamn did offer Swedish and English language classes, but players arriving late in the season did not have enough time to learn the basic vocabulary necessary to be efficiently employable on the field (p. 191). Apart from the use of Swedish as a lingua franca, communication strategies included the use of English as a lingua franca, the use of gestures and ad hoc interpreting by players proficient in multiple languages (Ringbom, 2012).

Supporting Lavric and Steiner's (2011) view, Ringbom (2012) emphasizes that "many problems off the field can be solved by teammates helping not so proficient players" and that "a friendly, informal atmosphere within the team is a huge help for successful coping with communication barriers" (p.192). Still, Ringbom (2012, p. 192) argues that the linguistic skills of potential new foreign players should be more taken into account during the recruitment process. Also, he claims that foreign players should be given enough time to learn the basic football vocabulary in the language used during training sessions (p. 192).

### **1.3.5 Multilingualism in cycling teams**

Whereas studies reporting on multilingualism in football teams are fairly thin on the ground, even less has been published on multilingualism in other sports. The only relevant study in this area is a master's thesis written by Lien Van Hoorebeke (2011), in which research was conducted into the "translation and interpreting needs of Belgian professional cycling teams" (p. 1). Van Hoorebeke (2011, p. 26) designed questionnaires in order to investigate the participants' linguistic knowledge and their language use within the team. Also, Van Hoorebeke examined whether the participants had ever experienced communication problems and whether they had employed translators or interpreters (p. 26).

The questionnaires were sent to 2 Belgian ProTeams<sup>3</sup> and 12 Belgian Professional Continental Teams and filled in by 70 participants, including both riders and staff members (Van Hoorebeke, 2011, p. 22). The results show that Dutch was clearly the most prevailing language in all teams, followed by French and English (p. 31). The communication in the teams appeared to go very smoothly, as only 17% of the respondents indicated to have experienced communication problems (p. 31). Correspondingly, the overwhelming majority had never consulted a translator or interpreter and believed it would not be useful to do so (p. 41).

Apart from Van Hoorebeke's master's thesis (2011), there has been no work reporting on multilingualism in cycling teams. However, the investigation of this topic would be very relevant at present day. Since the International Cycling Union (UCI) made the globalization of cycling one of its top priorities in 1990 (Van Reeth, 2016, p. 165), "professional road cycling did make a significant step towards globalization" (p. 195). Whereas up until the 1980s professional road cycling was dominated by the four European countries France, Belgium, Italy and Spain (Van Reeth, 2016, p. 165), the international peloton comprised riders from 79 countries all over the world by 2015 (p. 172). Although the number of top cycling teams decreased from 26 in 1990 to 17 in 2015, the number of countries hosting professional

---

<sup>3</sup> The category equivalent to the present-day UCI WorldTeams.

cycling teams increased from 9 in 1990 to 12 in 2015 (p. 181). Furthermore, in 2015, cycling competitions were organized in 67 countries, compared to only 17 countries in 1990 (p. 188). The statistics provided by Van Reeth (2016) show that professional cycling is growing more and more towards a globalized sport. The professional peloton is active all around the world and consists of more nationalities than ever. Consequently, cycling has probably become more multilingual than ever. As only very little attention has been paid to the topic of multilingualism in cycling teams, this master's thesis aims to fill this gap by providing an overview of the language policies and linguistic strategies of two WorldTour cycling teams.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Research questions

This master's thesis is concerned with the phenomenon of multilingualism in the specific context of professional cycling teams. The investigation seeks to explore how multilingual professional cycling teams are and how they cope with multilingualism within the team. To define the aim of this thesis more specifically, the following research questions were formulated:

#### ***How do professional cycling teams deal with multilingualism?***

- *RQ1: To what extent can professional cycling teams be considered multilingual?*
- *RQ2: What language policy is adopted in professional cycling teams?*
- *RQ3: Which strategies do members of professional cycling teams use to cope with language barriers?*
- *RQ4: To what extent do members of professional cycling teams experience communication problems and frustrations?*
- *RQ5: To what extent do language skills play a roll in the recruitment and integration process of new team members?*

The first research goal of this master's thesis consists of providing an overview of the participants' proficiency in a number of different languages and the language training they may have received. Moreover, it will be investigated which languages are frequently used in the teams. This way, this thesis aims to offer an answer to the first research question. Second, this investigation is concerned with the potential language policies followed by the participating cycling teams. In the second part, topics such as language choice, language policy on social media, the implementation of language policy and the language facilities the teams may offer their members will be discussed. The third research question relates to the different linguistic strategies which may be used within the team to cope with language barriers. In the fourth part of this master's thesis, it will be investigated whether the members of the participating cycling teams have ever experienced communication problems or frustrations. Finally, the fifth research question refers to the potential influence of language skills on the recruitment and integration process of new team members.

### 2.2 Participating teams

In order to answer the research questions listed above, data were gathered at two professional cycling teams, by means of questionnaires and interviews. This thesis aimed to investigate the language

situation at professional cycling teams active in the UCI WorldTour<sup>4</sup> category only, as it was assumed that those teams would be the most international. Potential teams were contacted in November 2018. Two teams agreed to cooperate: Lotto Soudal and Trek-Segafredo.

### **2.2.1 Lotto Soudal**

The Lotto Soudal cycling team has a long history in professional cycling. Founded in 1985 as Lotto (ProCyclingStats, 2019a), the team now consists of a professional men's team, as well as a professional women's team and a U23 team (Lotto Soudal, 2019). The Lotto Soudal men's team is composed of 27 riders and 50 staff members (De Keyser & Vandecapelle, 2019; Lotto Soudal, 2019). The team can be considered a primarily Belgian team; not only because it is licensed in Belgium, but also because the majority of the team members have the Belgian nationality. In total, the Lotto Soudal men's team comprises 9 different nationalities, including members with Australian, Belgian, British, Danish, Dutch, German, Norwegian, Polish and Spanish roots (De Keyser & Vandecapelle, 2019; Lotto Soudal, 2019). According to the Lotto Soudal communications manager, the men's team comprises native speakers of 8 different languages: Danish, Dutch, English, French, German, Norwegian, Polish and Spanish.

### **2.2.2 Trek-Segafredo**

Founded as Leopard Trek, Trek-Segafredo has been part of the WorldTour peloton since 2011 (ProCyclingStats, 2019b). Today, Trek-Segafredo consists of both a professional men's and women's team (Trek-Segafredo, 2019). The men's team is composed of 25 riders and 56 staff members. The Trek-Segafredo women's team consists of 13 riders and shares the staff with the men's team (Trek-Segafredo, 2019). In contrast to Lotto Soudal, Trek-Segafredo does not have a dominant nationality among the team members. The entire team, which is licensed in the United States, comprises 24 different nationalities, including members from Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, Germany, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Ukraine, Poland, Portugal, Spain, the United Kingdom, the United States and Switzerland (De Keyser & Vandecapelle, 2019; Trek-Segafredo, 2019). The Trek-Segafredo communications manager confirmed that the entire team is composed of native speakers of 15 different languages: Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Latvian, Luxembourgish, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish, Swedish and Ukrainian.

### **2.2.3 Respondents**

In December 2018, the communications managers of the two participating teams received questionnaires designed for the purpose of this investigation. They were asked to share the questionnaires with as many team members as possible, including both the riders and the staff members. By February 2019, 62 respondents had filled in the questionnaire, resulting into 61 fully completed responses. 37 out of the 77 members of the Lotto Soudal men's team had completed the

---

<sup>4</sup> The UCI WorldTour category is the highest category in professional cycling (UCI, 2019).

questionnaire, meaning that 48.05% of the team had participated in the investigation. The Lotto Soudal respondents' age ranged from 20 to 59 years, with a mean age of 34.35. At Trek-Segafredo, the questionnaires were sent to both the men's and the women's team. Out of the 94 Trek-Segafredo team members, 25 riders and staff members filled in the questionnaire, resulting in a percentage of 26.60%. The Trek-Segafredo participants' age ranged between 22 and 63 years, with an average of 34.32 years.

Tables 1, 2 and 3 give an overview of the function, gender and nationality of the participants. As can be seen in Table 1, about half of the respondents was active as a rider. The other half was composed of a variety of different staff functions. Participants who indicated to have another function were active as Business Development Manager (Lotto Soudal) or as Press Officer, Hospitality Coordinator, Service Course Manager, Nutritionist or Operations Manager (Trek-Segafredo).

*Table 1: Function of the respondents*

|                               | Lotto Soudal | Trek-Segafredo | Total     |
|-------------------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------|
| Administrative/logistic staff | 1            | 1              | 2         |
| Carer                         | 6            | 2              | 8         |
| Communications manager        | 1            | 1              | 2         |
| Doctor                        | 1            | 1              | 2         |
| Mechanic                      | 0            | 1              | 1         |
| Physiotherapist               | 1            | 1              | 2         |
| Psychologist                  | 1            | 0              | 1         |
| Rider                         | 20           | 10             | 30        |
| Sports director               | 3            | 2              | 5         |
| Team manager                  | 2            | 1              | 3         |
| Other                         | 1            | 5              | 6         |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>37</b>    | <b>25</b>      | <b>62</b> |

According to Table 2, more than 80% of the respondents were men. The number of women was higher at Trek-Segafredo than Lotto Soudal, which was probably due to the fact that the Trek-Segafredo women's team participated in the questionnaires as well.

*Table 2: Gender of the respondents*

|              | Lotto Soudal |                | Trek-Segafredo |                | Total     |                |
|--------------|--------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------|----------------|
|              | Number       | Percentage (%) | Number         | Percentage (%) | Number    | Percentage (%) |
| Man          | 35           | 94.59          | 16             | 64.00          | 51        | 82.26          |
| Woman        | 2            | 5.41           | 9              | 36.00          | 11        | 17.74          |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>37</b>    | <b>100</b>     | <b>25</b>      | <b>100</b>     | <b>62</b> | <b>100</b>     |

Table 3 (p. 25) gives an overview of the respondents' nationality and mother tongue(s). As not all 62 respondents fully completed the questionnaire, the mother tongue(s) of only 61 respondents is shown in the table.



*Table 3: Nationality and mother tongue(s) of the respondents*

| Nationality   |              |                | Mother tongue(s) |               |              |                |           |
|---------------|--------------|----------------|------------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|-----------|
|               | Lotto Soudal | Trek-Segafredo | Total            |               | Lotto Soudal | Trek-Segafredo | Total     |
| American      | 0            | 3              | 3                | Danish        | 1            | 0              | 1         |
| Australian    | 0            | 1              | 1                | Dutch         | 30           | 9              | 39        |
| Belgian       | 32           | 9              | 41               | English       | 0            | 6              | 6         |
| British       | 0            | 2              | 2                | French        | 3            | 2              | 5         |
| Canadian      | 0            | 1              | 1                | German        | 1            | 0              | 1         |
| Danish        | 1            | 0              | 1                | Italian       | 0            | 5              | 5         |
| Dutch         | 1            | 2              | 3                | Latvian       | 0            | 1              | 1         |
| German        | 1            | 0              | 1                | Luxembourgish | 0            | 1              | 1         |
| Italian       | 0            | 5              | 5                | Norwegian     | 1            | 0              | 1         |
| Latvian       | 0            | 1              | 1                | Spanish       | 1            | 0              | 1         |
| Luxembourgish | 0            | 1              | 1                |               |              |                |           |
| Norwegian     | 1            | 0              | 1                |               |              |                |           |
| Spanish       | 1            | 0              | 1                |               |              |                |           |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>37</b>    | <b>25</b>      | <b>62</b>        | <b>Total</b>  | <b>37</b>    | <b>24</b>      | <b>61</b> |

Table 4 shows how long the respondents had been employed in the cycling world and in their current team. For about a third of the participants, 2019 was the first season in their current team. The respondents with the longest period of employment in their current team formed part of Lotto Soudal, which corresponds to the fact that the Lotto Soudal team has been active in the professional peloton for more than 30 years.

*Table 4: Respondents' period of employment in the cycling world and in their current team*

| Employment in the cycling world |              |                | Employment in current team |              |              |                |           |
|---------------------------------|--------------|----------------|----------------------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|-----------|
|                                 | Lotto Soudal | Trek-Segafredo | Total                      |              | Lotto Soudal | Trek-Segafredo | Total     |
| < 1 year                        | 4            | 1              | 5                          | < 1 year     | 9            | 10             | 19        |
| 1-2 years                       | 3            | 1              | 4                          | 1-2 years    | 6            | 4              | 10        |
| 3-5 years                       | 7            | 5              | 12                         | 3-5 years    | 7            | 7              | 14        |
| 6-10 years                      | 8            | 7              | 15                         | 6-10 years   | 8            | 3              | 11        |
| 11-15 years                     | 6            | 5              | 11                         | 11-15 years  | 3            | 1              | 4         |
| 16-20 years                     | 2            | 3              | 5                          | 16-20 years  | 3            | 0              | 3         |
| > 20 years                      | 7            | 3              | 10                         | > 20 years   | 1            | 0              | 1         |
| <b>Total</b>                    | <b>37</b>    | <b>25</b>      | <b>62</b>                  | <b>Total</b> | <b>37</b>    | <b>25</b>      | <b>62</b> |

## 2.3 Method

### 2.3.1 Questionnaires

As this thesis seeks to provide both qualitative and quantitative results, the method used in this investigation consists of a combination of questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaires consisted of 27 closed-ended and 9 open-ended questions and were divided into four sections: demographic

questions, questions about language proficiency, questions about language use in the team and questions related to communication problems and frustrations. The questionnaires were designed in accordance with the methodological recommendations by Baarda et al. (2017, pp. 227-268), Baarda, Kalmijn and de Goede (2015) and Lietz (2010). The full version of the questionnaire was added to the appendix of this master's thesis (see p. 74).

In the first part of the questionnaire, the respondents were asked some general questions about their age, gender, nationality and function in the team. Furthermore, some questions related to the period of time the participants had been employed in the cycling world and in their current team. The respondents were also asked whether they had to move to another country because of their job in the cycling world. The first part of the questionnaire primarily consisted of closed-ended questions, as they are more suitable to provide statistical results (Baarda et al., 2017, p. 242). One open-ended question was added, in order to give participants the chance to explain why they did or did not have to move to another country.

The second part of the questionnaire focussed on language skills, asking about respondents' mother tongue(s), their proficiency level in other languages and the language training they might have received. Participants who indicated that they had taken a language course which did not form part of their curriculum at primary school, secondary school, university or college, were asked about the type of course and the period in which they had taken it. Finally, the participants were asked whether they had had to learn a new language for the team and in what ways the team had helped them to learn a new language. Again, the majority of the questions consisted of closed-ended questions. However, a number of open-ended questions were added for the participants to elaborate on their answer. For instance, the respondents were given the chance to report on their proficiency and received language training in other languages than the ones listed by the questionnaire (i.e. German, English, French, Italian, Dutch and Spanish). In the questions relating to language skills, participants were asked to assess their own language skills. In order to reduce the level of subjectivity in the participants' answers to a minimum, the possible answers were very precisely described, as suggested in Baarda, Kalmijn and de Goede (2015, p. 85). The following definitions, which are based on the definitions Ringbom (2012) used in his questionnaire, were given to specify the possible answers:

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| <i>Mother tongue:</i>  | <i>You were raised in this language.</i>  |
| <i>Excellent:</i>      | <i>You have a (nearly) native-like proficiency of this language.</i>            |
| <i>Very good:</i>      | <i>You can speak fluently and have no difficulties in understanding speech.</i> |
| <i>Good:</i>           | <i>You understand a lot, but cannot speak very well.</i>                        |
| <i>Fair:</i>           | <i>You understand a little, but speak very little.</i>                          |
| <i>Weak:</i>           | <i>You understand very little, but cannot speak at all.</i>                     |
| <i>No proficiency:</i> | <i>You cannot understand the language at all.</i>                               |

Part three was concerned with language use within the team. The respondents were asked to indicate how frequently they used a number of languages with certain team members (i.e. riders, sports directors, carers, mechanics and other staff members) and in certain situations (i.e. during tactical meetings,

during races and during informal moments). These questions were based on Van Hoorebeke's (2011) and Kellerman, Koonen and van der Haagen's (2005) questionnaires, but the number of different team members and situations had been extended. To ensure that participants would only answer questions that were applicable to them, filter questions were used (Baarda, Kalmijn, & de Goede, 2015, p. 60). As a result, only the participants who had indicated to attend the tactical meetings and had claimed to be active during races, either as a rider or a sports director, were able to respond to those questions. In order to provide detailed results on the frequency to which certain languages were used, the participants were asked to answer on a 5 point Likert scale of frequency. As Lietz (2010, p. 255) pointed out that adverbs of frequency are often interpreted differently by different respondents, the participants were asked to use the following definitions to answer the questions:

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| <i>Never:</i>     | <i>I never use this language.</i>                         |
| <i>Rarely:</i>    | <i>I use this language (less than) 3 times out of 10.</i> |
| <i>Sometimes:</i> | <i>I use this language 4 to 6 times out of 10.</i>        |
| <i>Often:</i>     | <i>I use this language (more than) 7 times out of 10.</i> |
| <i>Always:</i>    | <i>I always use this language.</i>                        |

Similar to Van Hoorebeke (2011) and Ringbom (2012), this master's thesis aimed to investigate whether the participants had ever experienced communication problems or frustrations. Therefore, the fourth part of the questionnaire comprised 4 questions relating to this topic. In the 2 closed-ended questions, respondents could indicate whether they had ever experienced communication problems and/or frustrations. 2 open-ended questions were added as well, for the participants to explain the situation in which they had experienced communication problems or frustrations.

As it was assumed that the members of professional cycling teams are busily occupied, online questionnaires seemed to be the most efficient way to gather quantitative data relating to team members' linguistic skills and their language use within the team (Baarda et al., 2017, p. 232). In order to address a maximal number of participants, the teams were provided with both an English and a Dutch version of the questionnaire. One of the teams had offered to distribute the questionnaires during their training camp. Those questionnaires were filled in on paper and later entered in LimeSurvey, the tool used to conduct the online questionnaires. The teams were given two months time to fill in the questionnaires. At the end of February 2019, all data were exported from LimeSurvey and processed in Microsoft Excel, following Baarda and van Viaenen (2015).

### **2.3.2 Interviews**

In order to complement the quantitative results of the questionnaires, six qualitative interviews were conducted. For both teams, an interview was held with the communications manager, a sports director and a rider. The interviews took place in February and March 2019 and varied in length, fluctuating between 20 and 60 minutes. As the questionnaires had already provided some insights into the way in which professional cycling teams deal with multilingualism, this investigation opted for semi-structured interviews, meaning that the topics to be discussed during the interview were prepared in advance

(Baarda, de Goede, & Teunissen, 2009b, p. 230; Baarda, de Goede, & van der Meer-Middelburg, 2007, p. 16).

