



Routledge Studies in Applied Linguistics

INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES TO THE PSYCHOLOGY OF MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS AND TEACHERS

Edited by

Giulia Sulis, Åsta Haukås, and Sarah Mercer



Interdisciplinary Approaches to the Psychology of Multilingual Learners and Teachers

This volume explores the connections between multilingualism and the psychology of language learning and teaching. It provides new insights into the relationship between these two areas and the complex realities of multilingual individuals.

This book seeks to advance scholarship in both multilingualism and psychology by extending existing studies in Psychology of Multilingual Learners and Teachers (PLLT) beyond the study of one language at a time and focusing on both learners and teachers. Collectively, the chapters make the case for bringing together multilingualism and PLLT for a more holistic view into issues impacting learners and teachers, reflecting on areas including Willingness to Communicate, well-being, emotions, motivation, identities, self-efficacy, and agency. In turning the focus on multilingual learners and teachers and their respective experiences, practices, and beliefs, this book offers directions for researchers and stakeholders to foster learner and teacher success in the language classroom and beyond.

This volume will be of interest to students and scholars in multilingualism, psycholinguistics, language teacher education, language learning and teaching, and applied linguistics.

Giulia Sulis is an Adjunct Professor of English at the University of Cagliari, Italy.

Åsta Haukås is Professor of Foreign Language Education at the University of Bergen, Norway.

Sarah Mercer is Professor of Foreign Language Teaching at the University of Graz, Austria.

Routledge Studies in Applied Linguistics

Narratives of English Language Learners in Private Tutoring

An L2 Motivational Self Perspective

Kevin Wai Ho Yung

Cultural Impacts of English as the Scientific Lingua Franca

Using Language for Specific Purposes Corpora to Examine Science Communication

Nilson Kunioshi, Kazuko Tojo and Judy Noguchi

Disfluencies We Live with in Japanese

An Interdisciplinary Approach

Edited by Toshiyuki Sadanobu

Lesser-Taught Languages in Multilingual Contexts

Focus on Language Variation, Pedagogy, and Policy

Edited by Gilles Forlot and Seraphin Kamdem

Interdisciplinary Approaches to the Psychology of Multilingual Learners and Teachers

Edited by Giulia Sulis, Åsta Haukås and Sarah Mercer

Theories and Methodologies of Individual Differences in Reading

Edited by Mark Feng Teng and Jing Zhou

Resisting ESL at a Hawai'i High School

Identity, Ideology and Order at Tradewinds High

Steven Talmy

For more information about this series, please visit: <https://www.routledge.com/Routledge-Studies-in-Applied-Linguistics/book-series/RSAL>

Interdisciplinary Approaches to the Psychology of Multilingual Learners and Teachers

Edited by Giulia Sulis, Åsta Haukås,
and Sarah Mercer



Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
NEW YORK AND LONDON

excellent = austria

FWF Austrian
Science Fund

First published 2027
by Routledge
605 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10158

and by Routledge
4 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

© 2027 selection and editorial matter, Giulia Sulis, Åsta Haukås and Sarah Mercer;
individual chapters, the contributors

The right of Giulia Sulis, Åsta Haukås and Sarah Mercer to be identified as the authors of the editorial material, and of the authors for their individual chapters, has been asserted in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

The Open Access version of this book, available at Home | Taylor & Francis eBooks, Reference Works and Collections, has been made available under a CC BY license. Published with the support of the Austrian Science Fund (FWF): [10.55776/PUB1299]

The images or other third-party material in this publication are covered by the publication's Creative Commons license, unless otherwise indicated in a reference to the material. If the material is not covered by the publication's Creative Commons license and the intended use is not permitted by law or exceeds the permitted use, permission for use must be obtained directly from the copyright holder. Despite careful editing, all information in this publication is provided without guarantee; any liability on the part of the author, the editor, or the publisher is excluded.

For Product Safety Concerns and Information please contact our EU representative
GPSR@taylorandfrancis.com. Taylor & Francis Verlag GmbH, Kaufingerstraße 24, 80331 München, Germany.

Trademark notice: Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Sulis, Giulia, 1991- editor | Haukås, Åsta editor | Mercer, Sarah editor
Title: Interdisciplinary approaches to the psychology of multilingual learners and teachers / Edited by Giulia Sulis, Åsta Haukås, and Sarah Mercer.

Description: New York, NY : Routledge, 2026. |

Series: Routledge studies in applied linguistics |

Includes bibliographical references and index. |

Identifiers: LCCN 2026003802 | ISBN 9781032819341 hardback |

ISBN 9781032822365 paperback | ISBN 9781003503620 ebook

Subjects: LCSH: Multilingual education |

Multilingualism—Psychological aspects | Language and languages—Study and teaching

Classification: LCC LC3715 .I78 2026

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2026003802>

ISBN: 9781032819341 (hbk)

ISBN: 9781032822365 (pbk)

ISBN: 9781003503620 (ebk)

DOI: 10.4324/9781003503620

Typeset in Sabon
by codeMantra

Contents

<i>List of figures</i>	<i>viii</i>
<i>List of tables</i>	<i>ix</i>
<i>List of contributors</i>	<i>xi</i>
<i>Acknowledgment</i>	<i>xiii</i>

1 Interdisciplinary approaches to the psychology of multilingual learners and teachers: an introduction	1
GIULIA SULIS, SARAH MERCER, AND ÅSTA HAUKÅS	

PART 1

Multilingualism and learner psychology	11
---	-----------

2 Willingness to communicate and multilingualism: concept extension and ontological underpinnings	13
ALASTAIR HENRY AND PETER MACINTYRE	

3 Negotiating identities, navigating speaking: a longitudinal study of Japanese students' multilingual fluctuations during a European study abroad	33
SIMON HUMPHRIES, JIM KING, JEAN-MARC DEWAELE, AND TOMOKO YASHIMA	

4 The more, the merrier? Comparing conceptualisations of self-report multilingualism as a predictor of individual differences	59
NAZILA FATTAHI, FARAMARZ EBN-ABBASI, AND ELOUISE BOTES	

5 Psychotypology-guided strategy development and multilingual learner emotions when learning a linguistically distant language	78
YAN-YI LEE AND KAREN FORBES	
6 Just about the language? Relating vision to multilingual learners' Mandarin learning engagement	96
SIYING SHEN AND MARTIN LAMB	
7 Learners' multilingual selves: a cross-country comparison of students' LOTE motivation in Estonia and Hungary	115
BOCHRA KOURAICHI	
8 Motivation and attitudes of Modern Greek FL learners in the multilingual context of Catalonia, Spain	133
MARIA ANDRIA	
9 Exploring Finnish high school students' multilingual repertoires: self-efficacy in reading in L1 and various L2s	160
MAREEN PATZELT, LEENA MARIA HEIKKOLA, AND JUDI ROSE	
10 Multilingual identity, metalinguistic abilities and their complex interaction in education	179
JACOPO TORREGROSSA, VALENTINA CARBONARA, AND SÍLVIA MELO-PFEIFER	
PART 2	
Multilingualism and teacher psychology	205
11 Language teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, agency, and students' engagement in multilingual digital storytelling	207
CAMILLA SPALIVIERO	
12 Well-being challenges and growth: insights from Australian pre-service language teachers	233
GARY BONAR, RUTH FIELDING, AND MEIHUI WANG	

13	Flow as a mediator of the well-being of teachers of multiple languages and multilingual teachers	256
	ANNA MYSTKOWSKA-WIERTELAK AND AGATA SŁOWIK-KROGULEC	
14	Multilingual language teacher psychology: interactions between emotional resonance, self-efficacy, and metalinguistic knowledge	279
	RAEES CALAFATO	
15	Breaking the boundaries: integrating PLLT and multilingualism	297
	GIULIA SULIS, SARAH MERCER, AND ÅSTA HAUKÅS	
	<i>Index</i>	313

Figures

2.1	Pyramid model of WTC. MacIntyre et al. (1998)	18
2.2	The 3D model of WTC. Henry and MacIntyre (2024a)	23
2.3	A transparent pentagonal (five-sided) pyramid	25
3.1	Perceived capacity to speak (CTS) construct	36
3.2	Yukiko's CTS graph	44
3.3	Erin's CTS graph	48
3.4	LX CTS	53
3.5	Separate ontogenetic CTS language systems	54
4.1	Structural equation models: plenitude multilingualism	68
4.2	Structural equation models: effective multilingualism	69
4.3	Structural equation models: complex multilingualism	70
6.1	Changes of engagement/vision across the two semesters	106
10.1	Predicted probability of an accurate response in the metalinguistic task as a function of the 'beliefs and future self scores' (left) and the 'open-mindedness score' (right)	188
10.2	Drawing by CH003	189
10.3	Drawing by CH004	190
10.4	Drawing by CH005	190
10.5	Drawing by CH006	191
10.6	Drawing by CH020	194
10.7	Drawing by CH025	195
10.8	Drawing by CH033	196
10.9	Drawing by CH023	197
11.1	Teachers' responses to the first closed-ended item	216
11.2	Teachers' responses to the second closed-ended item	217
11.3	Teachers' responses to the third closed-ended item	217
11.4	Students' responses to the first closed-ended item	223
11.5	Students' responses to the second closed-ended item	223
12.1	Sample Q-sort grid	238

Tables

3.1	Participants' English-speaking proficiency before and after SA	42
4.1	Descriptive statistics	67
4.2	Manifest correlation coefficient matrix	67
4.3	Fit indices of measurement models	68
4.4	Fit indices of structural equation models	69
4.5	Dominance analysis results	71
5.1	Key topics and strategy instruction during the Strategy-based Instruction Programme with Awareness of Psychotypology (SIPPs)	84
6.1	Overview of individuals' engagement during and out of semesters over Year 1	106
7.1	Demographic information of Estonian participants	120
7.2	Demographic information of Hungarian participants	120
9.1	Information on participants in School 1 (Swedish medium) and School 2 (Finnish medium)	166
9.2	Order of languages tested in School 1 (Swedish medium) and School 2 (Finnish medium)	167
9.3	Scoring scheme for reading performance task	169
9.4	Reading performance total scores (maximum score 16 points)	170
9.5	Self-efficacy total scores (0–1)	171
10.1	Descriptive statistics for the scores extracted from the questionnaire on multilingual identity	186
10.2	Parameters of the generalised linear mixed-effects analysis with response accuracy with metalinguistic questions as a function of the 'beliefs and future self score' and the 'open-mindedness score'	187
10.3	Descriptive statistics for the scores extracted from the questionnaire on multilingual identity	193

10.4	Parameters of the multinomial logistic regression analysis for explanation scores in response to the metalinguistic questions, focusing on the ‘multilingualism beliefs score’, the ‘future multilingual self score’ and the ‘open-mindedness score’	193
11.1	Teachers’ characteristics	213
11.2	Students’ characteristics (as reported by teachers)	213
11.3	Themes and codes from teacher diaries on Module 3	218
11.4	Themes and codes from teacher diaries on Module 5	220
11.5	Themes and codes from students’ reflections on multilingual activities	224
11.6	Themes and codes from students’ reflections on digital tools	225
12.1	Factor array showing statement position on sorting grid for each of the four factors (F1, F2, F3, and F4)	240
12.2	Participants in Viewpoint 1	243
12.3	Participants in Viewpoint 2	246
12.4	Participants in Viewpoint 3	248
12.5	Participants in Viewpoint 4	249
13.1	Demographics and languages spoken and taught	262

Contributors

Maria Andria is an associate professor (Serra Hünter Fellow) at the University of Barcelona, Spain.

Gary Bonar is a Senior Lecturer at Monash University, Australia.

Elouise Botes is a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Luxembourg, Luxembourg.

Raees Calafato is an Associate Professor at the University of South-Eastern Norway.

Valentina Carbonara is a researcher at the University of Perugia, Italy.

Jean-Marc Dewaele is an Honorary Professor at University College London and Professor Emeritus at Birkbeck, University of London, UK.

Faramarz Ebn-Abbasi is an M.A. graduate from Shahid Beheshti University of Tehran, Iran.

Nazila Fattahi is an M.A. graduate from Shahid Beheshti University of Tehran, Iran.

Ruth Fielding is an Associate Professor in Language Education and TESOL at Monash University, Australia.

Karen Forbes is an Associate Professor in Second Language Education at the University of Cambridge.

Åsta Haukås is a Professor of Foreign Language Education at the University of Bergen, Norway

Leena Maria Heikkola is a Professor of Kven and Finnish Language at the Arctic University of Norway, Norway, and an Associate Professor of Finnish Language at Åbo Akademi University, Finland.

Alastair Henry is a Professor of Language Education at Lund University and University West, Sweden.

Simon Humphries is a Professor of Intercultural Communication and Director of Study Abroad Partner Negotiations at Kansai University, Japan.

Jim King is an Associate Professor of Education (Applied Linguistics) and Director of Research and Enterprise at the University of Leicester, UK.

