

Figure 7.2.2. (b) Organizations: language use

Languages spoken by leading people in international organizations: 1995 and 1999

These tables indicate the language pairs spoken by leading people in international organizations (using data collected in 1995 and 1999 for the *Who's Who in International Organizations* (UIA, 1996 and 2000 respectively). People may speak more than two languages. Someone who speaks three languages, for example, would have three language pairs.

The same top ten languages appear in 1995 and 1999: Arabic, Dutch, English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, and Swedish (alphabetical order). They are listed in the entries of more than 100 biographees sampled in 1995 and 70 biographees in 1999. The tables below give totals for paired combinations of these 10 languages. For example, 1673 biographees in 1995 include English and French in the list of languages they speak, 57 include Italian and Portuguese, and 18 include Spanish and Swedish.

The frequency of language pairs, and the change between 1995 and 1999 are also given as percentages of the total samples.

Top ten language pairs and their frequency 1995

Number of Persons 1995

	Arabic									
Dutch	0	Dutch								
English	98	338	English							
French	61	318	1673	French						
German	15	270	993	809	German					
Italian	10	72	391	385	217	Italian				
Portuguese	4	22	139	124	56	57 Portuguese				
Russian	7	9	124	90	82	26	4	Russian		
Spanish	14	85	620	527	252	204	119	35	Spanish	
Swedish	2	5	122	60	84	9	2	7	18	

Percentage 1995

	Arabic									
Dutch	0.0%	Dutch								
English	3.8%	13.1%	English							
French	2.4%	12.3%	64.9%	French						
German	0.6%	10.5%	38.5%	31.4%	German					
Italian	0.4%	2.8%	15.2%	14.9%	8.4%	Italian				
Portuguese	0.2%	0.9%	5.4%	4.8%	2.2%	2.2% Portuguese				
Russian	0.3%	0.3%	4.8%	3.5%	3.2%	1.0%	0.2%	Russian		
Spanish	0.5%	3.3%	24.1%	20.5%	9.8%	7.9%	4.6%	1.4%	Spanish	
Swedish	0.1%	0.2%	4.7%	2.3%	3.3%	0.3%	0.1%	0.3%	0.7%	

Top ten language pairs and their frequency 1999

Number of Persons 1999

	Arabic									
Dutch	1	Dutch								
English	71	254	English							
French	45	239	1041	French						
German	15	198	618	514	German					
Italian	12	57	259	250	148	Italian				
Portuguese	2	12	94	80	37	41	Portuguese			
Russian	5	10	84	62	58	24	4	Russian		
Spanish	11	63	418	354	168	143	85	27	Spanish	
Swedish	2	5	74	44	53	10	4	8	20	

Percentage 1999

	Arabic									
Dutch	0.1%	Dutch								
English	4.6%	16.5%	English							
French	2.9%	15.5%	67.4%	French						
German	1.0%	12.8%	40.0%	33.3%	German					
Italian	0.8%	3.7%	16.8%	16.2%	9.6%	Italian				
Portuguese	0.1%	0.8%	6.1%	5.2%	2.4%	2.7%	Portuguese			
Russian	0.3%	0.6%	5.4%	4.0%	3.8%	1.6%	0.3%	Russian		
Spanish	0.7%	4.1%	27.1%	22.9%	10.9%	9.3%	5.5%	1.7%	Spanish	
Swedish	0.1%	0.3%	4.8%	2.8%	3.4%	0.6%	0.3%	0.5%	1.3%	

Change 1995 – 1999

	Arabic									
Dutch	100.0%	Dutch								
English	20.9%	25.4%	English							
French	23.1%	25.4%	3.9%	French						
German	66.9%	22.4%	3.9%	6.0%	German					
Italian	100.3%	32.1%	10.6%	8.4%	13.8%	Italian				
Portuguese	-16.5%	-9.0%	12.9%	7.7%	10.3%	20.1%	Portuguese			
Russian	19.2%	85.4%	13.1%	15.0%	18.1%	54.1%	66.9%	Russian		
Spanish	31.1%	23.7%	12.5%	12.1%	11.3%	17.0%	19.2%	28.8%	Spanish	
Swedish	66.9%	66.9%	1.2%	22.4%	5.3%	85.4%	233.8%	90.7%	85.4%	

Sample sizes

1995: 2577 biographees whose language skills are known spoke a total of 104 languages

1999: 1544 biographees whose language skills are known spoke a total of 79 languages