As suggested by Baarda, de Goede and Teunissen (2009b) and Baarda, de Goede and van der Meer-Middelburg (2007), a topic list was compiled as a guideline for each interview. The topics discussed during the interviews included the language situation in the team, the language policy adopted by the team (both in general and on social media), the language strategies used to cope with language barriers, the language facilities offered by the team, the communication before and during races, communication problems and frustrations and the recruitment and integration process of new team members.

Once the interviews were conducted, the audiotapes were transcribed<sup>5</sup>. The transcriptions were analysed by means of the method proposed by Baarda, de Goede and Teunissen (2009a). Baarda et al. (2009a, p. 318) suggest to label the different parts of the interview. This labelling process would lead to a “meaningful reduction of the research material” (p. 316). Once the labelling had been completed, the different labels were analysed and organized, in order to find connections between certain labels (pp. 321-325). In the next step, the label structure was interpreted and the many labels were reduced to themes and core themes. The provisional labelling system was applied to new data (i.e. the other interviews), in order to test its validity (pp. 328-329). The system was adapted where necessary and could then be used to answer the research questions. An overview of the labelling system was added to the appendix of this thesis (see p. 93).

---

<sup>5</sup> For privacy reasons, the transcriptions of the interviews were not added to the appendix of this thesis.

### 3. Results

This master’s thesis aims to explore how multilingual professional cycling teams are and how they deal with multilingualism within the team. In the following pages, the results of the investigation will be presented. Corresponding to the five research questions, the results section can be divided into five parts: multilingualism in the participating teams, language policy, language strategies, communication problems and frustrations and recruitment and integration. As the two participating teams clearly have a distinct identity, the results of both teams were not taken together but rather compared to each other.

#### 3.1 Multilingualism in the participating teams

##### 3.1.1 Linguistic proficiency

The first research question of this thesis refers to the extent to which professional cycling teams can be considered multilingual. In order to answer that question, this thesis has investigated the respondents’ linguistic proficiency, the language training team members may have received and the languages used for communication in the team. To find out how proficient the team members are in a number of languages, the questionnaire participants were asked to indicate their own proficiency level on a Likert scale.

Table 5 shows the proficiency level of the participating Lotto Soudal members in German, English, French, Italian, Dutch and Spanish. As can be seen from the table, the majority of the Lotto Soudal members have an excellent command of Dutch. In addition to Dutch, almost 70% reported to have a very good or excellent proficiency in English. About a quarter of the respondents declared to experience difficulties when speaking English, but to understand English well. French seems to be the third language at Lotto Soudal. Most participants are less proficient in German, Italian and Spanish. A minority indicated to be proficient in other languages as well, including Danish, Luxembourgish, Norwegian and Swedish.

Table 5: Linguistic proficiency at Lotto Soudal

| Lotto Soudal          |            |             |            |             |            |             |
|-----------------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
|                       | German (%) | English (%) | French (%) | Italian (%) | Dutch (%)  | Spanish (%) |
| <b>No proficiency</b> | 32.43      | 0           | 8.11       | 48.65       | 2.70       | 45.95       |
| <b>Weak</b>           | 27.03      | 0           | 13.51      | 21.62       | 10.81      | 27.03       |
| <b>Fair</b>           | 29.73      | 2.70        | 13.51      | 10.81       | 0          | 10.81       |
| <b>Good</b>           | 5.41       | 27.03       | 29.73      | 8.11        | 0          | 8.11        |
| <b>Very good</b>      | 2.70       | 59.46       | 24.32      | 10.81       | 5.41       | 5.41        |
| <b>Excellent</b>      | 0          | 10.81       | 2.70       | 0           | 0          | 0           |
| <b>Mother tongue</b>  | 2.70       | 0           | 8.11       | 0           | 81.08      | 2.70        |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b>  | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b>  | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b>  |

Table 6 provides an overview of the proficiency levels of the Trek-Segafredo members. The most interesting aspect of this table is the very high level of English among the team members: 95.83% indicated to have a very good, excellent or native command of English. The second most popular language seems to be French, although the percentage of native Dutch speakers is considerable as well. Similar to Lotto Soudal, most Trek-Segafredo members are less proficient in German, Italian and Spanish. A small number of participants claimed to have a command of Portuguese, Russian or Norwegian as well.

*Table 6: Linguistic proficiency at Trek-Segafredo*

| <b>Trek-Segafredo</b> |                   |                    |                   |                    |                  |                    |
|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|
|                       | <b>German (%)</b> | <b>English (%)</b> | <b>French (%)</b> | <b>Italian (%)</b> | <b>Dutch (%)</b> | <b>Spanish (%)</b> |
| <b>No proficiency</b> | 41.67             | 0                  | 12.50             | 25.00              | 29.17            | 16.67              |
| <b>Weak</b>           | 16.67             | 0                  | 16.67             | 16.67              | 12.50            | 16.67              |
| <b>Fair</b>           | 12.50             | 4.17               | 4.17              | 20.83              | 12.50            | 29.17              |
| <b>Good</b>           | 20.83             | 0                  | 25.00             | 8.33               | 4.17             | 16.67              |
| <b>Very good</b>      | 4.17              | 58.33              | 25.00             | 8.33               | 4.17             | 20.83              |
| <b>Excellent</b>      | 4.17              | 12.50              | 8.33              | 0                  | 0                | 0                  |
| <b>Mother tongue</b>  | 0                 | 25.00              | 8.33              | 20.83              | 37.50            | 0                  |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>100</b>        | <b>100</b>         | <b>100</b>        | <b>100</b>         | <b>100</b>       | <b>100</b>         |

### 3.1.2 Language training

Next, this thesis sought to analyse what kind of language training the members of the participating teams had received. Therefore, the respondents were asked to indicate the type of language training they had received for a number of languages. Respondents who had received multiple types of language training for the same language were asked to select the type they had received most recently. Table 7 gives the results of the Lotto Soudal members. As can be seen from the table, the majority of the respondents claimed to have received either secondary or higher education for English, French and Dutch. More than half of the respondents had had German at secondary school, college or university. The bulk of the respondents did not attend Italian or Spanish classes.

*Table 7: Received language training at Lotto Soudal*

| <b>Lotto Soudal</b>                        |                   |                    |                   |                    |                  |                    |
|--|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|
|  | <b>German (%)</b> | <b>English (%)</b> | <b>French (%)</b> | <b>Italian (%)</b> | <b>Dutch (%)</b> | <b>Spanish (%)</b> |
| <b>I did not receive language training</b> | 43.24             | 2.70               | 10.81             | 91.89              | 8.11             | 81.08              |
| <b>Primary education</b>                   | 2.70              | 0                  | 0                 | 0                  | 0                | 0                  |
| <b>Secondary education</b>                 | 45.95             | 81.08              | 72.97             | 0                  | 67.57            | 0                  |
| <b>Higher education</b>                    | 8.11              | 16.22              | 16.22             | 2.70               | 18.92            | 8.11               |
| <b>Other language course</b>               | 0                 | 0                  | 0                 | 5.41               | 5.41             | 10.81              |
| <b>Total</b>                               | <b>100</b>        | <b>100</b>         | <b>100</b>        | <b>100</b>         | <b>100</b>       | <b>100</b>         |

At Trek-Segafredo, English was the most studied language. According to Table 8, about 80% of the participating team members had had English at secondary school or during higher education. English is respectively followed by French, Dutch and German. The majority of the Trek-Segafredo members did not study Italian or Spanish. A small number of team members had received language training for other languages, such as Portuguese and Russian.

Table 8: Received language training at Trek-Segafredo

| Trek-Segafredo                      |            |             |            |             |            |             |
|-------------------------------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
|                                     | German (%) | English (%) | French (%) | Italian (%) | Dutch (%)  | Spanish (%) |
| I did not receive language training | 66.67      | 16.67       | 29.17      | 79.17       | 50.00      | 70.83       |
| Primary education                   | 4.17       | 4.17        | 0          | 0           | 8.33       | 0           |
| Secondary education                 | 20.83      | 54.17       | 54.17      | 4.17        | 33.33      | 12.50       |
| Higher education                    | 8.33       | 25.00       | 12.50      | 8.33        | 0          | 8.33        |
| Other language course               | 0          | 0           | 4.17       | 0           | 8.33       | 0           |
| <b>Total</b>                        | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b>  | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b>  | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b>  |

According to Tables 7 and 8, other language courses are not very popular among the participants of both teams. At Lotto Soudal, 8 members had taken a course (4 in Spanish, 2 in Italian and 2 in Dutch). At Trek-Segafredo, 1 member had enrolled on a course to learn French and 2 others had done so for Dutch. Table 9 shows the type of language course those respondents had taken. The one Lotto Soudal member who indicated to have taken another language course commented that he or she had learnt a language by having regular contact with speakers of that language.

Table 9: Type of language course

| Lotto Soudal                      |   | Trek-Segafredo                    |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|---|
| Adult education                   | 3 | Adult education                   | 2 |
| Online language course            | 2 | Online language course            | 4 |
| Self-study by means of a textbook | 2 | Self-study by means of a textbook | 2 |
| Other                             | 1 | Other                             | 0 |

The participants were also asked when they had taken their language course. The results of this question are shown in Table 10. The most striking aspect to emerge from the table is that no respondents had taken a language course after they were employed at their current team.

Table 10: Moment of taking a language course

| Lotto Soudal                               |   | Trek-Segafredo                             |   |
|--|---|--|---|
| Before I was employed in the cycling world | 4 | Before I was employed in the cycling world | 4 |
| After I was employed in the cycling world  | 2 | After I was employed in the cycling world  | 4 |
| Before I was employed at my current team   | 0 | Before I was employed at my current team   | 2 |
| After I was employed at my current team    | 0 | After I was employed at my current team    | 0 |

### 3.1.3 Language use in the team

In order to provide an overview of the languages which are most frequently used in both teams, the participants were asked to indicate how often they used German, English, French, Italian, Dutch, Spanish and other languages in their team. More specifically, the respondents could report on their language use with the riders, the sports directors, the carers, the mechanics and the other staff members. They were also asked about their language use in three specific situations: during tactical meetings, during races and during informal moments. The questions both referred to spoken and written language, as was specified in the questionnaire.

#### 3.1.3.1 Language use with certain team members

Table 11 provides an overview of the respondents' language use with the riders. As shown in the table, Dutch and English are the most frequently used languages at Lotto Soudal. At Trek-Segafredo, English clearly is the most frequently used language with the riders: all participants indicated to often or always communicate with them in English. About a third of the Trek-Segafredo respondents also indicated to often or always use French or Dutch.

Table 11: Language use with the riders

| Language use with the riders (%) |              |         |        |         |       |         |       |                |         |        |         |       |         |       |
|----------------------------------|--------------|---------|--------|---------|-------|---------|-------|----------------|---------|--------|---------|-------|---------|-------|
|                                  | Lotto Soudal |         |        |         |       |         |       | Trek-Segafredo |         |        |         |       |         |       |
|                                  | German       | English | French | Italian | Dutch | Spanish | Other | German         | English | French | Italian | Dutch | Spanish | Other |
| Never                            | 81.08        | 0       | 18.92  | 89.19   | 5.41  | 83.78   | 97.30 | 62.50          | 0       | 29.17  | 41.67   | 45.83 | 41.67   | 87.50 |
| Rarely                           | 16.22        | 0       | 29.73  | 2.70    | 5.41  | 8.11    | 2.70  | 29.17          | 0       | 16.67  | 16.67   | 12.50 | 29.17   | 4.17  |
| Sometimes                        | 2.70         | 16.22   | 27.03  | 5.41    | 2.70  | 8.11    | 0     | 8.33           | 0       | 20.83  | 20.83   | 12.50 | 12.50   | 8.33  |
| Often                            | 0            | 51.35   | 10.81  | 2.70    | 43.24 | 0       | 0     | 0              | 16.67   | 33.33  | 16.67   | 20.83 | 16.67   | 0     |
| Always                           | 0            | 32.43   | 13.53  | 0       | 43.24 | 0       | 0     | 0              | 83.33   | 0      | 4.17    | 8.33  | 0       | 0     |
| Total                            | 100          | 100     | 100    | 100     | 100   | 100     | 100   | 100            | 100     | 100    | 100     | 100   | 100     | 100   |

The results relating to the language use with the sports directors are presented in Table 12 (p. 33). As can be seen from the table, Dutch is most frequently used by the Lotto Soudal respondents to communicate with their sports directors. In addition to Dutch, English is also frequently used for communication with the Lotto Soudal sports directors. At Trek-Segafredo, English seems to be the most common language to communicate with the sports directors. Additionally, a quarter of the Trek-Segafredo members frequently resort to French when communicating with them.

Table 13 (p. 33) gives the results of language use with the carers in both teams. It can be seen from the table that Dutch is the most common language at Lotto Soudal for communication with the carers. About 40% of the Lotto Soudal participants claimed to frequently use English with the carers. It is apparent from Table 9 that the majority of the Trek-Segafredo members often or always use English to communicate with the carers. Frequently used alternatives include French, Italian, Spanish and Dutch.



Table 12: Language use with the sports directors

| Language use with the sports directors (%) |              |            |            |            |            |            |            |                |            |            |            |            |            |            |
|--|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|----------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
|  | Lotto Soudal |            |            |            |            |            |            | Trek-Segafredo |            |            |            |            |            |            |
|  | German       | English    | French     | Italian    | Dutch      | Spanish    | Other      | German         | English    | French     | Italian    | Dutch      | Spanish    | Other      |
| <b>Never</b>                               | 94.59        | 27.03      | 79.97      | 100        | 8.11       | 97.30      | 100        | 83.33          | 4.17       | 41.67      | 58.33      | 62.50      | 83.33      | 95.83      |
| <b>Rarely</b>                              | 5.41         | 10.81      | 10.81      | 0          | 2.70       | 2.70       | 0          | 12.50          | 0          | 25.00      | 16.67      | 8.33       | 8.33       | 0          |
| <b>Sometimes</b>                           | 0            | 10.81      | 5.41       | 0          | 2.70       | 0          | 0          | 0              | 0          | 8.33       | 4.17       | 16.67      | 4.17       | 4.17       |
| <b>Often</b>                               | 0            | 35.14      | 5.41       | 0          | 27.03      | 0          | 0          | 4.17           | 12.50      | 20.83      | 12.50      | 12.50      | 4.17       | 0          |
| <b>Always</b>                              | 0            | 16.22      | 5.41       | 0          | 59.46      | 0          | 0          | 0              | 83.33      | 4.17       | 8.33       | 0          | 0          | 0          |
| <b>Total</b>                               | <b>100</b>   | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b>     | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> |

Table 13: Language use with the carers

| Language use with the carers (%) |              |            |            |            |            |            |          |                |            |            |            |            |            |            |
|----------------------------------|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|----------|----------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
|                                  | Lotto Soudal |            |            |            |            |            |          | Trek-Segafredo |            |            |            |            |            |            |
|                                  | German       | English    | French     | Italian    | Dutch      | Spanish    | Other    | German         | English    | French     | Italian    | Dutch      | Spanish    | Other      |
| <b>Never</b>                     | 97.22        | 24.32      | 75.68      | 94.59      | 10.81      | 81.08      | 100      | 91.67          | 4.17       | 25.00      | 37.50      | 54.17      | 33.33      | 83.33      |
| <b>Rarely</b>                    | 2.78         | 13.51      | 5.41       | 2.70       | 0          | 8.11       | 0        | 8.33           | 0          | 12.50      | 20.83      | 8.33       | 29.17      | 12.50      |
| <b>Sometimes</b>                 | 0            | 24.32      | 8.11       | 2.70       | 2.70       | 5.41       | 0        | 0              | 0          | 33.33      | 12.50      | 16.67      | 12.50      | 4.17       |
| <b>Often</b>                     | 0            | 18.92      | 5.41       | 0          | 24.32      | 5.41       | 0        | 0              | 20.83      | 20.83      | 20.83      | 12.50      | 20.83      | 0          |
| <b>Always</b>                    | 0            | 18.92      | 5.41       | 0          | 62.16      | 0          | 0        | 0              | 75.00      | 8.33       | 8.33       | 8.33       | 4.17       | 0          |
| <b>Total</b>                     | <b>100</b>   | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>0</b> | <b>100</b>     | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> |

The next category of team members includes the mechanics. Table 14 (p. 34) gives an overview of the languages which are used to communicate with them. At Lotto Soudal, Dutch seems to be the main language for communication with the mechanics. Other frequently used languages include French and English. As can be seen from Table 14, most of the Trek-Segafredo respondents indicated to use English most frequently when communicating with the mechanics. A quarter of the team members claimed to frequently use Spanish for communication with them and a minority often resort to Italian or French.

Finally, Table 15 (p. 34) shows the results relating to language use with the other staff members (e.g. the communications manager, administrative/logistic staff, the doctor, the bus driver, the chef, et cetera). As can be seen from the table, Dutch seems to be the most common language for communication with the other staff members at Lotto Soudal. About a quarter of the Lotto Soudal respondents usually uses English when communicating with them. At Trek-Segafredo, English is the most commonly used language for communication with the other staff members. Still, Table 15 shows that there is a considerable number of alternatives, including Dutch, French, Spanish and Italian.