Bochra Kouraichi is an Assistant Professor of Applied Linguistics at King Khalid University, Saudi Arabia and Research Associate at SOAS University of London.

Martin Lamb is a Senior Lecturer in TESOL in the School of Education, University of Leeds, UK.

Yan-Yi Lee holds a PhD in Second Language Education at the University of Cambridge.

Peter MacIntyre is Professor of Psychology at Cape Breton University, Canada.

Sílvia Melo-Pfeifer is Professor of Foreign Language Teaching at the University of Hamburg.

Sarah Mercer is Professor of Foreign Language Teaching at the University of Graz, Austria.

Anna Mystkowska-Wiertelak is a researcher and a teacher trainer at the University of Wrocław, Poland.

Mareen Patzelt is a doctoral researcher and teacher at the University of Turku, Finland.

Judi Rose is a doctoral researcher and teacher at the University of Turku, Finland.

Siying Shen is a Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Graz, Austria.

Agata Słowik-Krogulec is an applied linguist and a teacher trainer at the University of Wrocław, Poland.

Camilla Spaliviero is a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Bergen, Norway.

Giulia Sulis is an Adjunct Professor of English at the University of Cagliari, Italy.

Jacopo Torregrossa is Professor of Multilingualism and Second Language Acquisition at the Goethe University, Frankfurt.

Meihui Wang is a Teaching Associate at Monash University, Australia.

Tomoko Yashima is a Professor Emeritus of Intercultural Communication at Kansai University, Japan.

Acknowledgment

This project received financial support from the Austrian Science Fund – FWF (Grant DOI: 10.55776/PUB1299).



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

1 Interdisciplinary approaches to the psychology of multilingual learners and teachers

An introduction

Giulia Sulis, Sarah Mercer, and Åsta Haukås

Introduction

While research linking multilingualism and psychology has mainly explored the cognitions and attitudes of multilingual individuals, only a limited number of studies to date have focused on other aspects of psychology of learners and teachers in relation to multilingualism. In contrast, research on the Psychology of Language Learning and Teaching (PLLT) has examined a range of constructs and issues but has often focused on one language at a time, thus failing to capture the holistic nature of multilingual individuals' language repertoires. This edited book seeks to address these limitations by bringing together authors from these two disciplines to explore the multifaceted connections between multilingualism and PLLT. By bringing these perspectives together, it aims to offer a broader understanding of multilingual individuals' experiences, and to provide valuable insights for educators, school leadership, researchers, and policy-makers.

Multilingualism

Over the past decade, a number of factors have contributed to the growing visibility and worldwide relevance of multilingualism, such as globalisation, transnational mobility, and the spread of new technologies (Cenoz, 2013). In education, the increasingly diverse makeup of classroom environments has contributed to the resonance of multilingualism as a research field, ultimately, bringing about a 'multilingual turn' (Meier & Conteh, 2014) which has led to a greater number of projects attending to this vital component of learning and teaching environments.

A multitude of terms have been used to refer to the knowledge of more than one language or language variety, including bilingualism, multilingualism, plurilingualism, metrolingualism, and polyglotism. Within this book, we draw on the most commonly used term 'multilingualism'. Traditionally, multilingualism has been defined in various ways centring

2 *Psychology of Multilingual Learners and Teachers*

around three core features: the number of languages involved, the levels of proficiency in the respective languages, and whether it is viewed as an individual or social phenomenon (Cenoz, 2013). However, in recent years, researchers have increasingly viewed multilingualism as a more holistic notion, namely, as “the dynamic and integrated knowledge and/or use of more than one language or language variety” (Haukås et al., 2021, p. 84). This conceptualisation suggests that multilingual individuals can have varied levels of proficiency and knowledge in their languages, and perfect mastery of two or more languages is no longer regarded as necessary to be considered multilingual (Cenoz & Gorter, 2011). Consequently, most people worldwide can be regarded as multilingual, as it is increasingly rare to encounter someone who has only engaged with a single language or variety throughout their lives (Haukås, 2022). This holistic view also suggests that the boundaries between languages are permeable and should be thus seen as integrated parts of one linguistic repertoire, rather than as isolated entities, and linguistic resources are used cross-linguistically, rather than in isolation (Cenoz & Gorter, 2021). As editors, we align with this view. However, we acknowledge that different understandings of multilingualism still exist, which will also be visible across the various chapters of this book and which reflect each author(s)’ own understandings of the notion and how it is enacted in research and practice.

A holistic perspective on multilingualism contrasts with traditional Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and Applied Linguistics research, which have typically focused on deficits when describing and assessing learners’ proficiency in additional languages, rather than viewing a broader linguistic repertoire as an asset (Meier, 2017). In multilingual research, the focus is not so much on what learners are lacking and have yet to achieve, but rather the emphasis is on appreciating the resources and experiences with two or more languages or language varieties that they bring with them, and which can represent valuable resources for further language acquisition (Ushioda, 2017). Furthermore, SLA research has typically focused on one language at a time. However, this overlooks the multitude of other languages which infuse learners’ and teachers’ linguistic lives and repertoires. As such, May (2014) has suggested the need to welcome a ‘multilingual turn’ also in Applied Linguistics research to account for the diverse linguistic lives which are a reality for many, if not most, learners and teachers globally.

The Psychology of Language Learning and Teaching

PLLT is concerned with how people think, feel, are motivated to act, and behave in relation to their language learning and teaching experiences and processes. It is at the heart of human meaning making and lived experiences and helps us understand who we are and why we behave in the ways that we do.

PLLT emerged from developments in the parent discipline of Applied Linguistics which has shifted its main focus from linguistic models as determinants of approaches to language teaching to more holistic perspectives. These newer approaches seek to understand the role played by learners (and increasingly teachers) as complex individuals whose lives extend beyond the physical and temporal boundaries of the language classroom (Mercer & Ryan, 2016). PLLT has established itself as a field of inquiry distinct to the traditional SLA area of Individual Differences, which usually focuses on isolated psychological constructs and their supposed ‘effectiveness’ for learning success. PLLT has instead typically taken a broader, more socially situated view of learners and been more closely connected to practice (Gregersen & Mercer, 2022). It is natural, therefore, that PLLT would seek to engage with more contemporary holistic understandings of learners which acknowledge the complex linguistic lives they lead in and beyond the classroom.

An additional dimension to PLLT that has only more recently gained greater recognition is the role played in processes of language learning and teaching by language teachers’ complex psychologies (see Mercer & Kostoulas, 2018). The focus in the majority of work to date has been on learners. While this focus on learners is understandable as the ultimate beneficiaries of educational practice, it is a critical mistake to overlook the important role played by teacher psychologies. In the context of this book, this includes teachers’ psychological perspectives on their own multilingual lives as well as those of their learners. Researchers agree that teacher and learner psychology are essentially two sides of the same coin (Roffey, 2012), which mutually shape and influence each other within the classroom ecology. Their respective well-being, emotions, and engagement, among other aspects, are contagious and interdependent (see, e.g., Frenzel et al., 2018; Sulis & Mercer, 2025). As such, teachers’ beliefs about multilingualism and their perceptions of their own multilingual identities can influence not only their pedagogical practices (Haukås, 2016), but also students’ beliefs and practices related to multilingualism (Sulis, 2025). This means that teacher and learner psychology in relation to multilingualism are deeply interconnected, as both can determine how multilingualism and multilingual practices are perceived and enacted in educational settings. For this reason, our book focuses on both learner and teacher psychology, addressed respectively in Parts 1 and 2, while highlighting where possible the interconnections and reciprocal influences between the two. However, even within this book, the broader imbalance in the wider field is also present with only five chapters examining dimensions of language teacher psychology. Yet, we hope to encourage others to take a dual focus to understanding the perspectives and experiences of both learners and teachers if we aim for a nuanced view of the complex processes involved in language learning and teaching.

What does interdisciplinary mean?

An interdisciplinary approach typically involves drawing on multiple disciplines or fields of inquiry to better understand specific issues and topics. A discipline is typically defined as an academic domain with its own area of study, theories, and methods (Krishnan, 2009). In contrast, a field of inquiry can be viewed as a more flexible area of investigation that draws on multiple disciplines (see Chapter 15, this volume). As both multilingualism and PLLT are inherently interdisciplinary lying at the intersection of education, linguistics, sociology, psychology, and other fields, they can be more accurately described as fields of inquiry than as fully independent disciplines.

Complex social issues require approaches which can better capture and cast light on such complexity and, for these reasons, interdisciplinary scholarship has been on the rise globally. Such scholarship is often characterised by a curiosity to explore social phenomena in which one lens alone offers insufficient insights (Mercer & Ryan, 2016). It often involves a willingness to expand traditional ways of thinking and conceptualising constructs, and results in scholars stretching disciplinary boundaries, and engaging with theoretical and methodological plurality in order to meet the unique challenges of inquiry in an interdisciplinary space. Although there are challenges in trying to combine multiple perspectives and disciplines (see Chapter 15, this volume), there are also potentially rich rewards to be gained, as this volume can attest.

In respect to PLLT and multilingualism, interdisciplinary scholarship is not entirely new. Indeed, there have been a number of exceptional publications in this area, notably, in respect to identities (e.g., Forbes et al., 2024), beliefs (e.g., Haukås et al., 2024), emotions (e.g., Botes et al., 2020), and motivation (e.g., Henry, 2023). However, the full spectrum of psychological constructs has not yet been explored and there remains much scope for further scholarship in respect to both teachers and learners as well as in how these two psychologies relate to one another in respect to multilingualism. This edited collection represents our first steps at bringing these two interconnected areas of scholarship together.

Marshall and Moore (2018, p. 22) argued for the need to bring together multilingualism and PLLT by stating that

a person's languages and cultures are not viewed as separate and compartmentalised but instead are seen as interrelated in complex ways that change with time and circumstances, and which depend on individuals' biographies, lived experiences, social trajectories, and life paths.

We see the benefits of taking such an approach as fourfold: (1) it better reflects the complex real-world lives and profiles of learners and teachers; (2) it challenges assumptions and prevailing monolingual discourses and

approaches to researching PLLT; (3) it offers a positive, strengths-based perspective on multilingualism; and (4) it is enriching for scholars who are prompted to extend their curiosity, learning, and thinking across fields of scholarship seeking interdisciplinary connection and growth.

Outline of chapters

This book is divided into two main parts: Part 1, Multilingualism and Learner Psychology, focuses on learners and Part 2, Multilingualism and Teacher Psychology, on teachers.

Part 1 begins with Chapter 2 by Alastair Henry and Peter MacIntyre who emphasise the need for more extensive research on the psychology of multilingual communication. The authors advocate for a multilingual approach to investigating Willingness to Communicate (WTC), which has typically been examined in the context of single target languages. They also shed light on the non-essentialist thinking which underpins the WTC construct. They propose a revised, three-dimensional version of MacIntyre et al.'s (1998) seminal model of WTC and its psychological and communicative antecedents, which recognises the plurality of languages in a learner's repertoire, the multitude of languages that may be at play within the same communicative event, and the code-switching that may take place during communication.

In Chapter 3, Simon Humphries, Jim King, Jean-Marc Dewaele, and Tomoko Yashima answer the call for more research on multilingual communication by focusing on two Japanese English major learners' capacity to speak (CTS) in both English and Languages Other than English (LOTEs) before, during, and after a dual-language study abroad programme in France and Germany. Using a combination of open-response questionnaire, interviews, monthly online journals, and retrospective timeline graphs, the authors found that the two participants, who successfully improved their English-speaking skills during the study abroad programme, both benefitted from caring English interlocutors, who helped them stretch their linguistic capabilities. However, there were distinctions in terms of their CTS fluctuations in their respective LOTEs, due to emotional struggles for one participant and issues of cross-linguistic interaction for the other, suggesting that complex combinations of psychological, social, and linguistic aspects may influence CTS differently across the multiple languages in one's repertoire.

Chapter 4, authored by Nazila Fattahi, Faramarz Ebn-Abbasi, and Elouise Botes, explores multilingualism as a predictor of different language learning outcomes. The authors compare three distinct conceptualisations of the construct: Effective Multilingualism, defined as the number of languages a participant is proficient in and can effectively use to generate the language spontaneously; Plenitude Multilingualism, namely, the number of

languages known to a participant at any level of proficiency; and Complex Multilingualism, where the total number of languages and their respective proficiency are quantified jointly. Their findings reveal that the number of languages a participant is proficient in was found to be a better predictor of language learning outcomes, as opposed to the total number of languages in their repertoire. Their insights suggest that the quality of languages in a participant's linguistic repertoire may have a stronger predictive effect than the sheer quantity reported.

