

While I understand the need to maintain the quality of education as a result of increasing student populations in universities, this bill is a more harmful way of approaching this problem. The proposed solutions by this bill will ultimately exclude many existing teaching staff who are not as comfortable with teaching in Dutch, and will push them out of universities and potentially the Netherlands. As an international who has done all of my higher education in the Netherlands, and has learned Dutch over the years, passing this bill will result in a massive brain drain. I have been lucky to receive my education in the Netherlands, I have made my home here, and welcome every day how I can be more participative in the society here. But because of this bill, I would be prevented from giving back to the society here in the way that I can, and that seems like a big shame. And this will be a similar story for many highly educated and motivated internationals who move to the Netherlands hoping to educate themselves to give back to the society here.

In research education, there is also the point that many influential research bodies primarily use English (e.g., journals, conferences, etc). Not training students to navigate their research in English will ultimately be at Dutch-speakers detriment if they would like to continue a career in research. Not only that, but Dutch universities' international rankings will also be harmed, as they will not be participate in international research as easily through their students, or their staff. One of the highest points in my research career has been international collaborations where my research can be better situated in the world because I can receive feedback and make professional contacts with others. Passing this bill, I fear, will make it all the more harder for Dutch-speaking folks to make such professional contacts and collaborations, and will harm the quality of their research and how it is situated with the rest of the world.

Language is also a way of knowing, and while I understand that Dutch as a language should always be an option available within higher education, removing or limiting English also takes away Dutch-speakers opportunities to know about other cultural ways of thinking and expression that may not be as readily available if they only communicate in Dutch. Limiting language of expression within higher education will also plant the seeds for more discrimination against internationals by forcing them to assimilate to the language within these spaces. Passing this bill will lead to more intergroup conflict between Dutch and non-Dutch speaking groups.

This bill will cause more imbalance than balance.

In reaction to the bill, I think about how universities have, and are currently, still majorly advertising themselves in various countries outside of the Netherlands. And because of this, many international students are drawn to the Netherlands. Every year, the targets of universities aim to increase the capacity of their programs, and I cannot help but think that this should be the main pressure point that the government should target. The fixation with attracting increasingly more and more international students to fulfil larger classrooms that current university resources and staff cannot adequately accommodate. I do not think it is practical, psychologically safe, or responsible of the government to remove English programs from higher education, but I also think the government can focus their efforts on how to avoid exploitation of international students and staff who do come here.