Table 14: Language use with the mechanics

| Language use with the mechanics (%) |              |            |            |            |            |            |            |                |            |            |            |            |            |            |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|----------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
|                                     | Lotto Soudal |            |            |            |            |            |            | Trek-Segafredo |            |            |            |            |            |            |
|                                     | German       | English    | French     | Italian    | Dutch      | Spanish    | Other      | German         | English    | French     | Italian    | Dutch      | Spanish    | Other      |
| <b>Never</b>                        | 97.30        | 67.57      | 24.32      | 100        | 10.81      | 100        | 100        | 87.50          | 4.17       | 41.67      | 41.67      | 45.83      | 41.67      | 87.50      |
| <b>Rarely</b>                       | 2.70         | 2.70       | 29.73      | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 12.50          | 0          | 12.50      | 25.00      | 4.17       | 12.50      | 0          |
| <b>Sometimes</b>                    | 0            | 8.11       | 24.32      | 0          | 2.70       | 0          | 0          | 0              | 0          | 33.33      | 16.67      | 33.33      | 20.83      | 12.50      |
| <b>Often</b>                        | 0            | 8.11       | 16.22      | 0          | 29.73      | 0          | 0          | 0              | 20.83      | 4.17       | 8.33       | 8.33       | 20.83      | 0          |
| <b>Always</b>                       | 0            | 13.51      | 5.41       | 0          | 56.76      | 0          | 0          | 0              | 75.00      | 8.33       | 8.33       | 8.33       | 4.17       | 0          |
| <b>Total</b>                        | <b>100</b>   | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b>     | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> |

Table 15: Language use with other staff members

| Language use with the other staff members (%) |              |            |            |            |            |            |            |                |            |            |            |            |            |            |
|---|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|----------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
|   | Lotto Soudal |            |            |            |            |            |            | Trek-Segafredo |            |            |            |            |            |            |
|   | German       | English    | French     | Italian    | Dutch      | Spanish    | Other      | German         | English    | French     | Italian    | Dutch      | Spanish    | Other      |
| <b>Never</b>                                  | 97.30        | 56.76      | 81.08      | 100        | 8.11       | 100        | 100        | 79.17          | 4.17       | 41.67      | 41.67      | 50.00      | 41.67      | 91.67      |
| <b>Rarely</b>                                 | 2.70         | 5.41       | 5.41       | 0          | 5.41       | 0          | 0          | 20.83          | 0          | 8.33       | 25.00      | 4.17       | 12.50      | 4.17       |
| <b>Sometimes</b>                              | 0            | 13.51      | 8.11       | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0              | 0          | 20.83      | 16.67      | 4.17       | 25.00      | 4.17       |
| <b>Often</b>                                  | 0            | 10.81      | 0          | 0          | 16.22      | 0          | 0          | 0              | 16.67      | 25.00      | 8.33       | 37.50      | 16.67      | 0          |
| <b>Always</b>                                 | 0            | 13.51      | 5.41       | 0          | 70.27      | 0          | 0          | 0              | 79.17      | 4.17       | 8.33       | 4.17       | 4.17       | 0          |
| <b>Total</b>                                  | <b>100</b>   | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b>     | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> |

### 3.1.3.2 Language use in certain situations

In the previous section, the results relating to language use with specific team members were presented. The following section will focus on the results concerned with language use in specific situations, to begin with the tactical meetings. As it was assumed that not all team members attended the tactical meetings before races, a filter question was used. Only the respondents who indicated to attend the tactical meetings (i.e. 72.97% of the Lotto Soudal participants and 62.50% of the Trek-Segafredo participants) were able to answer the question. As can be seen in Table 16 (p. 35), English is the most commonly used language during the tactical meetings at Lotto Soudal, as all participants indicated to often or always use English. A third of the Lotto Soudal respondents claimed to frequently speak Dutch during the meetings before races. During Trek-Segafredo's tactical meetings, English clearly is the most frequently used language, given that the vast majority of the team members reported to always use English.

Table 16: Language use during tactical meetings

| Language use during tactical meetings (%) |              |            |            |            |            |            |            |                |            |            |            |            |            |            |
|---|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|----------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
|   | Lotto Soudal |            |            |            |            |            |            | Trek-Segafredo |            |            |            |            |            |            |
|   | German       | English    | French     | Italian    | Dutch      | Spanish    | Other      | German         | English    | French     | Italian    | Dutch      | Spanish    | Other      |
| <b>Never</b>                              | 100          | 0          | 92.59      | 100        | 29.63      | 100        | 100        | 100            | 0          | 86.67      | 86.67      | 86.67      | 93.33      | 100        |
| <b>Rarely</b>                             | 0            | 0          | 7.41       | 0          | 22.22      | 0          | 0          | 0              | 6.67       | 6.67       | 0          | 6.67       | 6.67       | 0          |
| <b>Sometimes</b>                          | 0            | 0          | 0          | 0          | 14.81      | 0          | 0          | 0              | 0          | 6.67       | 6.67       | 6.67       | 0          | 0          |
| <b>Often</b>                              | 0            | 25.93      | 0          | 0          | 25.93      | 0          | 0          | 0              | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          |
| <b>Always</b>                             | 0            | 74.07      | 0          | 0          | 7.41       | 0          | 0          | 0              | 93.33      | 0          | 6.67       | 0          | 0          | 0          |
| <b>Total</b>                              | <b>100</b>   | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b>     | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> |

The next topic to be discussed is language use during races. Again, a filter question was used to ensure that participants would only answer the question if the situation was applicable to them (i.e. if they were active during races as a rider or a sports director). As a result, 64.86% of the Lotto Soudal respondents and 45.83% of the Trek-Segafredo participants were able to report on their language use during races. As can be seen from Table 17, the most frequently used language at Lotto Soudal is English, followed by Dutch. A minority of the Lotto Soudal members declared to frequently use French during races. At Trek-Segafredo, English clearly is the main language during races. The majority of the Trek-Segafredo riders and sports directors claimed to only rarely use other languages during races.

Table 17: Language use during races

| Language use during races (%) |              |            |            |            |            |            |            |                |            |            |            |            |            |            |
|-------------------------------|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|----------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
|                               | Lotto Soudal |            |            |            |            |            |            | Trek-Segafredo |            |            |            |            |            |            |
|                               | German       | English    | French     | Italian    | Dutch      | Spanish    | Other      | German         | English    | French     | Italian    | Dutch      | Spanish    | Other      |
| <b>Never</b>                  | 95.83        | 0          | 79.17      | 87.50      | 16.67      | 91.67      | 100        | 100            | 9.09       | 81.82      | 72.73      | 81.82      | 81.82      | 100        |
| <b>Rarely</b>                 | 4.17         | 0          | 8.33       | 8.33       | 8.33       | 8.33       | 0          | 0              | 0          | 9.09       | 0          | 18.18      | 9.09       | 0          |
| <b>Sometimes</b>              | 0            | 4.17       | 0          | 0          | 20.83      | 0          | 0          | 0              | 0          | 9.09       | 9.09       | 0          | 9.09       | 0          |
| <b>Often</b>                  | 0            | 41.67      | 8.33       | 4.17       | 37.50      | 0          | 0          | 0              | 0          | 0          | 9.09       | 0          | 0          | 0          |
| <b>Always</b>                 | 0            | 54.17      | 4.17       | 0          | 16.67      | 0          | 0          | 0              | 90.91      | 0          | 9.09       | 0          | 0          | 0          |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>100</b>   | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b>     | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> |

Finally, the participants were asked to report on their language use during informal moments (e.g. in the bus, during dinner, et cetera). Table 18 (p. 36) provides an overview of the results relating to this topic. As can be seen from the table, most Lotto Soudal respondents claimed to frequently use Dutch or English when they are not on duty. A minority of the team members indicated to often use French. At Trek-Segafredo, English is the most spoken language during informal moments. However, some of the respondents also indicated to frequently use Italian, French, Spanish or Dutch.

Table 18: Language use during informal moments

| Language use during informal moments (%) |              |            |            |            |            |            |            |                |            |            |            |            |            |            |
|--|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|----------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
|  | Lotto Soudal |            |            |            |            |            |            | Trek-Segafredo |            |            |            |            |            |            |
|  | German       | English    | French     | Italian    | Dutch      | Spanish    | Other      | German         | English    | French     | Italian    | Dutch      | Spanish    | Other      |
| <b>Never</b>                             | 94.59        | 5.41       | 48.65      | 91.89      | 10.81      | 94.59      | 100        | 83.33          | 4.17       | 37.50      | 41.67      | 45.83      | 41.67      | 91.67      |
| <b>Rarely</b>                            | 2.70         | 10.81      | 16.22      | 5.41       | 2.70       | 0          | 0          | 16.67          | 0          | 0          | 16.67      | 16.67      | 16.67      | 4.17       |
| <b>Sometimes</b>                         | 0            | 18.92      | 16.22      | 2.70       | 2.70       | 5.41       | 0          | 0              | 0          | 37.50      | 12.50      | 20.83      | 16.67      | 4.17       |
| <b>Often</b>                             | 2.70         | 40.54      | 13.51      | 0          | 48.65      | 0          | 0          | 0              | 20.83      | 20.83      | 16.67      | 12.50      | 16.67      | 0          |
| <b>Always</b>                            | 0            | 24.32      | 5.41       | 0          | 35.14      | 0          | 0          | 0              | 75.00      | 4.17       | 12.50      | 4.17       | 8.33       | 0          |
| <b>Total</b>                             | <b>100</b>   | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b>     | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> |

In summary, the most frequently used language at Trek-Segafredo is clearly English. English is the most prevailing language for communication with all team members and the most frequently used language in all situations. At Lotto Soudal, both Dutch and English are commonly used. English is frequently used for communication with the riders, the sports directors and (to a lesser extent) the carers. English also functions as the main language during tactical meetings and races. Dutch, on the other hand, is often used for communication with the riders, sports directors, carers, mechanics and other staff members. Both languages are frequently used during informal moments.

## 3.2 Language policy

The second research question of this thesis is concerned with the language policy adopted by the participating cycling teams. Topics such as language choice, language policy on social media, the implementation of the language policy and language learning were discussed during the interviews with the communications manager, sports director and rider of both teams. The results of those interviews will be presented in the following pages.

### 3.2.1 Language choice

The first subtheme to be discussed is language choice. Table 19 shows how this theme has been divided into the four codes 'main language policy', 'language choice for official communication', 'language choice during tactical meetings' and 'language choice during races'.

Table 19: Language choice

| CORE THEME      | THEME           | CODE                                       |
|-----------------|-----------------|--|
| Language policy | Language choice | Main language policy                       |
|                 |                 | Language choice for official communication |
|                 |                 | Language choice during tactical meetings   |
|                 |                 | Language choice during races               |

## **Main language policy**

The language policy adopted at Trek-Segafredo and Lotto Soudal is clearly different. During the interview, the three Trek-Segafredo members stated that English is the main language in their team, which corresponds to the questionnaire data provided in section 3.1. The choice for English was due to the wide variety of nationalities among the team members and to the fact that the team is officially American.

*“In most cases, we speak English. [...] It [using another language] would not be possible anyway, because we have so many different nationalities.”* (rider Trek-Segafredo)

*“That [the use of English] is consequent to the fact that we have so many nationalities in our team. Furthermore, we are officially an American team and thus is the official rule that we only speak English in the team. Of course, that is not always the case in reality. It would be too crazy to speak English with someone whom you would easily communicate with in Spanish. At table, we try to speak English as often as possible, to make sure that everyone can follow the conversation.”* (communications manager Trek-Segafredo)

At Lotto Soudal, the situation is different. As the majority of the team members are native Dutch speakers, Dutch is often used in the team. According to the Lotto Soudal communications manager, Dutch even is the main language among the staff members, although there are some non-native Dutch speakers among the staff as well. For communication with the non-Dutch speaking staff members, other languages such as French are sometimes used as well. With regard to the riders, there is a clear policy to be followed when a non-speaker of Dutch is around. As soon as a non-native speaker of Dutch is around, the other team members are ought to switch to English:

*“Our policy is actually very clear, especially with regard to the riders. From the moment there is one non-speaker of Dutch around, English will be the official language. [...] It is important that everyone can take part in the conversation or at least understands what is being said.”* (communications manager Lotto Soudal)

## **Language choice for official communication**

The interviewees also reported on the team's official communication. At Trek-Segafredo, the official communication is always drawn up in English, which logically corresponds to the team's main language policy. At Lotto Soudal, official documents are always drawn up in English as well, irrespective of the number of non-native Dutch speakers among the addressees.

*“In any case, all official communication is in English.”* (communications manager Trek-Segafredo)

*“I must say, all practical documents are almost always in English. That is a habit. Documents concerned with races and planning are almost always drawn up in English. Those documents are usually sent to both the riders and the staff.”* (communications manager Lotto Soudal)

### **Language choice during tactical meetings**

At both teams, the language used during the tactical meetings corresponds to the team's main language policy. At Trek-Segafredo, there is no real need to choose a language. The team's main language, English, is always used during tactical meetings. This result, which was confirmed by the Trek-Segafredo rider and sports director, is in accordance with the statistical data gathered by means of the questionnaires. At Lotto Soudal, a choice has to be made between English and Dutch. According to the Lotto Soudal sports director, the language is chosen with regard to the number of non-native Dutch speakers among the riders:

*"The language choice is based on the number of foreign riders in the group. For instance, we have a Walloon rider in the team. I always ask him which language [Dutch or English] he prefers. I personally prefer English, because I think the switch to Dutch is made too quickly in general situations. Because of that, not everyone immediately understands everything. I would only opt for English if there are seven Dutch-speaking riders<sup>6</sup>." (sports director Lotto Soudal)*

The Lotto Soudal rider also pointed out that the team's policy of using English when a rider with no command of Dutch is around, is applied during tactical meetings:

*"From the moment there is one foreign rider, English will be used. In Mallorca, for instance, I was the only foreign rider and still, English was used. They would only use Dutch if there are no foreign riders." (rider Lotto Soudal)*

### **Language choice during races**

According to the riders and sports directors of both teams, English is usually used to communicate through the radio system during races. The Trek-Segafredo sports director added that an exception is sometimes made during individual time trials, as it is common to use the rider's native language in those situations.

*"During [individual] time trials, the rider's mother tongue is sometimes used. [...] I must say that I even find it easier to coach in English than in Dutch. I am so used to using English during races, that it has become odd to use coach in my own mother tongue. [...] It is odd to all of a sudden use different terms." (sports director Trek-Segafredo)*

The Lotto Soudal sports director pointed out that in addition to English, Dutch was sometimes used during races. To illustrate the situation, he gave the following example:

*"For instance: one of our Dutch-speaking riders is in the breakaway and some of our foreign riders are in the peloton. We usually have two cars during big races. The car driving behind the Dutch-speaking rider in the breakaway will rather speak Dutch, while English will be used in the car behind the peloton." (sports director Lotto Soudal)*

---

<sup>6</sup> In all men's races on the UCI International Road Calendar, 7 riders per team are allowed to compete. An exception is made for the Grand Tours, where 8 riders per team are allowed. (UCI, 2017)

Interestingly, the native Dutch Trek-Segafredo sports director claimed that at his team a different strategy would be used in a similar situation. Commenting on the situation in which two Dutch-speaking Trek-Segafredo riders would be in the breakaway, he declared:

*“I think we would stick to English. If they did not understand something, [...] I would repeat the message in Dutch, but that does not happen frequently.”* (sports director Trek-Segafredo)

### 3.2.2 Social media and online communication

The following section will focus on social media and online communication. As can be seen in Table 20, this theme is composed of three codes: ‘language choice on team pages’, ‘language choice on personal accounts’ and ‘guidelines with regard to social media’.

Table 20: Social media and online communication

| CORE THEME      | THEME                                 | CODE                                   |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| Language policy | Social media and online communication | Language choice on team pages          |
|                 |                                       | Language choice on personal accounts   |
|                 |                                       | Guidelines with regard to social media |

#### Language choice on team pages

When asked about the language choice on social media and the team website, the Trek-Segafredo communications manager replied that English was always used on the social media channels and on the website. This choice was based on the fact that most people can be reached with English and the fact that Trek-Segafredo is licensed in the United States:

*“In English, we can address the most people. In addition, we are an American team, so I do not see why we would communicate in other languages as well.”* (communications manager Trek-Segafredo)

The Trek-Segafredo communications manager also mentioned that it is not easy to communicate in three languages. She pointed out that the investment the team would have to make is considerable:

*“Also, it is more efficient to opt for monolingual communication on social media and on the website. The investment necessary to communicate in two or three languages cannot be underestimated. You need the manpower and you should be very consequent.”* (communications manager Trek-Segafredo)

Efficiency is also the main reason why Lotto Soudal chose to use English on its social media channels.

*“On social media, we use English in 95% of all cases, because it is not self-evident to communicate in three languages on social media. [...] For instance, you cannot fit one message in three languages in one and the same tweet. Therefore, you should post three tweets for one message. That is possible in principle, but it is not easy to work like that.”* (communications manager Lotto Soudal)

The communications manager added that exceptions are sometimes made in specific cases. For instance, if a Flemish rider visited the Flemish radio station MNM, the visit would be announced in Dutch. Whereas Lotto Soudal primarily uses English on social media, the team's website content and press releases are always published in three languages: Dutch, French and English. That choice was especially made with regard to the team's bilingual main sponsor:

*“On the website, basically everything is published in three languages. We could choose to only do it in English, but the people responsible for the website are native Dutch speakers, which makes it easy to publish Dutch content as well. To keep the language balance – to refer to our bilingual sponsor – we also offer our content in French.”* (communications manager Lotto Soudal)

### **Language choice on personal accounts**

The sports directors and riders of both teams were asked which language(s) they used most frequently on their personal social media accounts. They all reported to both use English and their native language. Factors influencing the choice between those two languages include the target audience and the type of message. The interviewees indicated that they used their mother tongue when addressing their fellow countrymen and when posting a personal message. Posts related to cycling would be written in English, as most followers can be reached in English.

*“For personal messages, I often use Dutch. If I post a message referring to cycling, I often use English. [...] I use English for cycling posts because I have many foreign followers. Posting in Dutch would not be very social.”* (sports director Trek-Segafredo)

*“It also depends on who I am addressing. For instance, my fan page on Facebook is mainly liked by people from my local area. [...] If I make a post about something more personal, I would do it in Danish. If the post is related to racing, I would do it in English.”* (rider Lotto Soudal)

### **Guidelines with regard to social media**

The interviewees were asked whether their language choice on social media is influenced by certain guidelines set out by the team. According to all respondents, team members are free to choose the language they want to use on their personal social media accounts. The cycling teams do not enforce a certain language. That does not imply that no tips or guidelines are given at all. Lotto Soudal, for instance, offers “informal guidance” with regard to social media:

*“We offer informal guidance related to social media and we are even planning to intensify the guidance. [...] The riders with the widest reach – often the most important riders – are the most interesting to us. We certainly keep an extra eye on them. We also draw their attention to certain things.”* (communications manager Lotto Soudal)

The Lotto Soudal rider and sports director also mentioned that the team gives certain tips related to social media use:



*“Yes, especially with regard to the sponsors. Things such as tagging the team, not forgetting the hashtags, ... Those little things should be mentioned.”* (sports director Lotto Soudal)

At Trek-Segafredo, social media use is considered part of a rider’s job. According to the communications manager, the riders are encouraged to be active on their social media accounts. They also regularly receive feedback and tips:

*“We ask them to be frequently active on social media and to tag colleagues and the team, to make sure the audience of one team member starts to follow other team accounts as well. [...] Riders frequently receive feedback related to social media use. Three or four times a year, they receive an overview of their account’s growth, their most popular post, etc. We urge them, but we also give them feedback and tips.”* (communications manager Trek-Segafredo)

### 3.2.3 Implementation

Another aspect of a team’s language policy is the way in which the policy was implemented. Table 21 gives an overview of the three codes comprised by this theme.