In Chapter 5, Yan-Yi Lee and Karen Forbes turn to the construct of psychotypology, namely, learners' perceived distance between the background and target languages to explore how psychotypological thinking can help learners to harness their multilingual resources and manage their emotions while navigating linguistic distance. Focusing on three beginner-level learners of Mandarin Chinese, the authors retrospectively examined their emotional trajectories during a psychotypology-led, strategy-based instruction programme by means of an open-ended questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. Their insights revealed that psychotypological thinking can encourage learners to think deeper on multiple linguistic levels and to overcome pronounced linguistic barriers. This chapter offers critical implications in terms of the role played by cognitive foundation in helping learners to regulate their emotions when learning a distant language.

The focus on learners' trajectories during the arduous process of learning a distant language is also present in Chapter 6 by Siying Shen and Martin Lamb which adopted a person-focused perspective to track engagement fluctuations of six multilingual Anglophone learners of Mandarin Chinese during their first year of their BA Chinese course. The data generated through in-depth interviews and an engagement tracker provide key insights in terms of the potential role of vision in sustaining learners' engagement during the process of learning a new culturally and linguistically new language. Their insights also suggest that there may be distinctions between language-specific and multilingual engagement which require further investigation.

The role of vision was also addressed by Bochra Kourachi in Chapter 7, focusing on a qualitative study examining the language learning motivation of 18 multilingual university students in Estonia and Hungary, their perception of multilingualism in the era of global English, their learning goals, and their language learning experience. Her analysis, guided by Dörnyei's (2009) motivational self-system model, revealed that learners' ideal multilingual self as well as the LOTE learning experience were the most important aspects helping learners develop and maintain their language learning motivation in both contexts. The study offers key implications in terms of the conceptualisation of the ideal multilingual self as a complex construct shaped by personal interests, cultural connections, life experiences, and professional goals.

In Chapter 8, Maria Andria drew on Dörnyei's (2009) Motivational Self-System, alongside Seligman's (2012) PERMA model, to examine motivations and attitudes of multilingual learners in the bilingual region of Catalonia, Spain, towards learning Modern Greek as a foreign language. Data from semi-structured interviews analysed through Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) suggest the motivational role played by learners' positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment on their motivation to learn Modern Greek. The participants' motivation also appeared influenced by the unique makeup of their linguistic repertoire; in particular, being able to draw connections between Catalan and Greek helped sustained participants' motivation. The findings also offer critical insights in terms of the development of an *anti-ought-to-self*, as participants' motivation to learn Greek appeared mostly self-determined and ran counter to external societal pressures that emphasise the instrumental value of language learning.

In Chapter 9, Mareen Patzelt, Judi Rosel, and Leena Maria Heikkola examine high school students' self-efficacy beliefs related to reading in the various languages of their multilingual repertoires. These languages include their L1, either Finnish or Swedish, as well as three L2s: Swedish or Finnish (depending on their L1), English, and German. One key finding was that the L1 Swedish group's self-efficacy in English was even higher than that of their L1, even though their actual reading performance was higher in their L1. Their insights highlight the critical impact of societal language attitudes on learners' self-efficacy and reading performance. This influence is evident in the context of national languages (Swedish and Finnish) in Finland, as well as English in both settings.

At the end of Part 1, Chapter 10, authored by Valentina Carbonara, Jacopo Torregrossa, and Silvia Melo-Pfeifer, explores the complex interactions between multilingual identity and metalinguistic abilities of a group primary school students in Germany. Using a combination of metalinguistic awareness test, Haukås et al.'s (2021) multilingual identity questionnaire, and language portraits, the authors found that students' capacity to reflect on the role of different languages in shaping their multilingual identity, alongside the perceived interconnectedness of these languages, significantly contributed to their academic success. The study concludes with a methodological reflection regarding the importance of triangulating multiple research tools to gain more nuanced insights into learners' cognitions and identities.

Part 2, dedicated to language teachers, begins with Chapter 11 by Camilla Spaliviero, which examines language teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and agency in the context of multilingual digital storytelling. Drawing on a longitudinal single-case and participatory action research approach, she focused on Italian teachers in Argentina who participated in a professional

development intervention on multilingual education. Teacher questionnaires, reflective diaries, focus group discussions, and students' questionnaires revealed that teachers' increased confidence in designing and implementing multilingual digital storytelling activities, as well as students' positive feedback, positively influenced their agency. The study offers important methodological implications by advocating for the integration of participatory action research into professional development initiatives focused on enhancing multilingual education.

Chapter 12 by Gary Bonar, Ruth Fielding, and Meihui Wang explores the well-being issues faced by pre-service language teachers in the context of Australia, where language learning is typically marginalised in the curriculum and monolingual ideologies based on the dominance of English prevail. Using a combination of Q methodology and semi-structured interviews, the authors tracked participants' well-being over a period of four years. Their data provided critical insights in terms of the relationships between well-being and pre-service teachers' perceptions of their linguistic and cultural competence, how they are valued in educational settings, and their ability to exercise agency in teaching. The study offers key implications in terms of the complex relationship between language identity and well-being.

The topic of well-being is also examined in relation to flow in Chapter 13 by Agata Słowik-Krogulec and Anna Mystkowska-Wiertelak. The authors conducted semi-structured interviews with multilingual teachers and teachers of multiple languages which revealed the social dimension of flow as experienced collectively by both teachers and learners and its positive impact on teacher well-being. In their analysis, teachers' multilingualism, as well as their personal interest in language and cultures, emerged as powerful assets, both in terms of their skill repertoire and their ability to better support learners' language learning process. The authors conclude the chapter by reflecting on how teachers can benefit from their multilingual knowledge and transfer it to their students, ensuring that both they and their learners thrive in the language classroom.

Part 2 ends with Chapter 14 by Raees Calafato, focused on two multilingual English and French teachers at upper-secondary schools in Norway. It investigates the relationship between the teachers' emotional resonance with the languages they taught, their self-efficacy in applying metalinguistic knowledge in their teaching practices (i.e., their metalinguistic self-efficacy), and their observed metalinguistic teaching practices. Interviews and observation-based field notes revealed that lower emotional resonance was linked with both higher metalinguistic self-efficacy and more extensive metalinguistic teaching practices. The study offers critical implications in terms of the impact of psychological variables on language teachers and their metalinguistic teaching practices.

In Chapter 15, our final chapter, we draw on original data gathered from the authors during the writing process to explore the issues involved in working in the interdisciplinary area of PLLT and multilingualism. This chapter offers valuable insights into future research directions, advice for those starting out in the field, and words of caution for any empirical interdisciplinary endeavour.

As this overview shows, the chapters in this book provide a multifaceted picture of learner and teacher psychology in relation to multilingualism. They cover a variety of key psychological constructs, such as agency, self-efficacy, WTC, well-being and more, and a wide range of contexts and languages. By linking the two fields, we provide new perspectives on the psychologies and multilingual realities of students and teachers, which we hope will inspire further research in this exciting interdisciplinary space.

References

- Botes, E. L., Dewaele, J. M., & Greiff, S. (2020). The power to improve: Effects of multilingualism and perceived proficiency on enjoyment and anxiety in foreign language learning. *European Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 8(2), 279–306. <https://doi.org/10.1515/eujal-2020-0003>
- Cenoz, J. (2013). Defining multilingualism. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 33, 3–18. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S026719051300007X>
- Cenoz, J., & Gorter, D. (2011). A holistic approach to multilingual education: Introduction. *The Modern Language Journal*, 95(3), 339–343. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.2011.01204.x>
- Cenoz, J., & Gorter, D. (2021). *Pedagogical translanguaging*. Cambridge University Press.
- Frenzel, A. C., Becker-Kurz, B., Pekrun, R., Goetz, T., & Lüdtke, O. (2018). Emotion transmission in the classroom revisited: A reciprocal effects model of teacher and student enjoyment. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 110(5), 628–639. <https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000228>
- Forbes, K., Evans, M., Fisher, L., Gayton, A., Liu, Y., & Rutgers, D. (2024). ‘I feel like I have a superpower’: A qualitative study of adolescents’ experiences of multilingual identity development during an identity-based pedagogical intervention. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2024.2313564>
- Gregersen, T., & Mercer, S. (Eds.). (2022). *The Routledge handbook of the psychology of language learning and teaching*. Routledge.
- Haukås, Å. (2016). Teachers’ beliefs about multilingualism and a multilingual pedagogical approach. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 13(1), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2015.1041960>
- Haukås, Å. (2022). Who are the multilinguals? Students’ definitions, self-perceptions and the public debate. In W. Bennett, & L. Fisher (Eds.), *Multilingualism and identity: Interdisciplinary perspectives* (pp. 281–298). Cambridge University Press.

- Haukås, Å., Storto, A., & Tiurikova, I. (2021). Developing and validating a questionnaire on young learners' multilingualism and multilingual identity. *The Language Learning Journal*, 49(4), 404–419. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2021.1915367>
- Haukås, Å., Storto, A., & Tiurikova, I. (2024). School students' beliefs about the benefits of multilingualism. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 45(7), 2817–2830. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2022.2075001>
- Henry, A. (2023). Multilingualism and persistence in multiple language learning. *The Modern Language Journal*, 107(1), 183–201. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12826>
- Krishnan, A. (2009). *What are academic disciplines? Some observations on the disciplinarity versus interdisciplinarity*. NCRM Working Paper Series. ESRC National Centre for Research Methods. Available at: <https://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/id/eprint/783>
- MacIntyre, P. D., Dörnyei, Z., Clément, R., & Noels, K. A. (1998). Conceptualizing willingness to communicate in a L2: A situational model of L2 confidence and affiliation. *The Modern Language Journal*, 82(4), 545–562. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1998.tb05543.x>
- Marshall, S., & Moore, D. (2018). Plurilingualism amid the panoply of linguistics: Addressing critiques and misconceptions in education. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 15(1), 19–34. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2016.1253699>
- May, S. (Ed.). (2014). *The multilingual turn: Implications for SLA, TESOL, and bilingual education*. Routledge.
- Meier, G. (2017). The multilingual turn as a critical movement in education: Assumptions, challenges and a need for reflection. *Applied Linguistics Review*, 8(1), 131–161. <https://doi.org/10.1515/applirev-2016-2010>
- Meier, G., & Conteh, J. (2014). Conclusion: The multilingual turn in languages education. In J. Conteh & G. Meier (Eds.), *The Multilingual turn in languages education: Opportunities and challenges* (pp. 292–299). Multilingual Matters.
- Mercer, S., & Kostoulas, A. (Eds.). (2018). *Language teacher psychology*. Multilingual Matters.
- Mercer, S., & Ryan, S. (2016). Stretching the boundaries: Language learning psychology. *Palgrave Communications*, 2(1), 1–5. <https://doi.org/10.1057/palcomms.2016.31>
- Roffey, S. (2012). Pupil wellbeing-Teacher wellbeing: Two sides of the same coin? *Educational & Child Psychology*, 29(4), 8–17.
- Sulis, G. (2025). Learners' beliefs about multilingualism: comparing rural and urban contexts. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2025.2574386>
- Sulis, G., & Mercer, S. (2025). The choreography of engagement in the language classroom: Exploring the dynamic interplay between learner and teacher engagement. *Learning and Individual Differences*, 117(102586), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2024.102586>
- Ushioda, E. (2017). The impact of global English on motivation to learn other languages: Toward an ideal multilingual self. *The Modern Language Journal*, 101(3), 469–482. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12413>

Part 1

Multilingualism and learner psychology



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

2 Willingness to communicate and multilingualism

Concept extension and ontological underpinnings

Alastair Henry and Peter MacIntyre

Introduction

For more than a decade, a multilingual ‘turn’ has been taking place in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) (Conteh & Meier, 2014; May, 2014; Melo-Pfeifer, 2018). While the psychology of language learning (PLL) has been at the forefront of other ‘turns’, research on the effects that multilingual learning/acquisition can have on learner psychology has been limited. As Ushioda (2017) has noted, “while the multilingual turn is increasingly influencing thinking across many domains of theory, pedagogy, and research in language education”, for fields such as motivation “it has been slower to make inroads into our thinking” (p. 478). To bring multilingualism and multilingual perspectives into view, Ushioda (2023) has argued for engagement with “more critical sociological aspects of the multilingual turn” (p. 35). With a focus on the sociological aspects of multilingualism, and the study of identity practices and investment in language learning, valuable insights can be generated (Ayres-Bennett & Fisher, 2022). However, if the multilingual turn is to have a truly transformative influence, there is need to consider how multilingualism affects constructs with roots in educational psychology and communication science. Moreover, because constructs investigated in PLL invariably assume the existence of a single ‘target’ language, a multilingual perspective requires deeper engagement with the ontology of language (the *nature* of language, and what language *is*) (Ortega, 2018). There is a need to distinguish essentialist and non-essentialist ontologies (the former viewing languages as discrete and compartmentalised entities in a person’s mind, and the latter viewing them as interconnected constituents of a holistic system) and to develop an awareness of the effects that ontological assumptions have on the conceptualisation of constructs and the ways they are researched (Henry & Liu, 2025).

For a construct such as motivation, the shift in thinking demanded by a non-essentialist perspective can be substantial (Henry, 2024). In the conceptualisation and operationalisation of motivation constructs, a solitary

target language (TL) is assumed, and the achievement of a particular *goal* or *end state* (L2 proficiency) is targeted. In the wider macrocosm of processes involving multilingualism and multiple language learning, models that recognise the interconnectedness of languages need to be specially developed (e.g., Fisher et al., 2020; Henry, 2017, 2023). It is not enough to simply ‘add’ another language.

For willingness to communicate (WTC), however, the shift in thinking need not be so dramatic. Conceptually, WTC differs from the narrowly circumscribed and causally focused constructs frequently researched in PLL. For WTC, focus is not on an *end* state, but a *contingent* state: a momentary state of communicative readiness that is emergent, contextually sensitive, and constantly in flux (MacIntyre, 2007, 2020). Focused on micro-level processes, and the sometimes-rapid changes that can promote or inhibit language use, WTC encapsulates a “convergence of psychological processes underlying communication at a specific moment” (MacIntyre, 2007, p. 564). Encompassing psychological *and* communicative phenomena, located in the mind *and* in social activity, and with a focus on the *confluence* of varying influences (MacIntyre, 2020), WTC is a construct which embodies non-essentialist thinking.

Even though WTC has mostly been researched in relation to isolated TLs, and while designs have rarely been configured to enable investigation of influences stemming from languages other than a *TL*, embracing a multilingual perspective does not require wholesale conceptual overhaul. For WTC, the challenge is different. It involves bringing the construct’s ontological underpinnings to light, adjusting the conceptual apparatus in ways that can accommodate influences traceable to the different languages involved in a communication episode, and illuminating the patterns of communication that can emerge. Reflecting calls for SLA researchers to “invest effort in clarifying and exploring ontologies of language and [to] work harder towards a more multilingually-attuned ethos” (Ortega, 2018, p. 76), this chapter describes how a multilingual perspective can be encompassed within the WTC construct.

Essentialist and non-essentialist ontologies

Ontology affects the ways in which language-related phenomena are understood and investigated. In any field of linguistics, “there is a choice to be made between essentialist and non-essentialist ontologies of language” (Ortega, 2018, p. 69). Rooted in Saussurean structuralist theory, and Chomsky’s theory of generative grammar, essentialist ontologies embody the idea of languages as ‘bounded objects’ that are compartmentalised in a person’s mind. In contrast, a non-essentialist ontology views languages as highly interconnected. Languages and language development

are understood as processes that extend beyond cognition, and which are inseparable from social activity (Ortega, 2018).

When multilingualism and the processes involved in multiple language learning form objects of inquiry, the effects of a researcher's ontological standpoint are thrown into sharp relief. From an essentialist standpoint, multilingualism involves the ability to communicate in two or more languages. While research into multiple language learning might bring a new dimension by investigating influences of previously acquired languages, ontological blind spots can limit the scope of a study's findings. Research can proceed on the (often unacknowledged) assumption that learners develop discrete sets of skills (i.e., Lx grammar and Ly grammar), and that communication in the Lx and Ly will take qualitatively different forms. With an unwitting monolingual bias, studies can fail to "cover the whole complexity of multilingualism" (Cenoz & Gorter, 2019, p. 130).

Emphasising the importance of ontological interrogation, Pennycook and Makoni (2020) have questioned whether "new ways of talking about multilingualism ... really take us far enough in recognising a diversity of ways of using language" (p. 9). Even when designs have the exploration of phenomena associated with the learning of multiple languages as an explicit objective, an essentialist ontology can mean that languages are approached as distinct entities. In the long run, this can mean that "theories and findings about linguistic development can remain unhelpfully compartmentalized" (Ortega, 2018, p. 72).

To avoid the dangers associated with a monolingual bias, focus needs to be directed to *phenomena* connected to multilingualism and which arise *in communication* (Ortega, 2018). Rather than viewing code-switching, languaging, and language mixing as simply manifestations of multiple language use, they need to be understood as central to linguistic theory, and as constituting the appropriate objects of inquiry (Sridhar & Sridhar, 2018). When communication is understood as the product of a flexible use of language resources, and when attention is directed to the dynamics of communication episodes, multilingual competence can be understood as more than simply "a juxtaposition of two or more parallel monolingual competences" (Sridhar & Sridhar, 2018, p. 519). Instead, it can be conceptualised as a "unitary functional system where elements of the component languages come together in dynamic interaction to serve shifting communicative effects" (Sridhar & Sridhar, 2018, p. 519).

WTC as a non-essentialist construct

From these arguments, the importance of ontological transparency becomes clear. To avoid falling into the trap of investigating the psychology of multiple language learning from a monolingual standpoint, researchers need

to be clear about their ontological assumptions. There is a need to consider the ways in which a construct's theoretical architecture might map onto an essentialist or a non-essentialist ontology, and the effects this can have.

For researchers interested in exploring how multilingualism affects learner psychology, the definition of a non-essentialist ontology supplied by Ortega (2018) provides a set of contours upon which conceptual architectures can be plotted:

[N]on-essentialist ontologies see language as 'constructing' meaning, iteratively out of recurrent social activities, yet often incompletely, unpredictably, and on the fly, distributed across social actors. In sum, language (or grammar) is an ad hoc, local, emergent social accomplishment.

(Ortega, 2018, p. 70)

As we have made clear, WTC is focused on a contingent state. It involves a series of situated processes in which the feeling of being ready to communicate is assembled from a range of influences. Involving the integration of social and psychological factors at a moment when communication might take place, it is a construct which highlights the fluidity and unpredictability of communication:

The dynamics underlying willingness to communicate in a second or third language (L2 for short), *operating in real time*, are affected by a number of *intra- and interpersonal processes*. L2 communication is a remarkably *fluid process*, especially considering the wide range of skill levels observed among L2 learners and speakers. Learners often find themselves in a position that requires the use of *uncertain L2 skills*, be it inside or outside the classroom context. Beyond issues of competencies, which are themselves complex, using an L2 also evokes *cultural, political, social, identity, motivational, emotional, pedagogical, and other issues* that learners must *navigate on-the-fly*.

(MacIntyre, 2020, p. 111, emphasis added)

Mapped onto Ortega's (2018) definition of a non-essentialist ontology, the ontological underpinnings of the WTC construct are clearly illuminated. We can see how the accommodation of a non-essentialist multilingual perspective is well within the construct's confines.

Because WTC was developed to capture changes in communication readiness within a communication event, and the psychological and communicative phenomena which underlie such shifts, there is no call to rethink its constituents. The sense of being willing or less willing to communicate is a feeling that arises from intra-personal processes that facilitate or inhibit

communication, and from the immediate context (including who is in the situation and why). Irrespective of the number of languages in which communication might potentially take place, the *psychological experience* is the same. Captured in the feeling of being ready to communicate, WTC is holistic and overarching. Because WTC is assembled on a continuous basis, the psychological experience of readiness can change for any number of reasons. This includes the need or opportunity to switch between languages.

Rather than overhauling the construct, and rethinking the factors that might affect multilingual communication, alignment with the multilingual ‘turn’ does not require full-scale conceptual reconstruction. Instead, the challenge is to develop an understanding of how the factors affecting WTC associate with the different languages in a repertoire that, at a given moment and in a given situation, may be or may become salient. In practical terms, research needs to examine how WTC can be facilitated by the resources and the communicative experiences that multilingualism provides, even in nascent stages of learning. Instead of asking whether an individual is willing to use the L_x OR the L_y, we need to rephrase our research objectives so that we use *and* questions. In this way, we can access the internal decision-making processes involved in a multilingual communication event.

The pyramid model of WTC

Rich in the way that it implicates and integrates psychological and social processes, WTC can be defined as the probability that a person would choose to initiate communication given the opportunity (McCroskey & Richmond, 1991). Emphasising the stable patterns people tend to show over time, WTC was originally conceptualised as a communication trait. Reflecting typical patterns of differences in the willingness of individuals to initiate a conversation, research on L1 WTC recognises that some people are likely to be more talkative, and others less so.

In the paper introducing the pyramid model (Figure 2.1), MacIntyre et al. (1998) suggested that in the case of an L2, WTC is not simply a transfer of L1 WTC. Communicating in a different language will dramatically change the psychological situation. Following McCroskey and Baer (1985), WTC was conceptualised as a behavioural intention (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) – the likelihood that a person would initiate communication when circumstances afford the opportunity. In proposing the pyramid model, MacIntyre and colleagues (1998) noted that although WTC can be seen as a trait or trait-like variable – i.e., the *probability* that a person is likely to communicate in different situations – it is more than a disposition. For a language learner, *situational influences* will also shape their WTC.

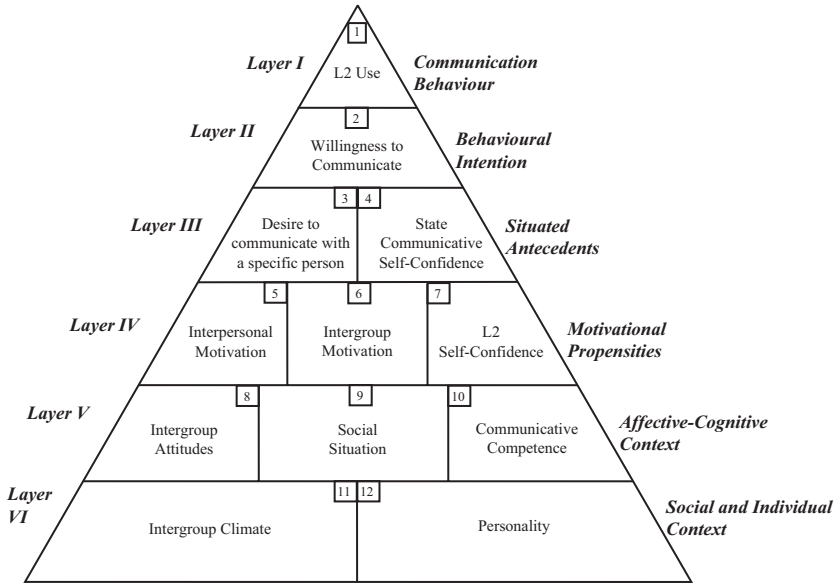


Figure 2.1 Pyramid model of WTC. MacIntyre et al. (1998).

Factors such as the linguistic context and previous experiences can play a pivotal role, affecting the relationship between WTC and traditionally associated factors such as anxiety, perceived communicative competence, and motivation.

Thus, in an L2 context, the psychology of situational appraisal becomes more complex (MacIntyre et al., 1998). Given the wide differences between communicating in a first or additional language (especially in the early stages of learning), levels of L2 WTC will be more fluid. Willingness to engage in communication will depend much more on the fit between the person and the affordances of the context. L2 WTC is likely to fluctuate to a far greater extent than in L1 communication (MacIntyre & Legatto, 2011). As changes take place within and between situations, shifts in the individual's choices about speaking, remaining silent, or perhaps using the L1, will also occur. Reflecting the changing influences of various factors, WTC will wax and wane continuously in real time.

The idea of a constant tension between combinations of push and pull factors that underlie WTC – the experience of feeling confident at one moment and lacking in confidence in the next – was the idea that underpinned the pyramid model (MacIntyre et al., 1998). Identifying more than 30 major concepts relevant to WTC (and more when it is recognised that each of the influences can be further broken down), the model is an

integration of social psychological and language communication factors. By emphasising influences relating to the immediate situation – the interlocutor(s), an interlocutor's capacity for accommodation, the need to say something, the strength of that need, and whether the speaker feels confident about initiating the conversation – the pyramid model constituted a significant departure from the original (L1) conceptualisation (McCroskey & Richmond, 1991).

As a model of L2 WTC, the pyramid represents a dynamic integration of ongoing appraisals. For the language learner, the unfolding of a communication episode is constantly monitored (MacIntyre et al., 1998). It is reflected in appraisals of competence that integrate continuously with the emotions that are being experienced (MacIntyre & Ayers-Glassey, 2020). Moreover, a communication event is never a discrete occurrence. A person's response to the opportunity to communicate will be influenced by experiences from previous events. In trajectories of L2 communication, events earlier in time provide the initial conditions for subsequent events.

Developed more than a quarter of a century ago, the pyramid model (MacIntyre et al., 1998) has stood the test of time. To a large degree, longevity can be linked to the model's capacity to accommodate innovation. Explaining how a multilingual perspective can be accommodated within the pyramid model, in the sections that follow, we describe two conceptual innovations.

Innovation 1: a process account of WTC assembly

One issue on which the pyramid model was originally silent involves conceptualisation of the ways in which influences on communication are brought to bear. As previously noted, the pyramid model implicates more than 30 variables that can affect WTC. Given the breadth of the construct space, the number of variables involved, and the recognition that they can fluctuate on different timescales, it would be almost impossible to map (let alone measure) all the interactions implicated in WTC assembly. While the pyramid model recognises that L2 communication is subject to continual monitoring, the manner in which information is processed was not part of the conceptualisation. However, the ontology of the WTC construct means that conceptual innovation can be readily accommodated. This is particularly true when innovation accords with the systemic and process-focused account of assembly dynamics embodied in the WTC concept (MacIntyre, 2007).