Table 21: Implementation

| CORE THEME      | THEME          | CODE  |
|-----------------|----------------|---|
| Language policy | Implementation | Communicating the language policy                                       |
|                 |                | Violation of the language policy  |
|                 |                | Being able to communicate is more important than sophisticated language |

#### Communicating the language policy

The communications managers of both teams were asked how the language policy is communicated with the team members. At Lotto Soudal, the policy appears to be communicated in an informal way:

*“The policy is actually automatically adopted. If there is a new Belgian rider [...] he will understand that it is logical to speak English at table when there are non-speakers of Dutch around. The policy is also conveyed in informal conversations. I do not know if it is stipulated in our internal code of conduct.”* (communications manager Lotto Soudal)

The Trek-Segafredo communications manager assumed that the team’s language policy was communicated by the sports directors and the team members responsible for the recruitment of new staff:

*“That [communicating the language policy] is not really my job, but I suppose the sports directors and the team members who recruit the new staff do so.”* (communications manager Trek-Segafredo)

### **Violation of the language policy**

The communications managers were also asked how the team would react if the team's language policy was violated. At Lotto Soudal, the policy states that English should be used when speakers with no command of Dutch are around. If someone does not follow the policy, a sports director may talk to the member. No one would be punished for using too much Dutch.

*“If someone speaks Dutch at table, you will not fine him for that. The only thing which may happen, is that a sports director talks to him about it. For instance, when you are on the road with the same riders for a long period of time – for example, during the Ardennes classics – and a lot of Dutch is spoken at table, that may happen.”* (communications manager Lotto Soudal)

At Trek-Segafredo, English is the main language and all team members are expected to have a certain proficiency level in English. However, according to the questionnaire results, not all Trek-Segafredo members are proficient enough in English. Commenting on this outcome, the communications manager declared:

*“In the past, a number of people have been called to account for that. It was stipulated that they had to improve their language proficiency, as their contract could not be renewed if they did not do so. That is an excellent motivator.”* (communications manager Trek-Segafredo)

### **Being able to communicate is more important than sophisticated language**

A number of interviewees added that a high level of proficiency is not absolutely required. Most importantly, team members should be able to convey a message and understand others. Whether that happens in sophisticated language or in grammatically incorrect language, is of minor importance.

*“Our team members' English should not be linguistically perfect. As long as the communication works, it is okay. If they produce many spelling mistakes or grammatical errors, so be it. That's not the point here.”* (communications manager Trek-Segafredo)

*“In cycling, very few people are good at grammar, but everyone can make clear what they want to say. It's easy to understand the others. We use some basic sentences.”* (rider Trek-Segafredo)

The Lotto Soudal communications manager illustrated the fact that an exceptional proficiency is not necessary by referring to one of the Walloon riders at Lotto Soudal:

*“Okay, you can hear that he is not a native speaker, but he can make himself perfectly understood and he understands everything we say. The fine nuances you can express in your own mother tongue, are more difficult to express in a foreign language. But in a sports environment, his language proficiency is more than satisfactory to express himself.”* (communications manager Lotto Soudal)

### 3.2.4 Language learning

The fourth and final subtheme of the core theme 'language policy' is concerned with language learning. Before the results of the interviews will be discussed, the statistical outcomes from the questionnaires relating to the same topic will be presented.

#### 3.2.4.1 Quantitative results

In the questionnaire, the respondents were asked whether they had had to learn a new language for their team. The results of this question are presented in Table 22. As can be seen from the table, the majority of the respondents indicated that they did not have to learn a new language, whether they were employed at Lotto Soudal or at Trek-Segafredo.

Table 22: Learning a new language for the team

| Lotto Soudal |           |                | Trek-Segafredo |           |                |
|--------------|-----------|----------------|----------------|-----------|----------------|
|              | Number    | Percentage (%) |                | Number    | Percentage (%) |
| <b>Yes</b>   | 8         | 21.62          | <b>Yes</b>     | 3         | 12.50          |
| <b>No</b>    | 29        | 78.38          | <b>No</b>      | 21        | 87.50          |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>37</b> | <b>100</b>     | <b>Total</b>   | <b>24</b> | <b>100</b>     |

The questionnaire respondents were also asked which languages they had to learn for the team. Most Lotto Soudal participants mentioned that they had to learn English, French and/or Dutch. One respondent answered that he learnt Dutch just because he wanted to do so. Another team member indicated that he had to learn English, as it is the principal language in the team. Some Lotto Soudal respondents also listed the languages they had to learn for their previous teams, including French and Italian. Three Trek-Segafredo members elaborated on their answer, indicating that they had to learn Italian, Spanish or Dutch.

Another question referred to the language facilities potentially offered by the participating cycling teams. The respondents were asked in what ways the team helped them to learn a new language. As shown in Table 23, neither Lotto Soudal nor Trek-Segafredo seems to offer or pay back language courses. The respondents who answered that the team helped them in another way, explained that their colleagues helped them where necessary.

Table 23: Language facilities

| Lotto Soudal   |           |                | Trek-Segafredo   |           |                |
|--|-----------|----------------|--|-----------|----------------|
|  | Number    | Percentage (%) |  | Number    | Percentage (%) |
| <b>The team offered its own language courses</b>               | 0         | 0              | <b>The team offered its own language courses</b>               | 0         | 0              |
| <b>The team paid the language course I took somewhere else</b> | 0         | 0              | <b>The team paid the language course I took somewhere else</b> | 0         | 0              |
| <b>The team did not help me</b>                                | 14        | 38.89          | <b>The team did not help me</b>                                | 10        | 41.67          |
| <b>Not applicable</b>  | 20        | 55.56          | <b>Not applicable</b>  | 13        | 54.17          |
| <b>Other</b>   | 2         | 5.56           | <b>Other</b>   | 1         | 4.17           |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>36</b> | <b>100</b>     | <b>Total</b>   | <b>24</b> | <b>100</b>     |

### 3.2.4.2 Qualitative results

Table 24 shows how the results of the interviews referring to language learning have been structured. As can be seen from the table, the theme 'language learning' can be divided into 4 codes: 'offering language courses', 'learning by doing', 'required terminology is limited' and 'only English is enough'.

Table 24: Language learning

| CORE THEME      | THEME             | CODE                           |
|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| Language policy | Language learning | Offering language courses      |
|                 |                   | Learning by doing              |
|                 |                   | Required vocabulary is limited |
|                 |                   | Only English is enough         |

#### Offering language courses

All interviewees were asked about the potential language facilities offered by their team. In correspondence to the questionnaire outcomes, the interviewees confirmed that their team did not offer its own language courses, nor did it pay back language courses team members took somewhere else. At both teams, different views were taken towards the matter. The Trek-Segafredo communications manager, for instance, answered clearly when asked whether the team had ever thought about offering language courses:

*“No. We do not offer language courses, as all our team members are working freelance. They are not an employee of the team. As a freelancer, you are fully responsible for yourself.”*  
(communications manager Trek-Segafredo)

The Trek-Segafredo rider and sports director agreed with this view, stating that riders are responsible for their own career and that they have to make the investment themselves:

*“As a rider, you are responsible for your future. Looking for a cycling team, making sure to feel comfortable, ... it's part of your career. If you choose an American team, you have to take into account that you will have to learn the language to feel comfortable in the team. [...] If I signed for an Italian team tomorrow, the first thing I would do is start taking classes. I would want to learn the language as fast as possible. The team does not have to help me with that.”* (rider Trek-Segafredo)

*“I think riders who are joining an international team have to invest in that [language learning] themselves.”* (sports director Trek-Segafredo)

Interestingly, it appears that not all team members support the language learning policy at the team. In the questionnaire, one Trek-Segafredo member argued the following:

*“If a team chooses a language to use within the team, they have to make sure that everyone really masters that language. If not, they have to help the people who don't in some way or another.”*

The Lotto Soudal communications manager declared that language learning had never been a topic to the team and that they had never thought about offering language courses. As one Lotto Soudal member mentioned in the questionnaire that it would be pleasant to have language courses paid by the team, the communications manager was asked whether that would be an option.

*“I think it would be considered. As long as the question is not raised, we won’t dwell on it. But if the question is posed, it can be discussed.”* (communications manager Lotto Soudal)

However, the Lotto Soudal sports director took a different view, stating that riders should make the investment themselves:

*“I think it is a little effort for the riders to invest in it [language learning], given the efforts we make for them.”* (sports director Lotto Soudal)

All in all, the majority of the interviewees claimed that cycling teams should not offer or fund language courses. A number of themes recurred in their argumentation, which will be described by means of the following three codes.

### **Learning by doing**

Firstly, the Trek-Segafredo and Lotto Soudal sports directors suggested that it is not too difficult to learn a language by having contact with speakers of the language in question. Rather than taking language classes, team members could just learn a language by using it.

*“No, offering language courses would not be useful. Riders who only make a tiny effort can master a language within months. They often watch TV series, for instance on Netflix, which of course helps. They learn very quickly.”* (sports director Trek-Segafredo)

*“Cycling usually starts at a young age. If you are talented, you will automatically end up competing in international races. I think that in this respect, experience of life is more important than language courses. [...] For instance, I learnt Italian myself – not by taking courses, but by being surrounded by Italian-speaking team members. It goes very quickly.”* (sports director Lotto Soudal)

The Trek-Segafredo rider also declared that it is easy to learn a language when being surrounded by speakers of the language. He gave the following example from when he was riding at his previous team:

*“For instance, I had a sports director who only spoke Italian. He did the meeting in Italian. I didn’t speak Italian, but after one month I was able to understand what was being said at race meetings.”* (rider Trek-Segafredo)

### **Required vocabulary is limited**

The same Trek-Segafredo rider also asserted that a rider does not need an extensive vocabulary in a certain language to be able to follow a tactical meeting:

*“Actually, the race meeting itself is easy to understand, because there are very few words really needed. As soon as you understand those, you get an idea of the tactics the sports directors are presenting.”* (rider Trek-Segafredo)

The Lotto Soudal sports director reported on a similar phenomenon. As the context and the vocabulary used in the team is always the same, he claimed it would be easy to learn the language used in the team:

*“Because they [the riders] are always in the same context – having breakfast together, competing in races together, and so on – the vocabulary that is used is always the same. Therefore, you can learn the language very quickly.”* (sports director Lotto Soudal)

### **Only English is enough**

Finally, a number of interviewees of both teams declared that a wide linguistic knowledge is not necessary in present-day cycling. They claimed that over the years, English has become the main language in cycling. Therefore, knowledge of other languages would not be absolutely required.

*“I think now with English, things have become much easier. But I think back in the days, people spoke more languages because English was not so common. [...] Now you just have to learn English and you will be fine.”* (rider Trek-Segafredo)

*“When I started as an intern in 1995, French was the main language. That has now changed into English.”* (sports director Trek-Segafredo)

The Danish Lotto Soudal rider also responded that he did not see a reason to learn Dutch, because he is proficient in English. When asked whether he would take a language course if the team offered it, he answered:

*“If the team provided language courses, it would be good, I think. I would consider it, for sure. But then again, I don’t see any reason for it, as all official communication is in English. I would not say it is important.”* (rider Lotto Soudal)

## **3.3 Language strategies**

The third research question of this master's thesis is concerned with the linguistic strategies used by professional cycling teams to deal with language barriers. The data relating to this topic were gathered during the interviews with the communications managers, sports directors and riders of Trek-Segafredo and Lotto Soudal. As can be seen in Table 25 (p. 47), 7 potential strategies were discussed: lingua franca, lingua receptiva, codeswitching, the use of professional interpreters or translators, ad hoc interpreting or translation, gestures and the use of a factotum. The strategies were explained to the interviewees before they were asked to comment on them.

Table 25: Language strategies

| CORE THEME          | THEME               | CODE                                     |
|---------------------|---------------------|--|
| Language strategies | Language strategies | Lingua franca                            |
|                     |                     | Lingua receptiva                         |
|                     |                     | Codeswitching                            |
|                     |                     | Professional interpreters or translators |
|                     |                     | Ad hoc interpreting or translation       |
|                     |                     | Gestures                                 |
|                     |                     | Factotum                                 |

### Lingua franca

The first strategy discussed with the interviewees was lingua franca, which implies that a language is chosen in which all participants are proficient (Coray & Duchêne, 2017, p. 56). At Trek-Segafredo, lingua franca is the main strategy used in the team. Corresponding to the results earlier discussed in the sections ‘language use in the team’ (p. 32) and ‘language policy’ (p. 36), the three Trek-Segafredo members stated that English is used in all possible situations and with all team members. All official communication is drawn up in English and during tactical meetings and races, English is the main language as well. As a result, the three Trek-Segafredo interviewees confirmed that English can be considered Trek-Segafredo’s lingua franca.

Lotto Soudal also makes use of the lingua franca strategy, albeit that not one, but two languages function as a lingua franca in the team. According to the team’s communication manager, a distinction can be made between the riders and the staff. In the rider’s group, English usually functions as a lingua franca. An exception is made when the team consists of Dutch riders only, as Dutch becomes the main language in that case. Among the staff members, Dutch always is the lingua franca, as 95% of the staff members speak Dutch (according to the Lotto Soudal communications manager).

### Lingua receptiva

Second, the respondents were asked whether lingua receptiva, a strategy in which the conversational participants each use their own language because they have enough passive knowledge to understand the language of the other (Blees, Mak, & ten Thije, 2014, p. 175), was ever adopted in their team. At Trek-Segafredo, the use of lingua receptiva appears to be rather rare, as only the communications manager indicated to sometimes adopt the strategy:

*“That’s not something which is used in our team, and certainly not through the radio. Many Italians speak Spanish and many Spanish speak Italian, but it does not occur that they both use their mother tongue to communicate.”* (sports director Trek-Segafredo)

*“We use it very rarely. I sometimes adopt it, the riders less frequently. For instance, I have a high passive command of Italian, but I don’t have an excellent active command of the language. I understand everything, but I answer in English. [...] At our team, lingua receptiva is not consciously adopted. I sometimes use it myself, but there are not many other team members who do so as well.”* (communications manager Trek-Segafredo)

The Lotto Soudal communications manager and rider responded that *lingua receptiva* was sometimes used in their team. The rider, who is a native Danish speaker, declared that he sometimes made use of the strategy to communicate with a Norwegian teammate:

*“At the training camp, I shared a room with a Norwegian rider. Danish and Norwegian are strongly related languages, so we both spoke our own language. [...] You just have to imagine you are speaking to your 80 year old grandmother. You have to speak very slowly, but we understand one another that way.”* (rider Lotto Soudal)

The rider added that he had not seen anyone else in the team using the strategy. According to the Lotto Soudal communications manager, *lingua receptiva* is sometimes, but rather exceptionally, used among the staff members. He claimed that the flexibility among the staff member is so great, that usually one language is chosen for a conversation.

*“Our Walloon mechanic, for instance, understands Dutch well but has difficulties expressing himself in Dutch. He would express himself in French and we would answer in Dutch or we would automatically switch to French. [...] It happens, but rather rarely. If you want to do that, you should really pay attention to speak your own language, because it is very tempting to switch to the language of your interlocutor.”* (communications manager Lotto Soudal)

### **Codeswitching**

The interviewees were asked whether they had ever made use of codeswitching, a strategy during which interlocutors switch between different languages or language varieties during a conversation (Saville-Troike, 2003, p. 48). At Trek-Segafredo, codeswitching seems to be frequently used, both by the staff members and the riders. The team members claimed to use the strategy when they lack certain vocabulary, when they are not understood by their interlocutor(s) or when discussing technical matters.

*“That happens a lot in cycling. It is both used by the riders and the staff. [...] For instance, I share my room with a Flemish rider. If there are some specific words he doesn't know in English, he would say them in Dutch and I would perfectly understand him.”* (rider Trek-Segafredo)

*“I have experienced that. For instance, it happens when you explain something in English and you notice that they don't understand. In that case, you would switch to another language, their mother tongue, to explain. [...] It happens both with the riders and the staff.”* (sports director Trek-Segafredo)

*“That is something I frequently adopt myself. Other members also often use codeswitching. We frequently switch to English during conversations about complex matters. [...] For instance, I am very proficient in Spanish and in French, but if we talk about technical matters, I would switch to English, to be sure I would use the correct terminology.”* (communications manager Trek-Segafredo)



The Lotto Soudal communications manager and sports director also declared that codeswitching is sometimes used in their team. The Lotto Soudal rider, however, claimed to have never noticed the phenomenon.

*“It happens. For instance, when Dutch-speaking riders in the group deviate from the rule and switch from English to Dutch.”* (communications manager Lotto Soudal)

*“It happens, in small discussions. For instance, when riders ask for something during a race, they often do so in Dutch, while all the other communication is in English. Codeswitching is also used before and after races.”* (sports director Lotto Soudal)

### **Professional interpreters or translators**

When asked about the use of professional interpreters or translators, all interviewees stated that professional interpreters and translators were never consulted by their team. The Lotto Soudal communications manager added that Google Translate is often used in the Lotto Soudal women’s team, as it is the only way to communicate with their Vietnamese rider, who does not speak English or any other Western language.

### **Ad hoc interpreting or translation**

In addition, the interviewees were asked whether team members sometimes functioned as a translator or interpreter. Although the riders of both teams only claimed that ad hoc interpreting or translation occurred in their previous teams (i.e. Continental and Professional Continental Teams), the sports directors and communications managers indicated that they or their current team members sometimes acted as an interpreter or translator.

*“In most cases, I can do that. For instance, I interpreted during the Tour Down Under. An Italian female rider had won a stage, but she didn’t speak English at all. She did understand it more or less. I acted as an interpreter and I translated her Italian into English. But that happens very rarely. [...] It has also happened that a co-rider with the same mother tongue and a better command in English helped that rider. That all happens very spontaneously. It is not strictly stipulated.”* (communications manager Trek-Segafredo)

*“If something is not understood, it happens that a sports director briefly translates something, to avoid miscommunication.”* (sports director Lotto Soudal)

*“That happens if necessary. Our team members, especially the staff, are very multilingual. We notice that it can be useful in Southern European countries, where the language proficiency of even the hotel staff is sometimes very limited. It can also be useful that our people are acquainted with certain medical terminology, for instance if one of our riders crashes in Spain and he needs to be taken to the hospital.”* (communications manager Lotto Soudal)

The Trek-Segafredo sports director pointed out that ad hoc interpreting or translation was used by Alberto Contador's press officer. However, as Contador understood English, his press officer purely translated to Spanish to give Contador more time to think about his answer:

*“During Alberto Contador's press conferences, Contador's press officer was always there. He asked to pose questions in Spanish, English or French. Alberto could always immediately reply to questions in Spanish, but the questions in English were always translated by his press officer. That was actually purely to give Alberto more time to think about his answer, as he did understand the question in English.”* (sports director Trek-Segafredo)

### **Gestures**

Interestingly, the responses of the interviewees differ when it comes to the use of gestures. The riders of both teams claimed that gestures are sometimes used, but rather to support the verbal message than to replace it. They declared that gestures are rarely used on the bike.