As MacIntyre (2020) has explained, modern theories of dual-processing (Frankish, 2010) have considerable explanatory power. They can elucidate the types of processes that underlie WTC, and they have the capacity to explain interactions between variables at varying layers of the pyramid

structure. In cognitive-experiential self theory (CEST), Epstein (1991, 1994) proposed the operation of two interrelated systems, the “experiential system” and “rational system”. Reflecting these ideas, Kahneman (2011) suggested that people use two types of ‘systems’ to process information, and to make decisions about how to act. One of these systems (System 1) is a rapid, intuitive, emotional, and error-prone system of information processing. Judgements are based on heuristic thinking. In the other system (System 2), processes involve a higher degree of consciousness. The processing of information is logical, deliberative, and more effortful. In the navigation of daily life, people often rely on rapid, intuitive thinking (System 1). However, slower and more cognitively structured thinking can also take place. Supplementing System 1 processing, System 2 is also operational and available to exert an influence when a person chooses to be more deliberate in their thinking.

To accommodate a conceptualisation of information processing within the pyramid model, and with a nod to CEST (Epstein, 1991, 1994) and theories of dual-processing (Kahneman, 2011; MacIntyre 2020) argued that perceptions of readiness to engage in communication can be shaped in two different ways: ‘thinking fast’, and ‘thinking slow’. As we have previously noted, WTC can be understood as a stable, trait-like tendency. This pattern of influence is reflected in the notion of ‘thinking slow’, and activation of the rational system. The slower, rational system operates at the “conscious level and is intentional, analytic, primarily verbal, and relatively affect free” (Epstein et al., 1996, p. 39). These are the judgements about communication that a person makes when they have time to think, to weigh options, and to determine a deliberate course of action. Equally, and as demonstrated by use of the idiodynamic method (MacIntyre & Ducker, 2022), WTC can also be seen as fluctuating during a communication episode, often unpredictably. This emphasises ‘thinking fast’. Thinking fast involves reliance on the experiential system. This is a mode of cognition where thought is “automatic, preconscious, holistic, associationistic, primarily non-verbal, and intimately associated with affect” (Epstein et al., 1996, p. 39). These are the rapid types of judgement that a person learning a language will make on the fly (MacIntyre, 2020) and which can lead to higher WTC (MacIntyre et al., 2020).

While the differentiation of ‘thinking fast’ and ‘thinking slow’ provides a component that was missing from the original (L2) WTC construct, the importance is magnified in situations where communication can be accomplished in more than one language. Compared to circumstances where communication can *only* be accomplished in the L2, when communication is possible in more than language and when shifts between languages are to be anticipated, the value of ‘fast’ and ‘slow’ thinking has even greater resonance.

In a multilingual communication event, ‘thinking fast’ has broader scope. Perceptions that involve competence and confidence can trigger appraisals of the suitability of the Lx contra the Ly. Following hesitation, or an ambiguous response from an interlocutor, a perception of doing well enough in the Ly can rapidly be replaced by a feeling of needing to switch to the Lx. As we will later explain, this type of momentary psychological assessment is centrally implicated in multilingual communication and can be understood as a defining characteristic of WTC in multilingual circumstances.

However, it is not only ‘thinking fast’ that has added importance in multilingual circumstances. Thinking slow can also have additional weight. When there may be differences in levels of Lx and Ly proficiency, when the expectations of interlocutors are unknown, or when interlocutor accommodations cannot be counted on, ‘thinking slow’ can play an important role in shaping WTC. In such situations, deliberative thought is likely to take place both prior to and within a communication event. Even in low-stakes communication, language learners are likely to plan the initiation of communication and think through the ways that it might proceed. In advance of an anticipated communication event, particularly one where the stakes can be high, learners can spend time devising strategies for handling problems that may arise (Henry & MacIntyre, 2024a).

Innovation 2: revision of the geometry

The second innovation involving multilingualism concerns influences that are traceable to the different languages that can be used for communication in a particular situation, and which constitute the learner’s *situationally functional repertoire* (the languages which are possible to use in a particular communication event).

As we have previously explained, the pyramid model (MacIntyre et al., 1998) provides a conceptualisation of the *in-situ* assembly of WTC. Rather than a framework that seeks explanations of causal relationships, the purpose of the model is to cast light on a momentary state, and the processes involved in arriving there. In the same way that the construct can accommodate explanations of the process characteristics of WTC assembly (‘thinking fast’ and ‘thinking slow’), it can similarly accommodate conceptualisations of diversity in relation to the *sources of influence*. Specifically, it can accommodate an account of how the variables in the pyramid’s various layers are influenced by the language(s) that can come into play during a communication event.

In this respect, there are two important points to note. The first point to keep in mind is that the nature of the communication event does not change the phenomenon captured by the WTC construct. WTC is the feeling of being willing to talk. Irrespective of the number of languages in

which communication can be accomplished, the *psychological experience* of feeling competent, self-confident, and willing to communicate is the same. It does not change. It is holistic, not language-specific. While a person might feel reasonably confident when communicating in the L_x, a little less so when communicating in the L_y, and perhaps reluctant in the L_z, the *psychological experience* is the same. The second point to keep in mind is that we are not talking about separate systems of WTC, each relating to a particular language. Rather, it is a single system. As a communication episode unfolds, the sense of feeling competent, self-confident and willing to communicate will relate to the language(s) that are potentially useable at a particular point. To be even more clear, variables do not pertain to languages. We are not talking about L_x state self-confidence and L_y state self-confidence as separate variables. Rather, the influence of the variables in the WTC pyramid (the 12 boxes) will differ as the situation evolves, and as languages are perceived as more or less useable.

With these points in mind, we can understand how adaptation to multilingual circumstances does not require revision of the pyramid's *structure*. In large part, this remains the same. The same variables (boxes) are involved. Rather, adaptation involves the pyramid's *geometry*. With each additional language, the WTC system becomes more complex. As the complexity of the system increases, so does the geometry. For each additional language, the pyramid will have an additional face.

In the sections that follow, we focus on three considerations involved in the revision of the pyramid's geometry. The first involves a need to explain how WTC can be shaped by appraisals relating to the different languages in the repertoire that is *situationally functional*. Here, we draw on language mode theory (Grosjean, 1998) and its extension to multilingual circumstances (Dewaele, 2001). The second consideration involves the manner in which WTC is assembled during a communication episode where more than one language can come into play. Here, we focus on the pyramid's interior, and the conduits through which influences are channelled. The third consideration involves an articulation of the push and pull of using incipient language skills in a communication event where code-switching might take place. Developing the ideas about 'fast' and 'slow' thinking previously discussed (Innovation 1), here we explain how a three-dimensional (3D) representation of the pyramid (Figure 2.2) supports an understanding of the complex dynamics of WTC assembly in multilingual situations.

The situationally functional repertoire

In a communication event where there is potential to use more than one language, decision-making extends beyond speaking or remaining silent.

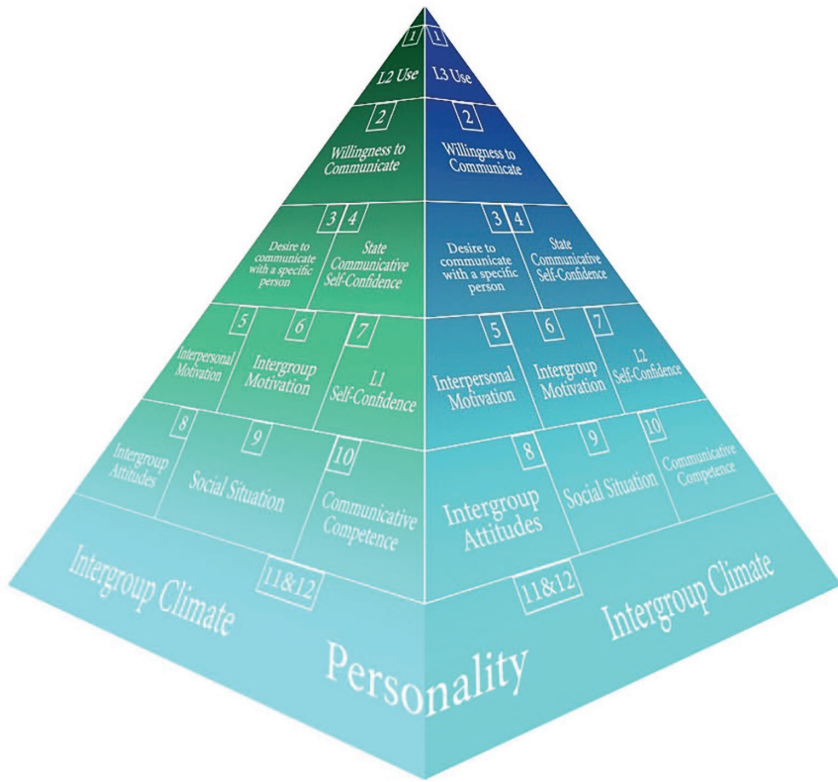


Figure 2.2 The 3D model of WTC. Henry and MacIntyre (2024a).

It will also involve *how* communication might take place or continue. In *language mode theory* (Grosjean, 1998), a bilingual's languages (L1 and Lx) are conceptualised as existing on a continuum representing the degree of cognitive activation. When communicating with other L1 speakers, the individual can be in complete (or almost complete) monolingual mode. The L1 is the cognitively active language. However, when interacting with a bilingual interlocutor who shares the same languages (e.g., the L1 and Lx), and in situations where language mixing might be anticipated, the person can be in complete (or almost) complete bilingual mode. In a multilingual extension proposed by Dewaele (2001), the continuum is expanded. For multilinguals, the continuum will range from complete (or almost complete) monolingual mode (for example, when a L1, Lx, and Ly speaker interacts with another L1 speaker), and complete (or almost complete) multilingual mode (when a person who speaks the L1, Lx, and Ly interacts with a person who also speaks these languages).

In situations when a person finds themselves towards the multilingual end of the continuum, decision-making can be highly complex (Dewaele, 2001). As Grosjean (2015) has explained, language choice is governed by a multitude of factors. These include – but are not limited to – the interlocutor(s), the circumstances of the interaction, the topic, the content, and the purpose(s) for which communication takes place. Like the conceptualisation of WTC (MacIntyre, 2007, 2020), language choice is a cognitive and socially situated phenomenon, the complexity of which “only becomes apparent when it breaks down” (Grosjean, 2015, p. 580).

In a multilingual communication episode, fluctuation in WTC can be far greater than in situations where a single L2 is implicated. From the insights supplied by language mode theory (Dewaele, 2001; Grosjean, 1998), it is evident that when more than one language can be brought into play, the monitoring of talk involves assessment of the fit between the language, the accommodation skills of the interlocutor, and the purposes of the communication. These assessments are not merely pragmatic. They also have an emotional tenor. Various emotions (anxiety, enjoyment, embarrassment, curiosity, and more) combine in real time with feelings of competence and confidence that form part of these appraisals.

While the original pyramid model (MacIntyre et al., 1998) provided an architecture for understanding the influences that can shape the situational assembly of L2 (i.e., Lx-only) WTC, it can be modified to better suit situations where communication can be assembled from a broader range of linguistic resources. While it is possible to explore relative levels of WTC for different languages over a longer time window (e.g., Henry et al., 2024), at the level of an actual communication event it would be wrong to think in terms of ‘Lx WTC’ and ‘Ly WTC’. As we have emphasised, WTC should be understood as a single system. Regardless of the number of languages, the *psychological experience* of being willing or unwilling to communicate does not vary. The feeling of being willing to communicate (or not) does not differ. Nor is it the case that different variables might be implicated in a multilingual communication event. As we have also emphasised, the perception of being willing or unwilling to communicate is influenced *by the same variables*. While WTC can fluctuate much more in multilingual communication, the factors that shape it are the same.

The difference between ‘Lx-only’ communication and ‘Lx + Ly’ or ‘Lx + Ly + Lz’ communication lies in the *scope* of the appraisal. There are more languages in the mix. In the same way that we should avoid talking about ‘Lx WTC’ and ‘Ly WTC’, we should not treat ‘Lx state communication self-confidence’ and ‘Ly state communication self-confidence’ as separate entities. Compartmentalisation of this sort runs counter to the construct’s ontological groundings. To express this idea in different terms, WTC variables are not *language-contingent*. Rather, they are *situation-contingent*.