*“It happens, but not because we do not understand each other so well. It's just to make things even clearer. [...] We don't use it during races, because we use English. It's easier to speak than to use your hands during races.”* (rider Lotto Soudal)

On the contrary, the sports directors, who had both had a career as a professional cyclist, asserted that gestures are frequently used during races:

*“Yes, we certainly use gestures. [...] Especially on the bike, riders use many gestures. For instance, they use gestures to point to hazards on the road.”* (sports director Trek-Segafredo)

*“Riders use gestures on the bike, for instance to show whether their front or back wheel is punctured, or to indicate that they want something to drink.”* (sport director Lotto Soudal)

The two communications managers reported that gestures are rarely used in their teams.

*“I think everyone uses that strategy if your interlocutor doesn't know what you are talking about. But I must say that I haven't seen many colleagues using that strategy.”* (communications manager Trek-Segafredo)

### **Factotum**

Finally, the communications managers were asked about the so-called factotum, who is often employed in professional football teams to assist new players (Lavric & Steiner, 2011, p. 107). A factotum is a personal assistant proficient in the main club language and the foreign player's mother tongue. He or she aims to help the new player, by interpreting and translating and learning him or her the club language. The factotum also has a supportive role in arranging the practical aspects of moving to a new country, including the search for a home and administrative work (pp. 107-108). The communications managers both answered that they had never employed a factotum and that it is not usual to do so in cycling:

*“No, we never do that. That is not common in cycling.”* (communications manager Trek-Segafredo)

*“In football, the situation is different. The players are always around. They come to the club every day, which makes it easy to employ a personal assistant. That is less evident in cycling. Our riders live in the country of their preference.”* (communications manager Lotto Soudal)

### 3.4 Communication problems and frustrations

#### 3.4.1 Quantitative results

The fourth research question of this master’s thesis is concerned with communication problems and frustrations. This topic was both covered in the questionnaires and in the interviews, in order to provide both quantitative and qualitative results. In the questionnaires, the respondents were asked whether they had ever experienced communication problems related to multilingualism in their team. Table 26 shows that communication problems are more common at Trek-Segafredo than at the Lotto Soudal team. Whereas 50.00% of the Trek-Segafredo respondents indicated to have experienced communication problems in the team, only 16.22% of the Lotto Soudal participants answered positively as well.

Table 26: Communication problems at Lotto Soudal and Trek-Segafredo

| Lotto Soudal |           |                | Trek-Segafredo |           |                |
|--------------|-----------|----------------|----------------|-----------|----------------|
|              | Number    | Percentage (%) |                | Number    | Percentage (%) |
| <b>Yes</b>   | 6         | 16.22          | <b>Yes</b>     | 12        | 50.00          |
| <b>No</b>    | 31        | 83.78          | <b>No</b>      | 12        | 50.00          |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>37</b> | <b>100</b>     | <b>Total</b>   | <b>24</b> | <b>100</b>     |

The respondents were also given the chance to elaborate on their answer. The members of Lotto Soudal answered that communication problems occurred when too much Dutch was spoken at table, when the radio connection was bad during races or when members simply missed certain information. They also indicated that communication problems were rare and often solved by using English. The members of Trek-Segafredo replied that communication problems were mostly due to riders’ and staff members’ weak proficiency in English and that they would often find themselves lost in translation. Two members added that communication problems would lead to simple misunderstandings, but another respondent indicated that communication problems had also led to the not understanding of a question or task. According to one of the Trek-Segafredo members, communication problems were solved by using gestures.

The participants were also asked whether they had ever experienced frustrations as a consequence of language differences in their team. As can be seen from Table 27 (p. 52) the percentage of team members who had felt frustrated is clearly higher at Trek-Segafredo (50.00%) than at Lotto Soudal (13.51%).

Table 27: Frustrations at Lotto Soudal and Trek-Segafredo

| Lotto Soudal |           |                | Trek-Segafredo |           |                |
|--------------|-----------|----------------|----------------|-----------|----------------|
|              | Number    | Percentage (%) |                | Number    | Percentage (%) |
| <b>Yes</b>   | 5         | 13.51          | <b>Yes</b>     | 12        | 50.00          |
| <b>No</b>    | 32        | 86.49          | <b>No</b>      | 12        | 50.00          |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>37</b> | <b>100</b>     | <b>Total</b>   | <b>24</b> | <b>100</b>     |

Again, the participants were able to explain the situation. At Lotto Soudal, two members were frustrated because they found their own linguistic skills too poor for smooth communication. One member had experienced frustrations because of misunderstandings and another respondent answered that it was hard to follow the conversation when the Flemish members speak Dutch to each other. Finally, one member responded that the managers were sometimes frustrated because they had to translate.

At Trek-Segafredo, several participants responded that they felt frustrated because of the low proficiency level of other team members (especially in English), which led to misunderstandings. Other members' frustrations were due to their own proficiency level. They replied that they would like to improve in some languages, but they did not all specify the language(s) in question. One respondent felt frustrated when dialects or native languages were used. Another member experienced frustrations when trying to explain complex situations.

### 3.4.2 Qualitative results

Communication problems and frustrations was also one of the main topics during the interviews. Table 28 illustrates how the core theme 'communication problems and frustrations' can be divided into two themes and six codes.

Table 28: Communication problems and frustrations

| CORE THEME                                     | THEME                         | CODE  |
|--|-------------------------------|---|
| <b>Communication problems and frustrations</b> | <b>Communication problems</b> | Linguistic problems                           |
|  |                               | Communication problems in the team            |
|  |                               | Communication problems during races           |
|  |                               | Avoiding communication problems               |
|  |                               | Dealing with other members' linguistic skills |
|  | <b>Frustrations</b>           | Frustrations                                  |

#### Linguistic problems

The theme 'communication problems' consists of six subsections, the first of which is concerned with linguistic problems. In general, the interviewees of Lotto Soudal and Trek-Segafredo claimed that they face relatively few linguistic problems in their teams. Especially at Lotto Soudal, linguistic problems seem to be rare.

*“Language has never been an issue at our team. [...] The language proficiency in our team is very high.”* (communications manager Lotto Soudal)

Interviewees of both teams stated that most riders do not have linguistic problems, especially not with English. This is probably related to the fact that riders are generally relatively young:

*“It is important for the riders to understand and speak English. But of course they are young, so most of them do not have problems with that.”* (communications manager Trek-Segafredo)

In both teams, team members who do face linguistic difficulties usually form part of the staff. Those team members tend to be slightly older and less educated. However, it must be taken into account that those members often have long experience in cycling and that they therefore know what there are doing.

*“The riders do not have language problems. As for the staff, they sometimes run into difficulties, as some of those people belong to the older generation.”* (sports director Trek-Segafredo)

*“Some people are higher educated than others. For a mechanic, for instance, it is not always easy to express oneself in a foreign language. However, those people usually have a long history in cycling, so they know what they have to do.”* (communications manager Lotto Soudal)

### **Communication problems in the team**

According to the Trek-Segafredo communications manager, communication problems sometimes occur, but not weekly or monthly. Only once or twice a year, plans would completely fail because people do not understand one another. Still, the communications manager was not surprised to see that 50% of the Trek-Segafredo members had indicated to have experienced communication problems and that those problems would be caused by the low proficiency in English of certain team members:

*“That is not often the case, it is always the case. Not understanding each other is always caused by a lack of language proficiency. I can only confirm that. The results are not surprising to me.”* (communications manager Trek-Segafredo)

A sports director of the same team reacted differently, stating that the rather high percentage of team members experiencing communication problems is unexpected. Reacting on the fact that most questionnaire respondents blamed communication problems to certain team members' low proficiency in English, he suggested:

*“I can imagine that. But I also think: if you know that someone has a lower command of English, you explain something more clearly to avoid problems. Maybe problems are not always caused by miscommunication, but by a lack of communication.”* (sports director Trek-Segafredo)

The interviewees of both teams reported that they never or rarely experience communication problems related to language proficiency themselves:

*“I occasionally experience communication problems, but those problems are often due to people not reading written communication. I personally have never experienced communication problems caused by language.”* (communications manager Trek-Segafredo)

Information flow was also an issue raised by the communications manager of Lotto Soudal:

*'I think the majority of the communication problems at our team are related to the flow of information. Sometimes, not all information reaches the right person. That is to do with internal communication rather than with language problems. I think internal communication is a topic to which we can pay more attention. [...] In the mobile world of cycling, where everyone is operating from different locations, it often happens that someone is not informed. Of course, you have to try to avoid those situations, but the fact that we are not all in one building, as is the case in a classic company, makes it harder to do so.'* (communications manager Lotto Soudal)

### **Communication problems during races**

During races, a special form of communication occurs. Cycling teams usually use a radio system in order to enable communication between the riders and the sports directors in the car. Both the riders and the sports directors are able to speak through the radio system. Riders and sports directors usually cannot see each other when communicating, so the communication during races is almost exclusively verbal.

According to the riders and sports directors of both teams, communication problems during races are mostly due to technical problems rather than to language problems.

*"I haven't experienced language problems when English was used. I think English is quite easy and the topics you discuss on the radio are quite simple as well. Problems are mostly due to a bad connection, but not due to the language we use."* (rider Trek-Segafredo)

The communication between riders and sports directors is sometimes disrupted by technical and environmental factors, such as a bad connection or background noise:

*"The communication through the radio is not always very clear. [...] That is also the case when riders try to speak to us. The problem is then due to the connection or the area you are driving through. The radio system also functions less smoothly when there are many motorcycles around, for instance during the Tour de France."* (sports director Trek-Segafredo)

*"Yes, we sometimes encounter technical problems with the radio system. For instance, if the car is 4 km behind the leaders of the race, it is possible that those riders don't hear what we say. If so, we repeat the message several times at different moments."* (sports director Lotto Soudal)

*"Most of the time, the system is only convenient from one way, when the sports directors speak from the car. When the riders speak, there is always a lot of noise."* (rider Lotto Soudal)

## Avoiding communication problems

The interviewees were also asked whether the teams have particular strategies or guidelines to avoid communication problems. One sports director at Trek-Segafredo has the habit of handing out the programme in person, so that everyone knows what he or she has to do:

*“When I am in charge during a race, I personally hand out the programme to make sure that everybody sees it. If they have questions, they can ask. I make sure that everyone knows what to do, especially with regard to the staff members.”* (sports director Trek-Segafredo)

The Trek-Segafredo rider added that the team sends many newsletters and makes use of certain apps to inform the team members.

During races, it is common in both teams to have only one sports director taking care of the communication with the riders. That decision is both taken for safety reasons and for the fact that it is easier for the riders:

*“There is always one person who communicates with the riders. [...] During big races, there are always two sports directors in the first car, of which only one speaks with the riders. That is always the person who is not driving, for safety reasons.”* (sports director Lotto Soudal)

*“There is one sports director who takes care of the communication. Otherwise, it would be too much for the riders.”* (sports director Trek-Segafredo)

As the communication through the radio is not always very clear due to a bad connection or background noise, the messages conveyed through the radio are usually relatively brief. According to the Lotto Soudal rider, there are no official guidelines for communication during races, but everyone intuitively conveys short messages:

*“I don’t think there are guidelines for communication during races. But I think it is clear to everyone that it is not convenient to tell long stories through the radio.”* (rider Lotto Soudal)

The sports directors of both teams reported that they do their very best to make the communication as concise and clear as possible. In order to do so, they both have their own practices:

*“I try to do it briefly and clearly. If I have to pass on a time indication, I always do it in two ways. For instance: “one minute thirty-five, one minute three five”.* (sports director Trek-Segafredo)

*“The messages are usually short, because the shorter they are, the better. [...] It is also very important to use names to make the message clear. For instance, we don’t say “we are going to ride at the front of the peloton”, but rather “[name of the rider], you are going to ride at the front of the peloton”. There are seven riders, so if we are not specific enough, the riders don’t know what they have to do.”* (sports director Lotto Soudal)

### **Dealing with other members' linguistic skills**

Some of the interviewees also explained how they cope with the linguistic skills of their team members. At Trek-Segafredo, English is the main language. According to the communications manager, team members with a lower proficiency in English are helped by their teammates, who actively speak to them and mail them in English. The Trek-Segafredo rider even goes a step further and adapts his language to his conversation partner:

*"In most cases, I use English. But I also speak a lot of other languages, so if I happen to be in a room with someone who speaks French, I would speak French with him. I would rather change my language to make it easier for the other instead of sticking to English. [...] Sometimes, I even tend to make mistakes to make it easier for the other person to understand me. Sometimes, if you use a correct verb form, the other doesn't understand you. So I use the wrong form on purpose, to make it easier for him."* (rider Trek-Segafredo)

At Lotto Soudal, Dutch is the lingua franca among the staff members. However, not all staff members are fluent in Dutch. The Lotto Soudal communications manager stated that consideration is shown for those who are less proficient in Dutch. According to him, there is good fellowship among the staff members, who always try to help each other when linguistic issues occur:

*"The collegiality among our team members is immense. We always try to help each other in terms of language use."* (communications manager Lotto Soudal)

In written communication, Lotto Soudal adapts the language to the linguistic skills of its staff members:

*"We have WhatsApp groups per race. When our Spanish carer is on duty, the language of the group is immediately adapted, to make sure he understands the practical information we pass on."* (communications manager Lotto Soudal)

### **Frustrations**

When asked whether they had ever experienced frustrations due to as a consequence of language differences in the team, the majority of the respondents answered negatively. The Trek-Segafredo communications manager responded that she doesn't experience frustrations, because she is proficient in a great number of languages and therefore always finds a language to communicate efficiently:

*"I have the advantage of speaking many languages. With the Portuguese and the Spanish members, I can speak Spanish. I can understand the Italians and the Germans and I speak French and English as well. Most people in the cycling world are proficient in more than one language. If you cannot convey your message in one language, use another language and you will get there."* (communications manager Trek-Segafredo)

The Lotto Soudal communications manager also replied that he had not experienced frustrations related to language problems. He had experienced frustrations, but those were mostly linked to information flow:



*“I have not experienced frustrations due to language use. I would like to speak more languages, but that is probably peculiar to my job. [...] There always are a few frustrations a year, but those can be trivialized. Also, the frustrations I have experienced are rather related to information flow than to language problems.”* (communications manager Lotto Soudal)

### 3.5 Recruitment and integration

The fifth and final research question of this master’s thesis refers to the potential influence of language skills on the recruitment and integration process of new team members. The data related to this topic were primarily collected by means of interviews with members of Lotto Soudal and Trek-Segafredo. Table 29 shows how the core theme ‘recruitment and integration’ can be divided into 3 themes and 6 codes.

Table 29: Recruitment and integration

| CORE THEME                  | THEME              | CODE  |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|---|
| Recruitment and integration | Recruitment        | Language proficiency as a prerequisite to recruitment: staff  |
|                             |                    | Language proficiency as a prerequisite to recruitment: riders |
|                             |                    | Language skills and a rider’s market value                    |
|                             | Moving for cycling | Moving for cycling  |
|                             | Integration        | Language proficiency and integration                          |

#### 3.5.1 Recruitment

##### Language proficiency as a prerequisite to recruitment: staff

During the interviews, the influence of language skills on the recruitment process was discussed with the team’s sports directors and communication managers. A distinction was made between the riders and the other staff members. With regard to the staff, linguistic skills seem to play an important role in both teams. The sports director and communications manager of the Trek-Segafredo team stated that a basic command in English is an essential prerequisite to join the team.

*“There are many talented people who do speak the language, so we would rather choose them. For instance, if we are looking for a new mechanic, we want someone proficient in English who is also qualified to drive a lorry. No matter how talented someone is, he won’t join us without the lorry qualification. It’s the same with language.”* (sports director Trek-Segafredo)

*“The full recruitment process takes place in English. If you see that the communication doesn’t work during that process, the candidate will not get in. That is the rule I apply when I recruit new people for my team. It is self-evident that your language skills need to be better if you want to work in the communications team than if you want to be a mechanic. But still, a basic command of English is always required.”* (communications manager Trek-Segafredo)

Similarly, the Lotto Soudal sports director and communications manager claimed that language skills play a role during the recruitment process of new staff members. Interestingly, they both stated that a command in Dutch, the lingua franca among the staff members, is not indispensable:

*“The staff needs to be multilingual to a certain extent. Being proficient in Dutch is not a prerequisite.”* (sports director Lotto Soudal)

*“We would rather recruit Dutch-speaking people than non-native Dutch speakers. However, non-native speakers of Dutch are not ruled out. Otherwise, our Spanish carer would have never ended up with us. It was a bit odd in the beginning, but now he is perfectly integrated in the team.”* (communications manager Lotto Soudal)

### **Language proficiency as a prerequisite to recruitment: riders**

For the riders, the situation is different. The sports directors and communications managers were asked whether they would not recruit a talented rider because of his very poor linguistic skills. The four interviewees answered unanimously: a poor linguistic proficiency would not stop them from hiring a talented rider, as sports performances are more important than anything else.

*“I don’t think it would stop us. I think the rider would be asked to take a crash course in English, so he would at least have a basic command. [...] Of course, the linguistic requirements for them are of a different level than the requirements for the staff. Riders obviously have to speak with their legs.”* (communications manager Trek-Segafredo)

*“Language skills do not play a role in the recruitment process of new riders. One’s qualities as a rider, that is the most important.”* (sports director Lotto Soudal)

*“The sports aspect is of course predominant. A rider needs to have certain qualities to race for our team. Second, the financial aspect always plays an important role. [...] The commercial aspect may also play a part, but to a lesser extent. For instance, you may have certain grounds to choose a rider with a certain nationality. But with regard to language skills, we always assume that that’s something which can be solved. [...] Linguistic proficiency is never considered a barrier to take on a rider.”* (communications manager Lotto Soudal)

The Lotto Soudal communications manager also stressed that there are no quotas relating to the team members’ nationality:

*“The media sometimes think that there are certain quotas and that we are under a contractual obligation to have at least  $\frac{2}{3}$  Belgians in our team. That is not true. It is not the case in the opposite way as well. Our partner, Soudal, has many foreign interests. They do not impose a number of non-Belgian members we should have in our team.”* (communications manager Lotto Soudal)

### Language skills and a rider's market value

The communications managers were also asked whether there is a link between a rider's linguistic skills and his value on the transfer market. The managers indicated that language skills do not have a direct influence on a rider's value. However, being proficient in multiple languages can arouse a sponsor's interest and therefore increase a rider's marketing value:

*"I don't think so. Whether a rider speaks 5, 10 or 0 languages, it will not affect his value on the transfer market. However, if a rider is able to communicate in several languages and if he is socially skilled, his marketing value will be higher. [...] Of course, if you speak 5 languages, you can be used for sponsor events in 5 language areas. That way, your market value can be influenced."* (communications manager Trek-Segafredo)

The Lotto Soudal communications manager suggested that a wide linguistic proficiency can increase a rider's chances on the transfer market:

*"Yes, but it is connected with someone's character as well. For instance, if a Movistar<sup>7</sup> is interested in a Flemish rider, it is more likely that the rider will accept the offer if he is fluent in Spanish. A rider who is not fluent in Spanish may turn down the offer, even though the team makes him an interesting offer. [...] I think your chances on the transfer market will increase if you speak several languages. Of, course that is connected with character as well. If you feel more at home in a Belgian team... The more languages you speak, the faster you will feel at home in other teams and the faster you will integrate."* (communications manager Lotto Soudal)

### 3.5.2 Moving for cycling

The next topic discussed with during the interviews is 'moving for cycling'. Before the outcomes of the interviews will be presented, one more questionnaire result will be provided. The questionnaire respondents were asked whether they had had to move to another country because of their job/contract in the cycling world. As can be seen from Table 30 the majority of the Lotto Soudal respondents indicated that they did not have to move. In contrast, 11 Trek-Segafredo members responded that they had to move, either for their current team or for their previous team.

Table 30: Moving to another country

| Lotto Soudal              |        |                | Trek-Segafredo            |        |                |
|---------------------------|--------|----------------|---------------------------|--------|----------------|
|                           | Number | Percentage (%) |                           | Number | Percentage (%) |
| Yes, for my current team  | 1      | 2.70           | Yes, for my current team  | 7      | 28.00          |
| Yes, for my previous team | 2      | 5.41           | Yes, for my previous team | 4      | 16.00          |
| No                        | 34     | 91.89          | No                        | 14     | 56.00          |
| Total                     | 37     | 100            | Total                     | 25     | 100            |

<sup>7</sup> Movistar is a Spanish WorldTour cycling team.

The questionnaire respondents were asked to comment on their answer. Two Lotto Soudal participants mentioned that they did not have to move, because they were employed in a Belgian team. Another member stated that he had to move for his previous team, as all his races were located in Italy. Finally, one Lotto Soudal member claimed to have moved to Spain for his current team, in order to be able to train better. At Trek-Segafredo, one member reported to have moved to the USA for a previous team and to Spain for Trek-Segafredo. Another Trek-Segafredo participant commented that he or she lives half the year in Europe, away from home.

### **Moving for cycling**

During the interviews, the sports directors and communications managers of both teams were asked whether their team expects its riders to move, as is the frequently case in football (e.g. Lavric & Steiner, 2011, pp. 106-107). The Lotto Soudal communications manager indicated that all Lotto Soudal members are free to choose their place of residence. If a rider chose to move to another country, it would be entirely his own choice, the communications manager confirmed:

*“All our riders live in the country of their preference. We don’t impose a place of residence and I don’t think that’s the case in other cycling teams.”* (communications manager Lotto Soudal)

The Trek-Segafredo interviewees indicated that no one is forced to move, but that it is advisable for non-Europeans to have a pied-à-terre in Europe, especially with regard to the effects of frequent long-haul flights on the team members’ health:

*“We don’t expect anyone to move. However, if you neither live in Europe nor have a second residence in Europe, you have a problem. You should fly in from the other side of the world for each race. That would imply a financial setback to the team and the many jet lags couldn’t be healthy as well. We see that our non-Europeans stay in Europe during almost the entire season and that they go back home during winter. In that sense, people have moved. If they stayed over there, they wouldn’t be able to do their job.”* (communications manager Trek-Segafredo)

As the team does not impose a place of residence, the team members are not offered any help by the team when they decide to move. The Trek-Segafredo sports director and communications manager added that most of the team members had already moved before they joined the team and that they usually receive help from their managers.

*“Usually, they have already moved. Also, they have managers who take care of things such as a residence permit, a house, ...”* (sport director Trek-Segafredo)

*“Many riders move to Europe before they become professional cyclists. You won’t become a professional rider by competing in overseas competitions. You become a professional rider by competing in Europe.”* (communications manager Trek-Segafredo)

### 3.5.3 Integration

#### Language proficiency and integration

Finally, the topic 'integration' was discussed with the riders, in order to find out whether there is a connection between language skills and integration. According to the two riders, there certainly is a link between language proficiency and integration. When the interviews were conducted, the Trek-Segafredo rider had spent his first four months with the Trek-Segafredo team. He claimed that it was much easier than he expected to integrate into the team and suggested that his wide linguistic proficiency had had a positive influence on the integration process:

*"Probably, it helps that I come from Luxembourg and speak so many languages. In the end, socializing is the first part of integrating. And if you can't speak fluently with everyone, it is harder to integrate. It is important to speak fluently, because that is what makes you close to someone. If you can only do small talk, you won't get close to anyone. So I think my language proficiency was a big help."* (rider Trek-Segafredo)

The Lotto Soudal rider had also spent about four months at his new team, but he did not feel entirely integrated yet. That was caused by the fact that he had crashed during his first race. As a result, the rider had to recover for a few weeks and was not able to race with the team. Still, the rider suggested that language proficiency plays a role in the integration process. For instance, he mentioned that he did not find it necessary to learn Dutch, as all official communication in the team was in English. However, he stated that if he learnt Dutch, it would be because of the social aspect of being part of a the team.

## 4. Discussion

The aim of this master's thesis was to investigate how multilingual professional cycling teams are and how they deal with multilingualism and language barriers within the team. By means of questionnaires and interviews, data were gathered from two WorldTour cycling teams. In the following paragraphs, the main findings of this investigation will be discussed.

### 4.1 Main findings

#### 4.1.1 Multilingualism in the participating teams

The first research question of this thesis referred to the extent to which professional cycling teams can be considered multilingual. The results of this study show that at both teams, a considerable number of languages is spoken. At Lotto Soudal, the majority of the team members is fluent in Dutch and in English. About a third is fluent in French as well. At Trek-Segafredo, the high command of English among the team members stands out. More than 90% of the Trek-Segafredo members indicated to have at least a very good command of English. A substantial number of team members stated to be fluent in French, Dutch, Italian and/or Spanish as well. The wide number of languages at Trek-Segafredo logically corresponds to the great number of nationalities within the team.

In terms of language training, the majority of the Lotto Soudal members seem to have received a solid education for at least three languages. Most members claimed to have received secondary or higher education (either as a foreign language or as a native language) for English, French and Dutch. More than half of the Lotto Soudal respondents indicated to have received at least secondary education for German as well. These results may be explained by the fact that most of the Lotto Soudal participants are Flemish and thus attended Flemish schools, where at least three languages are taught<sup>8</sup>. At Trek-Segafredo, the majority stated to have received at least secondary education for English. Two thirds had studied French at secondary school, college or university and a smaller group had received at least secondary education for Dutch and/or German. Other language courses were not very popular among the participants of both teams. No respondents had taken a language course after they were employed at their current team.

A clear difference between the two participating teams was found when investigating the language use in the teams. At Trek-Segafredo, English clearly is the main language. The Trek-Segafredo participants indicated to frequently use English for communication with the riders, the sports directors, the carers, the mechanics and the other staff members. The results also show that English is the most prevailing

---

<sup>8</sup> As Dutch is the official language in Flanders, most classes in primary and secondary education are taught in Dutch. Starting from the age of 10, all Flemish pupils are offered French classes at school. In secondary education, English is also added to the curriculum of all Flemish pupils. Depending on the subjects chosen by the pupils, they may also study other languages such as German, Spanish, Latin or ancient Greek in secondary school. (Vlaamse overheid, n.d.)

language in a number of specific situations, as English is used during tactical meetings, races and informal moments. Alternatives to English usually include French, Italian, Spanish and Dutch. At Lotto Soudal, however, two languages are commonly used. Similar to Trek-Segafredo, English is frequently used for communication with the Lotto Soudal riders, the sports directors and (to a lesser extent) the carers. In addition to English, Dutch is also frequently used to communicate with the riders, sports directors, carers, mechanics and other staff members. English is the main language during tactical meetings and races, although Dutch is sometimes used in those situations as well. During informal moments, the Lotto Soudal members frequently use Dutch or English. In rather exceptional cases, French is also used at Lotto Soudal.

#### **4.1.2 Language policy**

The results relating to the language use at Lotto Soudal and Trek-Segafredo logically correspond to the teams' language policy. At Trek-Segafredo, English functions as the main language. When applying Lavric and Bäck's (2009, p. 43) code choice model to the team, the choice for English seems very reasoned. For instance, the team members claimed that English was chosen because the team is officially licensed in the United States of America. This motive can be considered a macro-factor in Lavric and Bäck's (2009, p. 43) model, as it plays a role at the political and economic level. The choice for English can also be accounted for by a number of micro-factors, which are active at the level of a department or a certain employee (Lavric & Bäck, 2009, p. 43). When taking the individual language competences of the team members (i.e. a dispositional factor) into account, English comes out as the language in which the most members are fluent. This also coincides with the motivational factor *natural choice/efficiency*, which is based on Myers-Scotton's notion of "unmarked language choice" (1983, cited in Lavric & Bäck, 2009, p. 52). Myers-Scotton (1983, cited in Lavric & Bäck, 2009, p. 52) stated that if there was no common mother tongue, conversational participants would choose "the language for which the product of their competences is highest". This certainly is the case at Trek-Segafredo, since English, the language in which most team members are fluent, is chosen as the main language.

At Lotto Soudal, on the other hand, two languages function as the main team language. As the majority of the team members are native Dutch speakers, Dutch is often used in the team and even functions as the main language among the staff members. With regard to the riders, the team established a clear policy: as soon as a speaker with no command of Dutch is around, the other team members are ought to switch to English. Similar to Trek-Segafredo, Lotto Soudal's language policy seems very sound when applying Lavric and Bäck's (2009, p. 43) model of code choice to the team's main policy. One possible motive stems from the fact that Lotto Soudal is officially licensed in Belgium, which can be seen as a macro-factor in the model. Also, the dispositional factor *language competences* and the motivational factor *natural choice/efficiency*, which can be both situated at the micro-level, play a role. The results of this investigation have shown that 81.08% of the Lotto Soudal respondents are native speakers of Dutch. However, 13.51% of the team members indicated to have a weak command of Dutch. As for English, 70.27% of the team members indicated to be fluent and another 27.03% stated to have a basic active command, but a good passive knowledge of the language. As a result, the "language for which the

product of [the interlocutors'] competences is highest" (Myers-Scotton, cited in Lavric & Bäck, 2009, p. 52) is not Dutch, but English. One important situational factor playing a part at the Lotto Soudal team relates to the people present during a conversation (Lavric & Bäck, 2009, pp. 54-55). Of course, if the conversational participants are all native speakers of Dutch, the most natural and efficient way of communication would be using Dutch (Myers-Scotton, 1983, cited in Lavric & Bäck, 2009, p. 52). This way, the choice for Dutch as one of the main team languages can also be accounted for.

In terms of language use on social media, the teams' strategies can be connected to Lavric and Bäck's (2009, p. 43) code choice model as well. Both teams almost exclusively use English on the team's social media pages, because they claim it to be the most efficient way to reach as many people as possible. The worldwide importance of English, one of Lavric and Bäck's (2009, p. 44) macro-factors, thus has an influence on the teams' language choice. Lotto Soudal exceptionally uses Dutch or French on social media, depending on a number of situational factors such as the content of the post (i.e. *subject* in Lavric & Bäck, 2009, p. 55) and the target audience (i.e. *people present* in Lavric & Bäck, 2009, p. 55). For instance, if a Flemish rider visited the Flemish radio station MNM, the visit would logically only be announced in Dutch.

The Trek-Segafredo website is only available in English, again because it is the most efficient way to reach a wide audience, but also because the team is officially American. On the contrary, the Lotto Soudal website content is always published in Dutch, French and English. That choice was made with regard to the team's bilingual main sponsor, which can be considered one of Lavric and Bäck's (2009, p. 47) meso-factors. The interviewees of both teams indicated to use both English and their native language on their personal social media pages. The language choice on personal pages usually depends on the target audience and the type of message, both situational factors in the code choice model of Lavric and Bäck (2009, p. 55). Personal messages and posts aimed for fellow countrymen are usually written in the respondents' native language, whereas messages relating to cycling would be posted in English. Both Lotto Soudal and Trek-Segafredo do not impose a specific language to use on personal social media accounts. At the same time, social media use is considered very important at both teams. Lotto Soudal members are offered "informal guidance" with regard to social media use and the members of the Trek-Segafredo team are encouraged to be active on social media and provided with feedback and tips.

During the interviews, the participants were asked how their team's main language policy was communicated with the team members. At Lotto Soudal, the language policy is communicated in an informal way (e.g. during informal conversations). It remains unclear how the language policy is communicated at Trek-Segafredo, although it is presumed by the communications manager that the sports directors and human resources staff are responsible for that.

At Lotto Soudal, no one would be punished for violating the language policy (e.g. speaking Dutch when riders with no command in Dutch are around). A sports director may talk to the member, but he or she will not receive an official sanction. At Trek-Segafredo, stronger measures are taken when the language policy is not followed. As all team members work freelance, they are held responsible for their own



proficiency in English, which should be good enough to function in the team. In the past, a number of people have been called to account for not being proficient enough in English. If they did not improve their language proficiency, the team would not renew their contract. It should be noted that a high level of proficiency is not absolutely required by both teams. Team members should be able to convey a message and understand others. Whether that happens in sophisticated language or in grammatically incorrect language, is less important.

The results of this study have shown that both teams do not offer their own language courses, nor do they pay back language classes the team members might take somewhere else. Moreover, the teams do not explicitly encourage their team members to take language classes. In that sense, professional cycling clearly differs from professional football, where language courses are offered by most clubs and sometimes even made compulsory (Kellerman, Koonen, & van der Haagen, 2005; Lavric & Steiner, 2001; Ringbom, 2012). Of course, one big difference between cycling teams and football clubs is that football clubs are located in one city, where they have their own stadium. Training sessions are always held in the club's stadium and foreign players are expected to move to and integrate in the club's city. Cycling teams, on the other hand, do not have a real home base and can rather be considered mobile teams. The teams gather all around the world to compete in races, but when the race is over, all members go home and might not see each other for a while.

At both participating teams, different views were taken towards the policy of not providing language courses. A number of Lotto Soudal and Trek-Segafredo members stated that all team members (i.e. riders and staff) are responsible for themselves and for their own career. Therefore, they ought to make the investment of taking language classes themselves, if necessary. However, one of the Trek-Segafredo members indicated in the questionnaire that if the team chooses a language, they have to make sure that everyone is proficient enough in that language. If not, the team should help the team members. The Lotto Soudal communications manager stated that the question had never been raised before. If one of the team members asked to have language courses paid by the team, he claimed the matter could be discussed.

Three elements recurred in the argumentation of the interviewees who stated that language courses should not be offered by cycling teams. First, participants claimed that it is not too difficult to learn a language by having contact with speakers of that language. They asserted that team members could learn a language by just using it. Second, a number of respondents indicated that the vocabulary required to be employable in a cycling team is fairly limited, because the situation in which team members communicate is always the same. This outcome is in agreement with Lavric and Steiner's (2011, p. 104) findings, which showed that football players only need some basic commands to be fully employable on the field. Finally, a number of respondents indicated that a wide linguistic knowledge is not necessary. According to the interviewees, English has become the main language in cycling over the years. When being proficient in English, a command of other languages is not indispensable.

### 4.1.3 Language strategies

In both teams, the use of a lingua franca is one of the most commonly used strategies to cross language barriers. As discussed in the previous sections, the two participating teams pattern differently with regard to lingua franca in the team. At Trek-Segafredo, English functions as the lingua franca in all possible situations and with all team members. At Lotto Soudal, two *linguae francae* can be distinguished. Among the riders, English functions as the lingua franca. Only when the rider's group is composed of Dutch-speaking riders only, an exception is made and Dutch becomes the lingua franca. Among the Lotto Soudal staff members, Dutch always is the lingua franca.

The lingua receptiva strategy, in which the conversational participants each use their own language because they have enough passive knowledge to understand the language of the other (Blees, Mak, & ten Thije, 2014, p. 175), is less commonly used at both teams. At Trek-Segafredo, lingua receptiva is rarely and not consciously adopted. At Lotto Soudal, lingua receptiva is sometimes used, but rather exceptionally. The Danish Lotto Soudal rider claimed that he sometimes made use of the strategy to communicate with a Norwegian teammate. The communications manager stated that lingua receptiva was sometimes used among the staff members, but that it is more common for them to simply switch to the language of their interlocutor, since the linguistic flexibility among the staff members is very high.

Codeswitching, a strategy during which interlocutors switch between different languages or language varieties during a conversation (Saville-Troike, 2003, p. 48), is used at both teams. At Trek-Segafredo, the strategy is frequently used by the riders and staff to compensate for a lack of vocabulary, to discuss technical matters or to make sure the interlocutor fully understands the message. The members of Lotto Soudal also sometimes make use of the strategy, usually switching between English and Dutch.

The results of this study indicate that professional interpreters or translators are never consulted by both teams. This is in accordance with the findings of Van Hoorebeke (2011, pp. 32-34), who investigated the translation and interpretation needs of fourteen Belgian cycling teams. However, the interviewees of both Lotto Soudal and Trek-Segafredo indicated that teammates sometimes act as an ad hoc interpreter or translator. They claimed that ad hoc interpreting or translation is used to help less proficient team members or to avoid miscommunications.

Interestingly, the reactions of the interviewees on the use of gestures markedly differed. Whereas the riders of both teams claimed that gestures are sometimes used to support a verbal message, the communications managers of both teams reported that gestures are only rarely used. The riders also declared that gestures are rarely used on the bike, but the sports directors of both teams, who both had had a career as a professional cyclist, asserted that gestures are frequently used during races. As a result, no definite conclusions relating to the use of gestures in cycling teams can be drawn.

Contrary to what is common in professional football, the use of a *factotum* (i.e. a personal assistant who acts as an interpreter, language teacher and personal assistant to a new foreign player (Lavric & Steiner, 2011, pp. 107-108)) is not common in cycling. Again, the fact that cycling teams do not have a real home base where foreign riders are expected to move to, plays a role here.

In summary, both teams mainly use the lingua franca strategy. Because lingua franca sometimes does not satisfy to convey a message, the strategy is often complemented by the use of codeswitching and ad hoc interpreting or translation. These results are in line with those provided by the Innsbruck Football Research group, who reported on the use of “bricolage” or “putting bits together” in professional football (Lavric, 2012, p. 183). Similar to what Lavric and Steiner (2011, pp. 104-105) concluded, the main point is that the team members can understand and make themselves understood. How that happens is of minor importance.

#### **4.1.4 Communication problems and frustrations**

The findings relating to the occurrence of communication problems and frustrations as a consequence of language differences show striking differences between Lotto Soudal and Trek-Segafredo. Whereas a minority (16%) of the Lotto Soudal members had ever experienced communication problems, the percentage surprisingly amounts to 50% at Trek-Segafredo. Contrary to the questionnaire data relating to language proficiency and in spite of Trek-Segafredo’s policy of not renewing the contract of team members not proficient enough in the main team language, the Trek-Segafredo participants indicated that communication problems were often due to riders’ and staff members’ weak proficiency in English. Some members reported that communication problems would lead to simple misunderstandings, but according to another participant, communication problems had even led to the not understanding of a task. The results referring to the occurrence of frustrations due to language differences are in line with the findings relating to communication problems. Whereas only a minority (14%) of the Lotto Soudal respondents reported to have experienced frustrations as a consequence of language differences in the team, half of the Trek-Segafredo participants claimed to have felt frustrated. Again, the frustrations at Trek-Segafredo were mostly due to the low proficiency of other team members, especially in English.