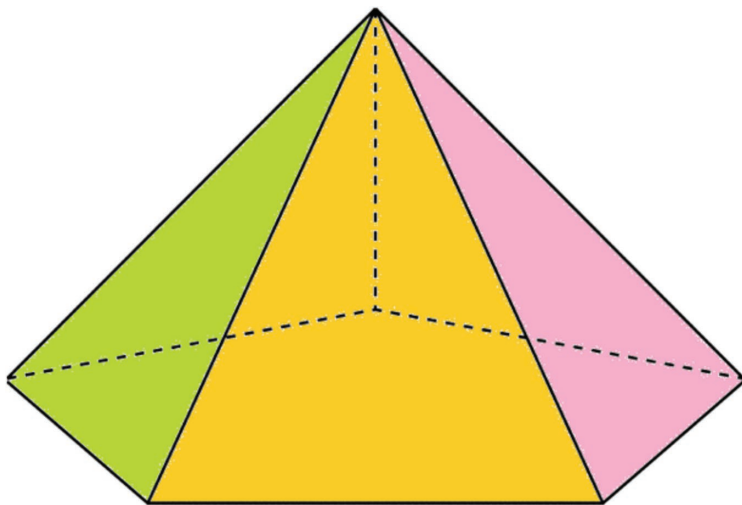


Figure 2.3 A transparent pentagonal (five-sided) pyramid.

In the same way that ‘desire to communicate with a specific person’ [box 3] relates to the situation at hand, so do perceptions of state communicative self-confidence [box 4], linguistic self-confidence [box 7], and communicative competence [box 10]. Just as in L2 WTC, the psychological experience of being willing to communicate depends on the circumstances of the interaction, not the languages in which it might take place.

The revised geometry of the 3D pyramid reflects this central idea. Languages that are available for communication in a particular situation – the person’s *situationally functional repertoire* – are represented as the pyramid’s visible faces. While the pyramid in Figure 2.2 is a tetrahedral representation (the third ‘L1’ side being hidden from view), there is no theoretical or geometrical limit to the number of languages or faces. Square (i.e., $L1 + Lx + Ly + Lz$) and pentagonal pyramids (i.e., $L1 + Lw + Lx + Ly + Lz$) are also possible (Figure 2.3).

Inner corridors

The second consideration influencing revision of the pyramid’s geometry involves the manner in which WTC is assembled. As we have explained, in a communication event where more than one language can be brought into play and where code-switching can be anticipated, experiences of feeling competent, confident, and willing to speak relate to the *situation*. To capture the sense that the variables implicated in WTC assembly can display the influence of the different languages in the situationally functional repertoire – feeling self-confident to communicate in the Lx , but less so in

the *Ly* – the interior of the 3D pyramid is conceptualised as comprising a series of internal ‘corridors’. These corridors provide conduits through which influences on WTC are channelled.

To appreciate the function of these conduits, it is important to first explain how assembly structures can be conceptualised in the original pyramid model. The WTC pyramid is comprised of 12 interconnected boxes containing relevant variables. Broadly considered, these variables can be understood as providing two pathways through which WTC is generally assembled. There is a LEFT-side pathway, and a RIGHT-side pathway. Along the LEFT-side pathway, communication readiness is shaped by factors that underlie the desire to communicate with a specific person, or a representative of a particular group. Here, the emergence of WTC is strongly influenced by intergroup-related factors. Along the RIGHT-side pathway, communication readiness is influenced by various intra-individual factors all the way up to current levels of confidence.

In the LEFT-side pathway, issues related to affiliation are central. Intergroup climate [box 11] feeds into intergroup attitudes [box 8], which, in turn, feeds into interpersonal attitudes and motivations [box 5]. A similar chain of influence can be seen in the RIGHT-side pathway. Here, personality contributes a basis for ways of developing communicative competence [box 10]. It shapes how a person acts (and reacts) across situations. Personality – and in particular how experiences are integrated and understood within the self – feeds into the assembly processes and is reflected in trait-like self-confidence [box 7], and in the specific instance, state communicative self-confidence [box 4].

However, this conceptualisation does not allow for the complexity of WTC assembly in communication events where use of more than one language is possible. In situations where code-switching and translanguaging can be anticipated, and when the individual can be in ‘multilingual mode’ (Dewaele, 2001), the notion of a ‘pathway’ does not adequately capture the influence of the *other* languages in the mix. With the geometry of the pyramid taking a 3D form, we need to think in terms of ‘corridors’.

In the 3D pyramid, assembly of WTC can be understood as shaped through conduits within its *interior*. Passing through the pyramid’s inner space, and linking both *levels* and *faces*, corridors can take vertical and horizontal routes. When taking a vertical route, a corridor will connect variables at the pyramid’s different layers. When taking a horizontal route, the ‘corridor’ will connect the influences that different languages can have on the same variables.

Like the LEFT- and RIGHT-side pathways of the 2D representation, the interior of the 3D pyramid is conceptualised as comprising LEFT- and RIGHT-side corridors. In the multilingual contexts that the 3D conceptualisation seeks to reflect, LEFT- and RIGHT-side corridors become

complexly interconnected. While changes would not be expected to occur in the pyramid's lowest layers (intergroup climate and personality), with each ascending level there is greater susceptibility to change as the factors become more variable. To the extent that language development is never completely finished, the corridors are always under construction.

In circumstances where communication can take place in two or more languages, and where code-switching is likely within a communication event, the notion of internal corridors can be valuable in understanding how WTC is an emergent property of complex interactions between *variables*, and the influences that different languages have *on* these variables. In our research on WTC in community contexts (Henry & MacIntyre, 2024a), participants often provided stories of communication events that involved combinations of Swedish and English. Analysing these stories, we could see how in some situations WTC was primarily influenced by *interpersonal* factors (attitudes and motivations). In these cases, WTC can be understood as emerging through corridors that primarily link LEFT-side variables. Equally, we could see how in other situations WTC was shaped by *personality-related* factors. Personality factors feed into perceptions of communicative competence, which, in turn, feed into self-confidence and state communicative self-confidence. In these cases, WTC can be understood as emerging through corridors primarily linking RIGHT-side variables. In both cases, multilingual communication means that corridors can be routed *vertically* (connecting variables at the pyramid's different layers) and *horizontally* (reflecting the influences that different languages have on these variables).

Assembly dynamics

In a communication episode where different languages can be used, assembly processes become more complex. Previously, we referred to the two-systems approach associated with CEST, and differences in 'thinking fast' and 'thinking slow' (MacIntyre, 2020). When there is apprehension that L_y communication might falter, and a switch to the L_x or to the L₁ (the hidden face of the 3D pyramid) might occur, 'thinking fast' is implicated.

In a remarkably short space of time, the assembly of WTC can undergo rapid change. On a moment-to-moment basis, system components can be realigned in different ways. As we have suggested, the dynamics of multilingual communication mean that changes can take place in the *variables* that are implicated, the influences that different languages can have *on* these variables, and the ways in which variables at different layers become *interconnected*. As changes take place in a communication event, the *routes* of the internal corridors will change. While some influences will come to the fore, others will recede into the background.

The ever-changing situational demands of multilingual communication are like bolts of energy coursing through the pyramid structure. In CEST terms, the reaction triggered by a reassembly can be a relatively good or bad vibe. With each change in assembly, a new pulse of energy will course through the structure, integrating what is currently happening at a particular moment with the lingering vibes from previous moments, energising the WTC system in new and sometimes different ways. In the 3D pyramid model, this is the beating heart of communication.

Stone foundations and shifting sands

Finally, it is important to recognise that even with the increased complexity of WTC assembly in multilingual circumstances, predictable patterns of communication can emerge. In our longitudinal research examining WTC in community contexts (Henry & MacIntyre, 2024a), we were able to identify communication events where rapid shifts in WTC were described, as well as predictable patterns of communication that were established in specific contexts, and within particular relationships. Even though WTC is uniquely assembled in each communication event, and while in multilingual circumstances (i.e., $L1 + Lx + Ly$) the likelihood for fluctuation is far greater than in a bilingual situation (i.e., $L1 + Lx$), the construction of WTC will often follow well-worn paths. This is also illustrated in the 3D rendering of the WTC pyramid.

As in the original pyramid (MacIntyre et al., 1998), the six layers of the 3D version are organised by time and breadth-of-concept. The influence of the stable and enduring variables located at the pyramid's base are unlikely to change much during a communication event. Setting the base upon which the communication system rests, these variables are less likely to bear the imprint of the languages that might be situationally functional. In the 3D pyramid, they are therefore combined to form a single foundational layer [boxes 11 and 12]. We might think of this bottom layer as made of stone.

Moving up the pyramid, the variables are more circumscribed. Influences on WTC can be exerted in certain situations (and not in others). Compared to the variables at the base, variables at the higher levels will be more susceptible to influences related to the languages in the situationally functional repertoire. To reflect these influences, divergences emerge in the colouring of the pyramid's faces. While the base has a uniform turquoise colouring, this develops into more differentiated shades of green and blue with each ascending layer. This represents how, at the lower levels, the variable may be largely unaffected by the influence of the language (Lx or Ly). Higher up however, the influence of the language on the variable is likely to increase and we see more distinct green and blue shades. As we have consistently emphasised, WTC is a perception that relates to

the *situation*, not the language. Thus, the change in shading represents how WTC can change as a result of influences that the language (Lx or Ly) can have on the variable. It gives recognition to circumstances where a learner might feel *motivated* to communicate in the Ly, but less so in the Lx (aware of the need to develop Ly skills), while at the same time feeling *confident* in the Lx, and less so in the Ly. If we are to think of the bottom layers as made of stone, we can understand how the upper layers consist of shifting sands.

The above description provides metaphors that can help guide research toward novel, multilingual questions. If WTC is conceptualised as a process of integrating information in a decision-making process, then more studies are needed to describe *how* this decision is made, both on the fly and more deliberately as the learner contemplates their approach to language use (MacIntyre et al., 2020). These studies may be experimental in nature, systematically varying relevant attributes of the communication event to see how they exert influence on WTC. They may also take a cross-sectional approach, for example by using narratives that are embedded in survey research. Further, the arguments above point to a pressing need to conduct research to understand how individuals navigate social situations in multilingual circumstances. This can involve both N-of-1 studies (e.g., Henry et al., 2024a, 2024b), as well as use of qualitative longitudinal methods to track changes in people's experiences of WTC during periods of transition (Henry & MacIntyre, 2024b). Finally, the detailed analysis of specific communication events offered by the idiodynamic method can further shed light on the moment-to-moment fluctuations in the various factors that influence WTC – both common and idiosyncratic, typical and unusual – as their relationships change over time (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2021).

Conclusion

In PLL, strides towards the adoption of multilingual perspectives are being made. However, focus is heavily weighted to learners' orientations to multilingualism (e.g., attitudes, identities, and motivation). Given that research on multilingualism is properly directed to phenomena that emerge in multilingual language use (Sridhar & Sridhar, 2018), greater engagement with the psychology of multilingual communication is needed. This, in turn, requires engagement with language ontologies, and the effects that essentialist and non-essentialist standpoints have on research designs (Ortega, 2018).

In this chapter, we have argued that because WTC offers an account of communication readiness as a state of constant flux (MacIntyre, 2007), the conceptualisation of languages as interacting components of an open and adaptive system does not require a shift in ontological perspective. Rather, innovation involves accounting for the influences of languages on the variables that comprise the WTC construct, and from which the

psychological experience of being willing or unwilling to communicate is situationally assembled.

In PLL, disciplinary traditions mean that ontologies have been largely unquestioned. While a commitment to quality (Plonsky, 2024) has been receiving increasing attention, a preoccupation with methodological concerns can favour designs which embody essentialist perspectives. Ontological assumption checking can be just as important as methodological assumption checking (Henry & Liu, 2025). In continuing to develop understandings of the complex psychology of multilingual language learning, it is important to recognise the blind spots connected with essentialist positions. By shedding light on the non-essentialist thinking which underpins the WTC construct, we hope that the ideas developed in this chapter will encourage engagement with ontological assumptions in PLL research and, through such engagements, facilitate study design in ways that can support the field's continued growth.

Funding acknowledgement

This research was supported by funding received from the programme Transdisciplinary Approaches to Learning, Acquisition, Multilingualism (TEAM) funded by Riksbankens Jubileumsfond (grant M23–0052). This support is gratefully acknowledged.