In contrast with the questionnaire data gathered at Trek-Segafredo, the interviewees of both Trek-Segafredo and Lotto Soudal reported that they had rarely or never experienced communication problems themselves, nor had they experienced serious frustrations due to language problems. The interview results also indicate that most team members at Lotto Soudal and Trek-Segafredo, the riders in particular, face relatively few language problems. In both teams, team members who do face linguistic problems usually form part of the staff and tend to be slightly older and less educated. This factor may explain the great difference in percentages between Lotto Soudal and Trek-Segafredo. In most cases, the older generation of (primarily Belgian) staff members at Lotto Soudal can use their mother tongue (Dutch) to communicate with the other staff members and a considerable number of the riders. At Trek-Segafredo, where there are many different nationalities among the riders and the staff members, the older generation of staff members cannot use their mother tongue but rather have to use English, because it is the language in which most team members are proficient. Given the high percentages of communication problems and frustrations at Trek-Segafredo, the team may want to encourage those members to take language courses to improve their proficiency in English.

Communication problems during races sometimes occur in both teams, but those are mostly due to technical problems (e.g. a bad connection, background noise, ...) rather than to language problems.

The sports directors in the car have their own practices to make the communicate as concise and clear as possible.

Finally, as all team members have the same goal of winning races with the team, it may not be surprising that there is good fellowship among the members of both teams and that members with a lower proficiency in certain languages are often helped by teammates. Many team members make an extra effort to deal with other members' linguistic skills, as it is in everyone's benefit to find an efficient way to communicate. The same phenomenon was also observed in the investigations of the Innsbruck Football Research Group, who carried out research on multilingualism in professional football teams (e.g. Lavric & Steiner, 2011).

#### **4.1.5 Recruitment and integration**

At both Lotto Soudal and Trek-Segafredo, linguistic skills play an important roll in the recruitment process of new staff members. Trek-Segafredo consider proficiency in the team's main language (English) an essential prerequisite to join the team. At Lotto Soudal, potential new team members' language skills are important as well, but strikingly a command in Dutch is not indispensable. Logically, the linguistic requirements for riders are different, as their main job is to speak with their legs. A poor linguistic proficiency would not stop Lotto Soudal and Trek-Segafredo from hiring a talented rider, as both teams consider sports performances more important than anything else.

The members of both cycling teams are free to choose their place of residence and no one is expected to move. Trek-Segafredo advise their non-European riders to have a pied-à-terre in Europe, with regard to the effects of frequent long-haul-flights on the team members' health. As the teams do not impose a place of residence, they do not offer help when a team member decides to move. Usually, non-European riders had already moved to Europe before they joined the team.

Finally, the results of the interviews show a clear link between language proficiency and integration. The interviewed Trek-Segafredo rider asserted that his wide linguistic proficiency had had a positive influence on his integration process and the Lotto Soudal rider claimed that if he learnt Dutch, it would be because of the social aspect of being part of a team.

## **4.2 Limitations and recommendations for further research**

The findings of this master's thesis contribute to existing knowledge of multilingualism in sports contexts. The study provides insights into the way in which professional cycling teams cope with multilingualism and language barriers within the team. Moreover, it shows how the cycling teams' policies and strategies correlate to and differ from the main policies and strategies used in professional football teams.

Of course, a number of limitations should be recognized. The first limitation of this investigation lies in the fact that due to practical and time constraints, research was carried out at only two professional cycling teams. This thesis sheds light on the main language policies and strategies adopted at Lotto

Soudal and Trek-Segafredo. However, in order to establish a full picture of the way in which professional cycling teams deal with multilingualism, research should be conducted at a greater number of professional cycling teams.

Secondly, this investigation was limited by the restricted number of participants per team. Out of the 77 Lotto Soudal members, 37 team members filled in the questionnaire, meaning that almost half of the team participated in the investigation. At Trek-Segafredo, about a quarter of the team members participated in the investigation (25 out of the 94 team members). Per team, interviews were carried out with three members. Because of the limited number of questionnaire respondents and interviewees per team, the results of this investigation cannot be generalized. Therefore, it is advised to interpret the data presented in this thesis with caution.

Thirdly, another source of weakness can be found in the fact that the participants' language skills and the frequency to which they use a number of languages were not objectively measured. The respondents were asked to assess their own language skills and the frequency to which they use a number of languages. In order to reduce the level of subjectivity in the respondent's answers to a minimum, the response options were very precisely described, as proposed by Baarda, Kalmijn and de Goede (2015, p. 85). Future research could provide a deeper insight into multilingualism in cycling teams by exploring the matter by means of observations.

In spite of its limitations, this thesis has offered insight into the way in which professional cycling teams cope with multilingualism. However, there is still abundant room for further exploration of multilingualism in professional sports contexts. To date, research has only been carried out on multilingualism in football clubs and cycling teams. Future studies on multilingualism in other professional sports contexts are therefore recommended.

## Bibliography

- Aronin, L., & Singleton, D. (2008). Multilingualism as a new linguistic dispensation. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 5(1), 1–16. doi:10.2167/ijm072.0
- Baarda, B., Bakker, E., Fischer, T., Julsing, M., van der Hulst, M., & van Vianen, R. (2017). Hoe gebruik je interviews en vragenlijsten in je onderzoek? In *Basisboek methoden en technieken: Kwantitatief praktijkgericht onderzoek op wetenschappelijke basis* (6th ed., pp. 227–268). Groningen: Noordhoff.
- Baarda, B., de Goede, M., & Teunissen, J. (2009a). Hoe analyseer ik mijn kwalitatieve gegevens? In *Basisboek kwalitatief onderzoek: Handleiding voor het opzetten en uitvoeren van kwalitatief onderzoek* (2nd ed., pp. 314–338). Groningen: Noordhoff.
- Baarda, B., de Goede, M., & Teunissen, J. (2009b). Interviewen, hoe doe ik dat? In *Basisboek kwalitatief onderzoek: Handleiding voor het opzetten en uitvoeren van kwalitatief onderzoek* (2nd ed., pp. 224–257). Groningen: Noordhoff.
- Baarda, B., de Goede, M., & van der Meer-Middelburg, J. (2007). *Basisboek interviewen: Handleiding voor het voorbereiden en afnemen van interviews* (2nd ed.). Groningen: Noordhoff.
- Baarda, B., Kalmijn, M., & de Goede, M. (2015). *Basisboek enquêteren: Handleiding voor het maken van een vragenlijst en het voorbereiden en afnemen van enquêtes* (4th ed.). Groningen: Noordhoff.
- Baarda, B., & van Vianen, R. (2015). *Basisboek statistiek met Excel: Handleiding voor het verwerken en analyseren van en rapporteren over (onderzoeks)gegevens* (2nd ed.). Groningen: Noordhoff.
- Blees, G. J., Mak, W. M., & ten Thije, J. D. (2014). English as a lingua franca versus lingua receptiva in problem-solving conversations between Dutch and German students. *Applied Linguistics Review*, 5(1), 173–193. doi:10.1515/applirev-2014-0008
- Genoz, J. (2013). Defining multilingualism. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 33, 3–18. doi:10.1017/S026719051300007X
- Chovanec, J., & Podhorna-Policka, A. (2009). Multilingualism in football teams: Methodology of fieldwork. *Language and Literature. European Landmarks of Identity*, 5(1), 190–200.
- Coray, R., & Duchêne, A. (2017). Praktizierte Mehrsprachigkeit an der Arbeit. In *Mehrsprachigkeit und Arbeitswelt: Literaturübersicht* (pp. 55–70). Retrieved from www.institut-plurilinguisme.ch
- De Keyser, P., & Vandecapelle, B. (2019). *Wielergids 2019*. Antwerpen: Het Nieuwsblad.
- Giera, I., Giorgianni, E., Lavric, E., Pisek, G., Skinner, A., & Stadler, W. (2008). The globalized football team: A research project on multilingual communication. In E. Lavric, G. Pisek, A. Skinner, & W. Stadler (Eds.), *The Linguistics of Football* (pp. 375–390). Tübingen: Gunter Narr.
- Jenkins, J., Cogo, A., & Dewey, M. (2011). Review of developments in research into English as a lingua franca. *Language Teaching*, 44(3), 281–315. doi:10.1017/S0261444811000115
- Jessner-Schmid, U. (2015). Multilingualism. In J. D. Wright (Ed.), *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioural Sciences* (2nd ed., Vol. 16, pp. 65–71). doi:10.1017/CBO9781316144534

- Kellerman, E., Koonen, H., & van der Haagen, M. (2005). "Feet speak louder than the tongue": A preliminary analysis of language provisions for foreign professional footballers in the Netherlands. In M. Long (Ed.), *Second Language Needs Analysis* (pp. 200–224). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kleinberger Günther, U. (2004). Wirtschaftslinguistik und Mehrsprachigkeit. *Babylonia*, (4), 36–39.
- Lavric, E. (2008). Fifteen theses about business language choices: Plurilingual strategies of companies and of individuals within companies. *Fachsprache*, 3(4), 156–168.
- Lavric, E. (2012). Politiques conscientes et <<bricolage>> linguistique dans les entreprises et dans les équipes de football. *Pays Germanophones*, 5, 165–186.
- Lavric, E., & Bäck, B. (2009). English, French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese? Code choice and Austrian export. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 6(1), 37–67.  
doi:10.1080/14790710802573039
- Lavric, E., & Steiner, J. (2011). "Wenn er die Sprache kann, spielt er gleich besser" - 11 Thesen zur Mehrsprachigkeit im Fußball. In I. Mendoza, B. Pöll, & S. Behensky (Eds.), *Sprachkontakt und Mehrsprachigkeit als Herausforderung für Soziolinguistik und Systemlinguistik* (pp. 101–120). München: Lincom.
- Lesk, S., Lavric, E., & Stegu, M. (2017). Multilingualism in business: Language policies and practices. In G. Mautner & F. Rainer (Eds.), *Handbook of business communication: Linguistic approaches* (pp. 269–317). doi:10.1515/9781614514862-013
- Lietz, P. (2010). Research into questionnaire design: A summary of the literature. *International Journal of Market Research*, 52(2), 249–272. doi:10.2501/S147078530920120X
- Lotto Soudal. (2019). *Get to know the team of 2019*. Retrieved February 18, 2019, from <https://www.lottosoudal.be/nl/worldtour>
- Lüdi, G. (2013a). Englisch als lingua franca und/oder Mehrsprachigkeit? *Babylonia*, (2), 10–16.
- Lüdi, G. (2013b). Receptive multilingualism as a strategy for sharing mutual linguistic resources in the workplace in a Swiss context. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 10(2), 140–158.  
doi:10.1080/14790718.2013.789520
- Lüdi, G., & Py, B. (2009). To be or not to be ... a plurilingual speaker. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 6(2), 154–167. doi:10.1080/14790710902846715
- ProCyclingStats. (2019a). *Lotto Soudal (WT)*. Retrieved May 5, 2019, from <https://www.procyclingstats.com/team/lotto-soudal-2019>
- ProCyclingStats. (2019b). *Trek-Segafredo (WT)*. Retrieved May 5, 2019, from <https://www.procyclingstats.com/team/trek-segafredo-2019>
- Rehbein, J., ten Thije, J. D., & Verschik, A. (2011). Lingua receptiva (LaRa) – remarks on the quintessence of receptive multilingualism. *International Journal of Bilingualism*, 16(3), 248–264.  
doi:10.1177/1367006911426466
- Ringbom, H. (2012). Multilingualism in a football team: The case of IFK Mariehamn. In D. Gabrys-Barker (Ed.), *Cross-linguistic Influences in Multilingual Language Acquisition* (pp. 185–197).  
doi:10.1007/978-3-642-29557-7

- Saville-Troike, M. (2003). Varieties of Language. In *The Ethnography of Communication: An Introduction*. (3rd ed., pp. 41–87). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Skutnabb-Kangas, T., & McCarty, T. L. (2008). Key concepts in bilingual education: Ideological, historical, epistemological, and empirical foundations. In J. Cummins & N. Hornberger (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Language and Education: Bilingual education* (2nd ed., Vol. 5, pp. 3–17). New York; NY: Springer.
- Steiner, J., & Lavric, E. (2013). Mehrsprachigkeit im Fußball: Fallstudie eines spanischen Legionärs in Österreich. *Bulletin Suisse de Linguistique Appliquée*, 187–213.
- Trek-Segafredo. (2019). *The home of Trek's racing teams*. Retrieved February 18, 2019, from <https://racing.trekbikes.com/>
- UCI. (2017). *The UCI announces extensive modernisation of regulations*. Retrieved June 24, 2019, from <https://www.uci.org/inside-uci/press-releases/the-uci-announces-extensive-modernisation-of-regulations-183935-33b2>
- UCI. (2019). *Teams*. Retrieved May 5, 2019, from <https://www.uci.org/road/teams>
- Van de Vooren, J. (2017). *Duitse wijsheid uit 1960: Sport is de belangrijkste bijzaak van het leven*. Retrieved April 18, 2019, from <https://sportgeschiedenis.nl/sporten/voetbal/duitse-wijsheid-uit-1960-sport-is-de-belangrijkste-bijzaak-van-het-leven/>
- Van Hoorebeke, L. (2011). *Translation and interpreting needs of Belgian professional cycling teams* (Unpublished master's thesis, Hogeschool Gent, Gent, Belgium). Retrieved from <https://www.scriptiebank.be/scriptie/2011/translation-and-interpreting-needs-belgian-professional-cycling-teams>
- Van Reeth, D. (2016). Globalization in professional road cycling. In D. Van Reeth & D. J. Larson (Eds.), *The Economics of Professional Road Cycling* (pp. 165–206). doi:10.1007/978-3-319-22312-4
- Vlaamse overheid. (n.d.). *Onderwijsdoelen*. Retrieved July 8, 2019, from <https://onderwijsdoelen.be>



# List of tables and figures

## Tables

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Table 1: Function of the respondents .....  | 24 |
| Table 2: Gender of the respondents.....   | 24 |
| Table 3: Nationality and mother tongue(s) of the respondents .....                              | 25 |
| Table 4: Respondents' period of employment in the cycling world and in their current team ..... | 25 |
| Table 5: Linguistic proficiency at Lotto Soudal .....   | 29 |
| Table 6: Linguistic proficiency at Trek-Segafredo .....   | 30 |
| Table 7: Received language training at Lotto Soudal .....                                       | 30 |
| Table 8: Received language training at Trek-Segafredo.....                                      | 31 |
| Table 9: Type of language course .....  | 31 |
| Table 10: Moment of taking a language course .....  | 31 |
| Table 11: Language use with the riders .....  | 32 |
| Table 12: Language use with the sports directors.....   | 33 |
| Table 13: Language use with the carers .....  | 33 |
| Table 14: Language use with the mechanics .....   | 34 |
| Table 15: Language use with other staff members .....   | 34 |
| Table 16: Language use during tactical meetings.....  | 35 |
| Table 17: Language use during races .....   | 35 |
| Table 18: Language use during informal moments.....   | 36 |
| Table 19: Language choice .....   | 36 |
| Table 20: Social media and online communication .....   | 39 |
| Table 21: Implementation .....  | 41 |
| Table 22: Learning a new language for the team.....   | 43 |
| Table 23: Language facilities.....  | 43 |
| Table 24: Language learning.....  | 44 |
| Table 25: Language strategies .....   | 47 |
| Table 26: Communication problems at Lotto Soudal and Trek-Segafredo .....                       | 51 |
| Table 27: Frustrations at Lotto Soudal and Trek-Segafredo .....                                 | 52 |
| Table 28: Communication problems and frustrations.....  | 52 |
| Table 29: Recruitment and integration .....   | 57 |
| Table 30: Moving to another country .....   | 59 |

## Figures

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Figure 1: Factors of Code choice: three-level-model (Bäck, 2004, in Lavric & Bäck, 2009, p. 43)..... | 13 |
|--|----|

## Appendix

|  |    |
|--|----|
| A. Questionnaire (English version) .....   | 75 |
| B. Questionnaire (Dutch version).....      | 84 |
| C. Labelling system of the interviews..... | 93 |

## A. Questionnaire (English version)

---

### Multilingualism in cycling teams

I am Elien Prophète, a graduate student of Multilingual Communication at KU Leuven (campus Antwerp). Under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Elke Peters I am carrying out research on the topic 'multilingualism in cycling teams'. I am investigating to what extent multilingualism occurs in cycling teams and how teams deal with it. You would be of great help by filling in this questionnaire, which will only take 10 minutes. Thank you in advance!

#### General questions

1. What is your name?

.....

2. What is your year of birth?

.....

3. What is your gender?

Male       Female       Other

4. What is your nationality?

.....

5. Which is your cycling team?

- Lotto Soudal
- Quick-Step Floors
- Team Sunweb
- Trek-Segafredo
- Other: .....

6. What is your function in your team?

- |   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Administrative/logistic staff | <input type="radio"/> Physiotherapist |
| <input type="radio"/> Bus driver                    | <input type="radio"/> Psychologist    |
| <input type="radio"/> Carer                         | <input type="radio"/> Rider           |
| <input type="radio"/> Chef                          | <input type="radio"/> Sports director |
| <input type="radio"/> Communications manager        | <input type="radio"/> Team manager    |
| <input type="radio"/> Doctor                        | <input type="radio"/> Trainer         |
| <input type="radio"/> Mechanic                      | <input type="radio"/> Other: .....    |

**7. How long have you been employed in the cycling world?**

- < 1 year
- 1-2 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 year
- 16-20 years
- > 20 years

**8. How long have you been employed in your current team?**

- < 1 year
- 1-2 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- > 20 years

**9. Did you have to move to another country because of your job/contract in the cycling world?**

- Yes, for my current team
- Yes, for my previous team
- No

You may elaborate on your answer here:

**Language skills**

**10. What is your mother tongue?**

(If you are bilingual, please indicate both of your mother tongues.)

- |                                  |  |                                    |
|----------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Danish  | <input type="checkbox"/> Japanese      | <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dutch   | <input type="checkbox"/> Latvian       | <input type="checkbox"/> Swedish   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> English | <input type="checkbox"/> Luxembourgish | <input type="checkbox"/> Ukrainian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> French  | <input type="checkbox"/> Norwegian     | <input type="checkbox"/> Other:    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> German  | <input type="checkbox"/> Polish        | .....                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Italian | <input type="checkbox"/> Portuguese    |                                    |

**11. What is your proficiency level in the following languages? Please use the definitions below to answer the question.**

|         | Mother tongue         | Excellent             | Very good             | Good                  | Fair                  | Weak                  | No proficiency        |
|---------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| German  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| English | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| French  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Italian | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Dutch   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Spanish | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

**Definitions:**

*Mother tongue: You were raised in this language.*

*Excellent: You have a (nearly) native-like proficiency of this language.*

*Very good: You can speak fluently and have no difficulties in understanding speech.*

*Good: You understand a lot, but cannot speak very well.*

*Fair: You understand a little, but speak very little.*

*Weak: You understand very little, but cannot speak at all.*

*No proficiency: You cannot understand the language at all.*

**12. Are you proficient in other languages? Please indicate your proficiency level in each language based on the definitions above.**

(If you are not proficient in another language, you may proceed to the next question.)

|   |
|---|
| <i>Example: Japanese (mother tongue), Russian (good), Portuguese (fair)</i> |
|---|

**13. Which type of language training did you receive for the following languages?**

(If you received multiple types of training for one language, please indicate the type you received most recently.)

|         | I did not receive language training | Primary education     | Secondary education   | Higher education      | Other language course |
|---------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| German  | <input type="radio"/>               | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| English | <input type="radio"/>               | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| French  | <input type="radio"/>               | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Italian | <input type="radio"/>               | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Dutch   | <input type="radio"/>               | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Spanish | <input type="radio"/>               | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

**14. For which other languages did you receive language training? Please indicate for each language which type of training you received most recently.**

(If you did not receive training for other languages, you may proceed to the next question.)

*Example: Japanese (secondary education), Russian (other language course)*

**15. If you took another language course: which type of course did you take?**

(If you did not take another language course, please proceed to question 17.)

***You may choose multiple answers.***

- Adult education
- Online language course
- Self-study by means of a textbook
- Other: .....

**16. If you took another language course: when did you take the course?**

(If you did not take another language course, please proceed to question 17.)

***You may choose multiple answers.***

- Before I was employed in the cycling world.
- After I was employed in the cycling world.
- Before I was employed at my current cycling team.
- After I was employed at my current cycling team.

You may elaborate on your answer here:

**17. Did you have to learn a new language for the team?**

- Yes
- No

If so, which language(s) did you have to learn?

**18. In what ways did the team help you to learn a new language?**

- The team offered its own language courses.
- The team paid the language course I took somewhere else.
- The team did not help me.
- Not applicable
- Other: .....

**Language use in the team**

In the following part of the questionnaire you will be asked in which languages you communicate with team members and in which situations. This includes both **spoken language** and **written language** (e.g. emails, text messages, ...).

Please use the following **definitions** to answer the questions:

**Definitions:**

- Never: I never use this language.*
- Rarely: I use this language (less than) 3 times out of 10.*
- Sometimes: I use this language 4 to 6 times out of 10.*
- Often: I use this language (more than) 7 times out of 10.*
- Always: I always use this language.*

**LANGUAGE USE WITH CERTAIN TEAM MEMBERS**

**19. How often do you communicate with the riders in the following languages?**

|         | Never                 | Rarely                | Sometimes             | Often                 | Always                |
|---------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| German  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| English | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| French  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Italian | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Dutch   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Spanish | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Other   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

**20. How often do you communicate with the sports directors in the following languages?**

|         | Never                 | Rarely                | Sometimes             | Often                 | Always                |
|---------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| German  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| English | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| French  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Italian | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Dutch   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Spanish | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Other   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

**21. How often do you communicate with the carers in the following languages?**

|         | Never                 | Rarely                | Sometimes             | Often                 | Always                |
|---------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| German  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| English | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| French  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Italian | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Dutch   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Spanish | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Other   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

**22. How often do you communicate with the mechanics in the following languages?**

|         | Never                 | Rarely                | Sometimes             | Often                 | Always                |
|---------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| German  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| English | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| French  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Italian | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Dutch   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Spanish | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Other   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |



**23. How often do you communicate with the other staff members (communications manager, administrative/logistic staff, doctor, bus driver, chef, ...) in the following languages?**

|         | Never                 | Rarely                | Sometimes             | Often                 | Always                |
|---------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| German  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| English | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| French  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Italian | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Dutch   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Spanish | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Other   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

#### LANGUAGE USE IN CERTAIN SITUATIONS

**24. Do you attend the tactical meetings before races?**

Yes → proceed to question 25

No → proceed to question 26

**25. How often do you communicate during tactical meetings in the following languages?**

|         | Never                 | Rarely                | Sometimes             | Often                 | Always                |
|---------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| German  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| English | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| French  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Italian | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Dutch   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Spanish | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Other   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

**26. Are you active during races either as a rider or as a sports director?**

Yes → proceed to question 27

No → proceed to question 28

**27. How often do you communicate during races in the following languages?**

|         | Never                 | Rarely                | Sometimes             | Often                 | Always                |
|---------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| German  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| English | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| French  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Italian | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Dutch   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Spanish | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Other   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

**28. How often do you communicate during informal moments (e.g. in the bus, during dinner, ...) in the following languages?**

|         | Never                 | Rarely                | Sometimes             | Often                 | Always                |
|---------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| German  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| English | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| French  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Italian | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Dutch   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Spanish | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Other   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

### Communication problems and frustrations

**29. Have you ever experienced communication problems related to multilingualism in your team?**

Yes

No

If so, please explain the situation briefly. What exactly was the problem? How was it solved?

**30. Have you ever experienced frustrations as a consequence of language differences in your team?**

Yes

No

If so, please explain the situation briefly. Were the frustrations due to your own linguistic skills or to someone else's?

**31. Would you like to add anything else?**

Thank you for participating!

The results of the investigation will be shared with your team during the summer of 2019.

Meanwhile, if you have any questions please do not hesitate to send an email to [elien.prophete@student.kuleuven.be](mailto:elien.prophete@student.kuleuven.be).

## B. Questionnaire (Dutch version)

---

### Meertaligheid in wielerploegen

Ik ben Elien Prophète, masterstudent Meertalige Communicatie aan de KU Leuven (campus Antwerpen). Onder begeleiding van prof. dr. Elke Peters doe ik onderzoek naar het thema 'meertaligheid in wielerploegen'. Ik probeer in kaart te brengen in welke mate meertaligheid in professionele wielerploegen voorkomt en hoe daarmee omgegaan wordt. U zou me enorm kunnen helpen door deze enquête in te vullen. Dat neemt slechts 10 minuten in beslag. Alvast bedankt!

#### Algemene vragen

1. Wat is uw naam?

.....

2. Wat is uw geboortjaar?

.....

3. Wat is uw geslacht?

Man                       Vrouw                       Andere

4. Wat is uw nationaliteit?

.....

5. Tot welke wielerploeg behoort u?

- Lotto Soudal
- Quick-Step Floors
- Team Sunweb
- Trek-Segafredo
- Andere: .....

6. Wat is uw functie in de ploeg?

- |  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Administratief/logistiek verantwoordelijke | <input type="radio"/> Ploegmanager  |
| <input type="radio"/> Arts                                       | <input type="radio"/> Psycholoog    |
| <input type="radio"/> Buschauffeur                               | <input type="radio"/> Trainer       |
| <input type="radio"/> Communicatieverantwoordelijke              | <input type="radio"/> Verzorger     |
| <input type="radio"/> Kinesist                                   | <input type="radio"/> Wielrenner    |
| <input type="radio"/> Kok  | <input type="radio"/> Andere: ..... |
| <input type="radio"/> Mecanici                                   |                                     |
| <input type="radio"/> Ploegleider                                |                                     |

**7. Hoelang bent u al professioneel actief in de wielwereld?**

- < 1 jaar
- 1-2 jaar
- 3-5 jaar
- 6-10 jaar
- 11-15 jaar
- 16-20 jaar
- > 20 jaar

**8. Hoelang bent u al actief in uw huidige ploeg?**

- < 1 jaar
- 1-2 jaar
- 3-5 jaar
- 6-10 jaar
- 11-15 jaar
- 16-20 jaar
- > 20 jaar

**9. Bent u naar een ander land moeten verhuizen omwille van uw job/contract in de wielwereld?**

- Ja, voor mijn huidige ploeg
- Ja, voor mijn vorige ploeg
- Nee

Verklaar hier eventueel uw antwoord:

**Taalkennis**

**10. Wat is uw moedertaal?**

(Indien u tweetalig bent, duidt u uw twee moedertalen aan.)

- |                                    |                                     |                                    |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deens     | <input type="checkbox"/> Lets       | <input type="checkbox"/> Portugees |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Duits     | <input type="checkbox"/> Luxemburgs | <input type="checkbox"/> Spaans    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Engels    | <input type="checkbox"/> Nederlands | <input type="checkbox"/> Zweeds    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Frans     | <input type="checkbox"/> Noors      | <input type="checkbox"/> Andere:   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Italiaans | <input type="checkbox"/> Oekraïens  | .....                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Japans    | <input type="checkbox"/> Pools      |                                    |

**11. Op welk niveau beheerst u de volgende talen? Gebruik de onderstaande definities om de vraag te beantwoorden.**

|            | Moedertaal            | Uitstekend            | Zeer goed             | Goed                  | Matig                 | Zwak                  | Geen kennis           |
|------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Duits      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Engels     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Frans      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Italiaans  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Nederlands | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Spaans     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

**Definities:**

*Moedertaal: U bent opgegroeid in deze taal.*

*Uitstekend: U beheerst de taal (bijna) op moedertaalniveau.*

*Zeer goed: U kunt de taal vloeiend spreken en probleemloos verstaan.*

*Goed: U verstaat de taal goed, maar spreekt hem niet zo goed.*

*Matig: U verstaat de taal een beetje, maar spreekt hem bijna niet.*

*Zwak: U verstaat de taal een klein beetje, maar kunt hem niet spreken.*

*Geen kennis: U verstaat de taal helemaal niet.*

**12. Welke andere talen beheerst u nog? Geef voor elke taal uw taalniveau aan op basis van de bovenstaande definities.**

(Als u geen andere talen beheerst, mag u deze vraag overslaan.)

*Voorbeeldantwoord: Japans (moedertaal), Russisch (goed), Portugees (matig)*

**13. Welke taalopleiding heeft u voor de volgende talen gevolgd?**

(Als u voor één taal meerdere taalopleidingen hebt gevolgd, duidt u de opleiding aan die u het **laatst** hebt gevolgd.)

|            | Geen taalopleiding gevolgd | Lager onderwijs       | Middelbaar onderwijs  | Hoger onderwijs       | Andere taalcursus     |
|------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Duits      | <input type="radio"/>      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Engels     | <input type="radio"/>      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Frans      | <input type="radio"/>      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Italiaans  | <input type="radio"/>      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Nederlands | <input type="radio"/>      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Spaans     | <input type="radio"/>      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

**14. Voor welke andere talen hebt u een taalopleiding gevolgd? Geef voor elke taal aan welke opleiding u het laatst hebt gevolgd.**

(Als u geen andere taalopleidingen gevolgd hebt, mag u deze vraag overslaan.)

Voorbeeldantwoord: Japans (middelbaar onderwijs), Russisch (andere taal cursus)

**15. Indien u een andere taal cursus volgde: om welk soort taal cursus ging het?**

(Als u geen andere taal cursus gevolgd hebt, gaat u verder bij vraag 17.)

***U mag meerdere antwoorden aanduiden.***

- Volwassenenonderwijs
- Online taal cursus
- Zelfstudie d.m.v. een handboek
- Andere: .....

**16. Indien u een andere taal cursus volgde: wanneer volgde u die taal cursus? Verklaar eventueel uw antwoord.**

(Als u geen andere taal cursus gevolgd hebt, gaat u verder bij vraag 17.)

***U mag meerdere antwoorden aanduiden.***

- Voordat ik actief werd in de welerwereld.
- Nadat ik actief werd in de welerwereld.
- Voordat ik actief werd bij mijn huidige ploeg.
- Nadat ik actief werd bij mijn huidige ploeg.

Verklaar hier eventueel uw antwoord:

**17. Heeft u een nieuwe taal moeten leren voor de ploeg?**

- Ja
- Nee

Zo ja, welke taal of talen heeft u moeten leren?

**18. Op welke manier heeft de ploeg u geholpen bij het leren van een nieuwe taal?**

- De ploeg heeft haar eigen taalcursussen aangeboden.
- De ploeg heeft een taalcursus die ik ergens anders volgde betaald.
- De ploeg heeft me daarbij niet geholpen.
- Niet van toepassing
- Andere: .....

**Taalgebruik in de ploeg**

In het volgende deel van de enquête wordt gevraagd in welke talen u met bepaalde teamleden en in bepaalde situaties communiceert. Het gaat daarbij zowel om **gesproken taal** als om **geschreven taal** (bv. e-mails, sms-berichtjes, chatberichten, ...).

Gebruik de volgende **definitie**s om de vragen te beantwoorden:

**Definitie**s:

*Nooit: Ik gebruik deze taal nooit.*

*Zelden: Ik gebruik deze taal (minder dan) 3 op de 10 keer.*

*Soms: Ik gebruik deze taal 4 tot 6 op de 10 keer.*

*Vaak: Ik gebruik deze taal (meer dan) 7 keer op de 10 keer.*

*Altijd: Ik gebruik deze taal altijd.*



**TAALGEBRUIK MET BEPAALDE TEAMLEDEN****19. In welke talen communiceert u in welke mate met de wielrenners in de ploeg?**

|            | Nooit                 | Zelden                | Soms                  | Vaak                  | Altijd                |
|------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Duits      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Engels     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Frans      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Italiaans  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Nederlands | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Spaans     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Andere     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

**20. In welke talen communiceert u in welke mate met de ploegleiding?**

|            | Nooit                 | Zelden                | Soms                  | Vaak                  | Altijd                |
|------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Duits      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Engels     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Frans      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Italiaans  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Nederlands | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Spaans     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Andere     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

**21. In welke talen communiceert u in welke mate met de verzorgers?**

|            | Nooit                 | Zelden                | Soms                  | Vaak                  | Altijd                |
|------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Duits      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Engels     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Frans      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Italiaans  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Nederlands | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Spaans     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Andere     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

**22. In welke talen communiceert u in welke mate met de mecaniciens?**

|            | Nooit                 | Zelden                | Soms                  | Vaak                  | Altijd                |
|------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Duits      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Engels     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Frans      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Italiaans  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Nederlands | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Spaans     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Andere     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

**23. In welke taal communiceert u in welke mate met de andere stafleden (communicatieverantwoordelijke, logistiek verantwoordelijke, administratief verantwoordelijke, arts, buschauffeur, kok, ...)?**

|            | Nooit                 | Zelden                | Soms                  | Vaak                  | Altijd                |
|------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Duits      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Engels     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Frans      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Italiaans  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Nederlands | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Spaans     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Andere     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

#### TAALGEBRUIK IN BEPAALDE SITUATIES

**24. Neemt u deel aan de tactische besprekingen voor een wedstrijd?**

- Ja → ga verder bij vraag 25
- Nee → ga verder bij vraag 26

**25. Welke taal gebruikt u in welke mate tijdens tactische besprekingen?**

|            | Nooit                 | Zelden                | Soms                  | Vaak                  | Altijd                |
|------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Duits      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Engels     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Frans      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Italiaans  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Nederlands | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Spaans     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Andere     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

**26. Bent u als wielrenner of ploegleider actief tijdens wielervedstrijden?**

- Ja → ga verder bij vraag 27
- Nee → ga verder bij vraag 28

**27. Welke talen gebruikt u in welke mate om tijdens een wielervedstrijd te communiceren?**

|            | Nooit                 | Zelden                | Soms                  | Vaak                  | Altijd                |
|------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Duits      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Engels     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Frans      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Italiaans  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Nederlands | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Spaans     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Andere     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

**28. Welke talen gebruikt u in welke mate tijdens informele momenten (bv. in de bus, tijdens het avondeten, ...)?**

|            | Nooit                 | Zelden                | Soms                  | Vaak                  | Altijd                |
|------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Duits      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Engels     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Frans      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Italiaans  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Nederlands | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Spaans     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Andere     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

### Communicatieproblemen en frustraties

**29. Heeft u binnen de ploeg al communicatieproblemen ondervonden die te maken hadden met meertaligheid?**

- Ja
- Nee

Zo ja, leg de situatie kort uit. Om welk communicatieprobleem ging het? Hoe werd het opgelost?

**30. Heeft u zich al gefrustreerd gevoeld als gevolg van taalverschillen in de ploeg?**

- Ja
- Nee

Zo ja, leg de situatie kort uit. Lag de oorzaak van de frustratie bij uzelf of bij iemand anders?

**31. Wilt u zelf nog iets toevoegen?**

Bedankt om deel te nemen!

De resultaten van het onderzoek worden in de zomer van 2019 met uw team gedeeld. Als u ondertussen nog vragen zou hebben, kunt u altijd een mailtje sturen naar [elien.prophete@student.kuleuven.be](mailto:elien.prophete@student.kuleuven.be).

## C. Labelling system of the interviews

| CORE THEME                              | THEME                                 | CODE  |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|
| Language policy                         | Language choice                       | Main language policy  |
|   |                                       | Language choice for official communication                              |
|   |                                       | Language choice during tactical meetings                                |
|   |                                       | Language choice during races  |
|   | Social media and online communication | Language choice on team pages   |
|   |                                       | Language choice on personal accounts                                    |
|   |                                       | Guidelines with regard to social media                                  |
|   | Implementation                        | Communicating the language policy                                       |
|   |                                       | Violation of the language policy  |
|   |                                       | Being able to communicate is more important than sophisticated language |
|   | Language learning                     | Offering language courses   |
|   |                                       | Learning by doing   |
|   |                                       | Required vocabulary is limited  |
| Only English is enough                  |                                       |   |
| Language strategies                     | Language strategies                   | Lingua franca   |
|   |                                       | Lingua receptiva  |
|   |                                       | Codeswitching   |
|   |                                       | Professional interpreters or translators                                |
|   |                                       | Ad hoc interpreting or translation                                      |
|   |                                       | Gestures  |
|   |                                       | Factotum  |
| Communication problems and frustrations | Communication problems                | Linguistic problems   |
|   |                                       | Communication problems in the team                                      |
|   |                                       | Communication problems during races                                     |
|   |                                       | Avoiding communication problems   |
|   |                                       | Dealing with other members' linguistic skills                           |
|   | Frustrations                          | Frustrations  |
| Recruitment and integration             | Recruitment                           | Language proficiency as a prerequisite to recruitment: staff            |
|   |                                       | Language proficiency as a prerequisite to recruitment: riders           |
|   |                                       | Language skills and a rider's market value                              |
|   | Moving for cycling                    | Moving for cycling  |
|   | Integration                           | Language proficiency and integration                                    |