References

- Ajzen, I., & Fishbein, M. (1980). *Understanding attitudes and predicting social behavior*. Prentice-Hall.
- Ayres-Bennett, W., & Fisher, L. (Eds.). (2022). *Multilingualism and identity: Interdisciplinary perspectives*. Cambridge University Press.
- Cenoz, J., & Gorter, D. (2019). Multilingualism, translanguaging, and minority languages in SLA. *The Modern Language Journal*, 103, 130–135. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12529>
- Conteh, J., & Meier, G. (Eds.). (2014). *The multilingual turn in languages education: Opportunities and challenges*. Multilingual Matters.
- Dewaele, J.-M. (2001). Activation or inhibition? The interaction of L1, L2 and L3 on the language mode continuum. In J. Cenoz, B. Hufeisen & U. Jessner (Eds.), *Cross-linguistic influence in third language acquisition: Psycholinguistic perspectives* (pp. 69–89). Multilingual Matters.
- Epstein, S. (1991). Cognitive-experiential self-theory: An integrative theory of personality. In R. C. Curtis (Ed.), *The relational self: Theoretical convergences in psychoanalysis and social psychology* (pp. 111–137). Guilford Press.
- Epstein, S. (1994). Integration of the cognitive and the psychodynamic unconscious. *American Psychologist*, 49, 709–724. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/0003-066X.49.8.709>

- Epstein, S., Pacini, R., Denes-Raj, V., & Heier, H. (1996). Individual differences in intuitive-experiential and analytical-rational thinking styles. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 71(2), 390–405.
- Fisher, L., Evans, M., Forbes, K., Gayton, A., & Liu, Y. (2020). Participative multilingual identity construction in the languages classroom: A multi-theoretical conceptualisation. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 17(4), 448–466. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2018.1524896>
- Frankish, K. (2010). Dual-process and dual-system theories of reasoning. *Philosophy Compass*, 5, 914–926. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-9991.2010.00330.x>
- Grosjean, F. (1998). Studying bilinguals: Methodological and conceptual issues. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, 1(2), 131–149. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S136672899800025X>
- Grosjean, F. (2015). Bicultural bilinguals. *International Journal of Bilingualism*, 19(5), 572–586. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367006914526297>
- Henry, A. (2017). L2 motivation and multilingual identities. *The Modern Language Journal*, 101(3), 548–565. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12412>
- Henry, A. (2023). Multilingualism and persistence in multiple language learning. *The Modern Language Journal*, 107(1), 183–201. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12826>
- Henry, A. (2024). Language learning motivation and the multilingual turn. In A. Hajar & S. A. Manan (Eds.), *Multilingual selves and motivations for learning languages other than English in Asian contexts* (pp. 13–32). Multilingual Matters.
- Henry, A., & Liu, M. (2025). Ontology and social influence in language learning psychology: A theoretical review through the lens of dialogical self theory. *Journal of Constructivist Psychology*, 1–26. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10720537.2025.2595648>
- Henry, A., & MacIntyre, P. D. (2024a). *Willingness to communicate, multilingualism and interactions in community contexts*. Multilingual Matters.
- Henry, A., & MacIntyre, P. D. (2024b). Keeping in time: The design of qualitative longitudinal research in SLA. *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics*, 3(1), 100102. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rmal.2024.100102>
- Henry, A., Thorsen, C., & MacIntyre, P. D. (2024a). Willingness to communicate in a multilingual context: Part one, a time-serial study of developmental dynamics. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 45(4), 937–956. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2021.1931248>
- Henry, A., Thorsen, C., & MacIntyre, P. D. (2024b). Willingness to communicate in a multilingual context: Part two, person-context dynamics. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 45(4), 1033–1048. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2021.1935975>
- Kahneman, D. (2011). *Thinking, fast and slow*. Anchor Canada.
- MacIntyre, P. D. (2007). Willingness to communicate in the second language: Understanding the decision to speak as a volitional process. *The Modern Language Journal*, 91, 564–576. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.2007.00623.x>
- MacIntyre, P. D. (2020). Expanding the theoretical base for the dynamics of willingness to communicate. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 10(1), 111–131. <https://doi.org/10.14746/sslt.2020.10.1.6>
- MacIntyre, P. D., & Ayers-Glassey, S. (2020). Competence appraisals: Dynamic judgements of communication competence in real time. In W. Lowie, M. Michel,

- A. Rousse-Malpat, M. Keijzer, & R. Steinkrauss (Eds.), *Usage based dynamics in second language development: In celebration of Marjolijn Verspoor* (pp. 155–175). Multilingual Matters.
- MacIntyre, P. D., Clément, R., Dörnyei, Z., & Noels, K. A. (1998). Conceptualizing willingness to communicate in a L2: A situational model of L2 confidence and affiliation. *Modern Language Journal*, 82, 545–562. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1998.tb05543.x>
- MacIntyre, P. D., & Ducker, N. (2022). The idiodynamic method: A practical guide for researchers. *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics*, 1(2), 100007. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rmal.2022.100007>
- MacIntyre, P. D., & Gregersen, T. (2021). The idiodynamic method: Willingness to communicate and anxiety processes interacting in real time. *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, 60(1), 67–84. <https://doi.org/10.1515/iralt-2021-0024>
- MacIntyre, P. D., & Legatto, J. (2011). A dynamic system approach to willingness to communicate: Developing an idiodynamic method to capture rapidly changing affect. *Applied Linguistics*, 32(2), 149–171. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amq037>
- MacIntyre, P. D., Wang, L., & Khajavy, G. H. (2020). Thinking fast and slow about willingness to communicate: A two-systems view. *Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 6(3), 443–458. <https://doi.org/10.32601/ejal.834681>
- May, S. (Ed.). (2014). *The multilingual turn: Implications for SLA, TESOL, and bilingual education*. Routledge.
- McCroskey, J. C., & Baer, J. E. (1985). Willingness to communicate: The construct and its measurement. Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the Speech Communication Association. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01463379209369817>
- McCroskey, J. C., & Richmond, V. P. (1991). Willingness to communicate: A cognitive view. In M. Booth-Butterfield (Ed.), *Communication, cognition, and anxiety* (pp. 19–37). Sage.
- Melo-Pfeifer, S. (2018). The multilingual turn in foreign language education. In A. Bonnet & P. Siemund (Eds.), *Foreign language education in multilingual classrooms* (pp. 191–212). John Benjamins.
- Ortega, L. (2018). Ontologies of language, second language acquisition, and world Englishes. *World Englishes*, 37(1), 64–79. <https://doi.org/10.1111/weng.12303>
- Pennycook, A., & Makoni, S. (2020). *Innovations and challenges in applied linguistics from the global south*. Routledge.
- Plonsky, L. (2024). Study quality as an intellectual and ethical imperative: A proposed framework. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190524000059>
- Sridhar, S. N., & Sridhar, K. K. (2018). Mixing, multilingualism, and intelligibility. *World Englishes*, 37(3), 511–522. <https://doi.org/10.1111/weng.12340>
- Ushioda, E. (2017). The impact of global English on motivation to learn other languages: Toward an ideal multilingual self. *The Modern Language Journal*, 101(3), 469–482. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12413>
- Ushioda, E. (2023). Why we do language education research: Reflecting on academic and social values. *JACET Kansai Journal*, 25, 31–39.

3 Negotiating identities, navigating speaking

A longitudinal study of Japanese students' multilingual fluctuations during a European study abroad

*Simon Humphries, Jim King,
Jean-Marc Dewaele, and Tomoko Yashima*

Introduction

In their introduction to this book, the editors describe the growing recognition of linguistically diverse classrooms, which has led to a research turn. In light of this, there is greater acknowledgement that multilingual users do not need perfect mastery of two or more distinct languages in order to access and use their integrated linguistic repertoires (Sulis et al., 2026). In contrast, the pace of change seems slower in the Japanese context. Many Japanese consider their country monolingual (Turnbull, 2020), and foreign language study tends to be limited to English (Takahashi, 2022). In English classes, the test-driven *yakudoku* grammar-translation teaching approach encourages an avoidance of mistakes (Humphries & Burns, 2015), and learners have limited L2 speaking opportunities inside and outside the classroom (Takahashi, 2022). These factors may dampen students' enthusiasm for using English communicatively, and silence has been observed widely even when speaking opportunities arise (King, 2013; Yashima, 2021). A question arises as to whether a different picture may emerge among the limited number of Japanese learners of languages other than English (LOTEs).

While remaining silent in a foreign language classroom is possible, it is more challenging during study abroad (SA), where communication is crucial for survival. As sojourners face new experiences, SA can trigger changes in perspectives and mindsets (Humphries et al., 2023a). However, most studies have focused on short sojourns (one semester or less) and ignored the lasting effects post-SA. The current study focuses on two students whose English-speaking proficiency improved exceptionally during SA in France and Germany. We seek to understand their perceptions of factors hindering and supporting their abilities to speak in English and their L3LOTE before, during and after SA.

The WTC-speaking disconnect

MacIntyre et al. (1998) developed a heuristic pyramid model that combines internal factors (such as motivation and self-confidence) with situational factors (such as the desire to communicate (DC) with a specific person) to produce L2 willingness to communicate (WTC). They define WTC as the “readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons using a L2” (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 547). As Henry and MacIntyre (2026) noted in their chapter of this book, the pyramid model has stood the test of time due to its capacity to accommodate innovation, and they have adapted it into a 3D model for users of three or more languages. However, a weak correlation seems to exist between speaking out and WTC for East Asian learners because many participants remain silent during moments of high perceived WTC in Japan (Ducker, 2022; Yashima, 2021) and China (Peng, 2020). Wen and Clément (2003) argue that the original pyramid model was based on research in the Western context. For example, the left-side pathway of the WTC pyramid centres on affiliation (intergroup climate, intergroup attitudes, interpersonal/intergroup motivation, and DC with a specific person); however, East Asian sociocultural values, such as respect for authority and group harmony over individual expression, may negate these left-side WTC factors. Wen and Clément (2003) claim that the DC and WTC, which are proximate in the original model, should be separated by intervening cognitive and affective factors. They explain that quiet Chinese students might experience DC but feel overwhelmed by their traditional social values, such as the fear of losing face, which undermines their WTC.

Similar cultural values can also be seen among Japanese learners (Nakane, 2007), and the volition implied in foreign language WTC may be weak compared to factors causing silence. In the education system, students tend to regard grammar-translation examination practice as real study (Sakui, 2004). This form-focused approach tends to be demotivating (Falout et al., 2009) and can encourage concern about making mistakes that stymies action (Dewaele, 2017). Foreign language-speaking reticence seems prevalent, as reported by King (2013). After an extensive observational study encompassing 48 hours across nine Japanese universities, he discovered that student-initiated talk only represented 0.24% of class time. Five conceptions of silence emerged related to teacher-centred instruction, confusion, disengagement, non-verbal activities and, most importantly, hypersensitivity to others (King, 2013). This hypersensitivity to others causes learners to monitor their utterances to avoid standing out or causing discomfort for their interlocutors.

In addition to the factors described above undermining Japanese students’ WTC, there seems to be a lack of evidence that WTC can predict actual language use in real time (Peng, 2022). Cao and Philp (2006)

found no significant relationship between reported WTC and observed behaviours among eight ESL participants in a four-week study in New Zealand. Moreover, studies by MacIntyre and Legatto (2011) and Ducker (2022) used the idiodynamic method, where participants watched recordings of their L2 speaking activities and used software to rate their moment-to-moment WTC. After examining with a Pearson correlation for a relationship between situated WTC and speaking output, the researchers reported the results as “weak” (Ducker, 2022, p. 225) and “a near-zero correlation” (MacIntyre & Legatto, 2011, p. 156). Ducker (2022) noted the importance of “compulsion to talk (when negative WTC coincides with talk) or enforced silences (when aroused WTC is suppressed for various reasons)” (p. 253) that has gone understudied.

While the WTC model has provided valuable insights into factors influencing the intention or readiness of a foreign language user to initiate communication, its explanatory power appears limited in moments where cultural and situational constraints override communicative intent. Therefore, our study employed the perceived capacity to speak (CTS) concept, which is designed to capture learners’ real-time judgements about their ability to speak in specific moments. The following section defines the concept and proposes a hypothetical model.

Perceived capacity to speak theoretical framework

Humphries et al. (2015) proposed the CTS concept to understand classroom silence among Japanese students. They noted that abstract communication-oriented motivational factors to speak might feel weak among students taking compulsory English classes. Instead, student effort may be directed towards form-focused preparation for high-stakes lexicogrammatical exams. The authors defined CTS as “students’ perceptions of their abilities to speak under various classroom situations” (p. 165). In later studies and the current study, this concept has been extended beyond the classroom, yet it maintains a key distinction from WTC. While WTC examines dispositions towards communication (including written communication), it does not fully account for the judgements made at the moment of speaking or silence. The CTS construct addresses this gap by capturing a real-time synthesis of internal and external factors that determine whether a learner feels they can speak in a given moment. This concept is useful for explaining silence among learners who might otherwise be motivated or confident.

While earlier studies collected students’ voices (Humphries et al., 2015), tested the construct using structural equation modelling (Humphries et al., 2020) and explored fluctuations longitudinally (Humphries et al., 2023a, 2023b), they did not model a framework for visualising the factors influencing CTS.

In Figure 3.1, we propose four bidirectional layers to hypothesise the psychological CTS factors influencing moments of speech or silence. It is a dynamic system (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008) where perceived changes in any layer influence perceptions of past and future experiences. The highest layer is the perceived moment of speaking or silence. This is presented as a binary construct for simplicity, but in reality, there will be a wider range of communicative behaviours such as minimal responses and non-verbal cues. The second layer is the core perceived CTS concept, represented as a narrow diamond with ruler-like intervals. The intervals show a continuum representing the degree to which an individual feels they can or cannot speak in a given moment. This layer represents the executive function, where the individual is aware of their speaking output and decision to speak. It also represents changes or continuations in this dynamic system, such as decisions to stop or continue speaking. The third layer contains three interdependent situational factors: state self-confidence, perceived situation and supportive/evaluative perceived others. The final fourth layer comprises trait-like enduring factors such as sociocultural values, experience, personality traits and neurodevelopmental disorders. The components of the third and fourth layers are described in more detail below.

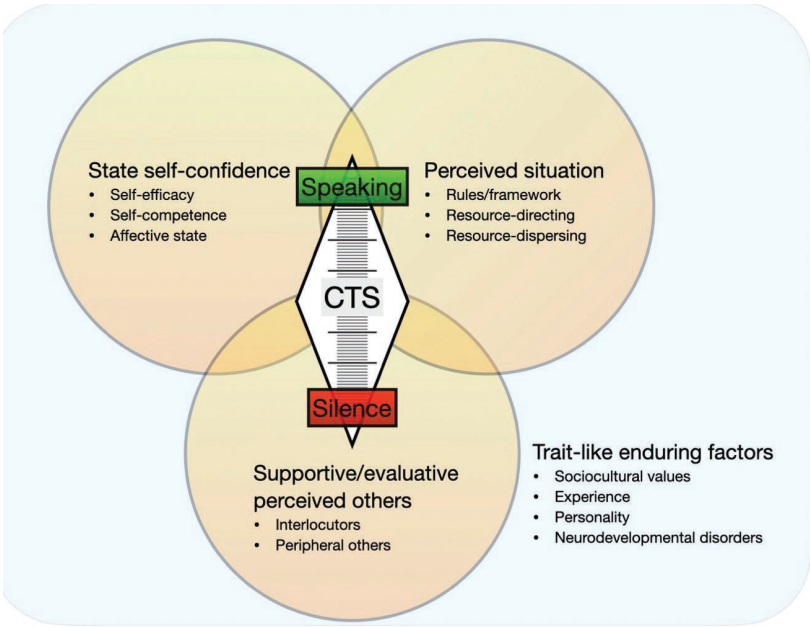


Figure 3.1 Perceived capacity to speak (CTS) construct.

The state self-confidence component of the third layer encompasses the learner-internal self-appraisal of cognitive and affective factors that interact with CTS. We divide this into three main interconnected subcategories. Firstly, based on the theory proposed by Bandura (1977), self-efficacy comprises an individual's confidence that they can successfully perform the speaking activity in a foreign language. It is task-specific, such as a person's belief that they can give a presentation. Secondly, a speaker's foreign language self-competence refers to their perception that they have the linguistic ability to comprehend when listening to their interlocutors and/or produce language. Thirdly, the speaker's affective state. A speaker's attitude to communication can be influenced by their enjoyment or anxiety, which can be experienced simultaneously, fluctuating in the moment in "different shades and flavours" (Dewaele & Pavelescu, 2019, p. 76).

We divide the perceived situation into three components. Firstly, Humphries et al. (2015) noted the importance of the perceived rules and framework. In a classroom or real-world exchange, it is easier for an individual to speak when they understand how they are expected to perform at that moment. The remaining two components relate to the cognitive demands. Robinson (2005) distinguishes two dimensions of intrinsic complexity regarding language classroom activities: resource-directing and resource-dispersing. Resource-directing dimensions encompass the complexity and conceptual demands that are met by the linguistic system. In contrast, resource-dispersing dimensions such as prior knowledge and preparation time "do not direct learners to any aspect of language code" (Robinson, 2005, p. 7).

As outlined earlier, the Japanese hypersensitivity to perceived others could be one of the strongest factors leading to silence (King, 2013). Japanese tend to be high-context communicators due to their strong shared culture as an island country with a long history and low immigration (Meyer, 2016). Socially aware participants can *kuki yomeru* (read the air) before speaking, whereas *kuki yomenai* (cannot read the air) individuals are called "KY" for speaking out without considering the feelings of others. This pressure to read the air encourages people to pause and consider "peripheral others" who may be in earshot in addition to the direct interlocutors. Working within a situated WTC framework, Kang (2005) suggests interlocutor influences such as L1 (same or different), familiarity, number, interest/attitude/response, and relative L2 proficiency. Within the CTS framework, the overriding factors are whether the interlocutors and peripheral others are perceived as supportive or evaluative. Supportive perceived others can facilitate CTS by listening patiently, giving positive non-verbal cues and linguistic aid. Conversely, unsupportive perceived others may appear impatient and cause reduced CTS by interrupting or ignoring. Evaluative perceived others may dampen CTS by appearing to negatively assess their proficiency, knowledge or personality.

The fourth layer comprises four indirect trait-like variables that can combine to develop an enduring CTS self-identity. Firstly, as described earlier, sociocultural values such as face-saving and concern for others may cause unwillingness to speak (Nakane, 2007; Wen & Clément, 2003). Secondly, experience of previous foreign language successes/failures can influence the perception of current and future performance (Falout, 2016). Thirdly, the big five personality traits, including extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability and openness to new experiences, contribute to trait L2 WTC (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996) and can be expected to influence CTS indirectly. Fourthly, although neurodevelopmental disorders have been under-researched in relation to speaking foreign languages, they can influence CTS. For example, impulsive ADHD tendencies can reduce the monitoring inhibitions (Köder et al., 2024) that are common among Japanese, leading to increased CTS. In contrast, people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), selective mutism or social anxiety disorders can struggle with social interactions that may be exacerbated in a foreign language, leading to decreased CTS.

Microgenetic and ontogenetic timescales

Influenced by the work of Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008) into complex dynamic systems theory (CDST), there has been a dynamic turn in foreign language research that deemphasises traits in favour of a focus on the psychological states that emerge in response to the influence of the context (Henry & MacIntyre, 2023). However, trait-based and dynamic approaches should not be mutually exclusive; instead, they can offer insights from different timescales (MacIntyre, 2020; Yashima, 2021). Yashima (2021) suggested combining the microgenetic timescale, focused on short-term situated factors, with the ontogenetic timescale for enduring trait-like dimensions. In their 12-week-long classroom study, Yashima's research team found that individuals' trait-like anxiety measures correlated with the averages of their situated anxiety. It could imply that trait (ontogenetic) tendencies influenced situated microgenetic changes, and conversely, repeated microgenetic behaviours may lead to long-term ontogenetic changes. However, the study would need to be conducted for a more extended period to test this theory. Referring to Cognitive Experiential Self Theory (CEST; Epstein, 1994), MacIntyre (2020) suggested that researchers need to study both the "rational" (contemplative, logical and deliberative) and "experiential" (intuitive, affective and action-oriented) systems. The "rational" system favours ontogenetic trait-level measures such as surveys, whereas microgenetic experiences reported in idiodynamic and qualitative reports can reflect "experiential" thinking. Combining dynamic and trait approaches can give a comprehensive account

of change and stability in communication. Most dynamic research has concentrated on shorter timescales in classrooms and laboratory settings, but more research is necessary into target language-speaking attitudes over longer timescales and the combinations of factors that may stimulate change, including speech events outside the classroom (Henry & MacIntyre, 2023). SA provides a rich environment for exploring CTS across different timescales.

Study abroad speaking challenges

Language learners studying abroad often face speaking challenges such as managing anxiety in spontaneous conversations and adapting to local accents, slang and idiomatic expressions. These problems may arise more with monolingual L1 interlocutors who lack empathy for and awareness of these L2 speaking issues. In two longitudinal SA studies about Japanese students who sojourned for academic years in the USA and the UK, trends emerged where their English CTS was higher with international students compared to with monolingual locals (Humphries et al., 2023a, 2023b). They faced dynamic fluctuations in their CTS before and during SA, but after SA, their CTS tended to stabilise at a slightly lower level than their sojourn's peak, indicating that they had settled in their comfort zones but seemed to need more opportunities to speak English. Interestingly, one participant ("Kumi") who had struggled to communicate with L1 English users in the UK found increased CTS with British international dorm residents post-SA. Her identity had changed from feeling like a deficient outsider in England to becoming popular with British sojourners who praised her English and her affiliation as they struggled to adapt in Japan.

LOTE challenges

A multilingual turn in applied linguistics has shifted from examining separate, isolated languages (usually English) to recognising the complex interconnections between the various languages in learners' repertoires (Cenoz & Gorter, 2019). Early studies in the European context noted learners' cognitive struggles stemming from cross-linguistic interaction between multiple languages, often leading to bilingual preferences for their L2 (usually English) and L1 (Henry, 2017). In contrast, a more nuanced picture emerged in Asia, where learners sometimes felt a closer proximity to other Asian languages and cultures than to L2 English (Bui & Teng, 2019). Multilingual learning and use are dynamic and fluid, laden with emotional and social influences shaped by experiences (Cenoz & Gorter, 2019), which imply the benefits of learner-centred longitudinal studies.

In two longitudinal studies of Japanese students in Taiwan, the participants faced difficulties mastering two additional languages. Fukui and Yashima (2021) noted that the repeated microgenetic feelings provoked a longer-term mesogenetic experience of struggling to learn both English and Chinese. They hypothesised that this experience had the potential to develop into an ontogenetic belief that learning two languages is impossible. In a study by Humphries and Yashima (2021), one participant (“Naoki”) lost his passion for English and even claimed to forget Japanese during his Chinese language immersion. After SA, he changed his major to his L3. Different dynamics arose from the four participants across the two studies. “Satomi” struggled socially, causing her to retreat to Japanese social networking sites; in contrast, “Haruka” joined a group of Thai students and dated one of them, using Chinese together supplemented with English (Fukui & Yashima, 2021). According to the study by Humphries and Yashima (2021), “Oji” socialised in English with international friends and seemed relaxed with limited Chinese. Naoki joined an English-speaking society with local students, where English was used in discussions and presentations, but Chinese was used socially; therefore, English was a gateway to L3 use. Although these studies offer insight into Japanese students in East Asia, there has been a lack of research on Japanese sojourners in the European LOTE context, where the L2 is closer to the L3 than the L1.

Henry and MacIntyre (2023) tracked changes in LOTE WTC by following the lives of female migrants in Sweden as they attempted to transition from L2 English to L3 Swedish. For example, the authors explored how participants with translanguaging ideologies (e.g. “Kesu” and “Pranisha”) used English as a contact language to support Swedish interactions. These participants felt less anxiety as they were accustomed to switching between languages to support effective communication. In contrast, those with a deficit ideology (e.g. “Maria”) held beliefs that positioned them as imperfect foreign language users and that they needed to conform to the norms of L1 communication as closely as possible to be considered competent. Some participants (e.g. “Olivia”) felt comfortable in English-speaking international friendship communities, but this restricted Swedish-speaking opportunities. Other participants (e.g. “Titly” and “Jessie”) had “weak tie” encounters in public “third places” like leisure centres, with low emotional commitment, helping their WTC. Moreover, an individual psychological strategy to prepare for appointments was “self-talk,” where the participant (“Wafaa”) practised dialogues in her mind. Henry and MacIntyre’s work highlights the complex challenges for adapting to an L3LOTE context that may resonate with SA sojourners who begin with low proficiency in the local language but stronger L2 English.

The qualitative longitudinal (QL) approach used by Henry and MacIntyre (2023) captured a moment of change (arriving in a new country)

and followed the participants' L3LOTE WTC fluctuations and stabilising tendencies as they attempted to settle in their new homes. However, trajectories may differ for SA sojourners in LOTE contexts who are aware of their limited time overseas. Furthermore, after returning from SA, the context changes and priorities shift, which can lead to new trajectories in speaking attitudes. As far as we know, no LOTE studies have focused on Japanese participants sojourning in Europe that track their speaking attitudes longitudinally from before SA through 12 months after they return.

As mentioned earlier, for Japanese students, the volition implied in the WTC model from the DC may be weak compared to situational and cultural forces inhibiting the ability to speak out. Some studies focused on CTS to mitigate this problem, but only examined L2 English. To fill this gap, we investigated Japanese learners' CTS for both L2 English and their L3LOTEs by asking about situations when they felt they could and could not speak their foreign languages, using the following research question:

For Japanese English majors who spent an academic year in Germany and France, how did their CTS perceptions of L2 English and L3LOTE evolve before, during, and after SA?

This research question incorporated the following sub-questions: (a) To what extent could L2 CTS experiences explain changes in English-speaking proficiency? (b) How would the L3LOTE CTS develop in comparison to English CTS? (c) Could rational, stable ontogenetic systems emerge from the experiential microgenetic fluctuations?

Methods

Participants and context

We collected speaking proficiency data using the Telephone Standard Speaking Test (TSST; ALC, n.d.) from 157 English majors attending a large private university who participated in a compulsory sophomore SA year. Most students chose anglophone destinations, but the five volunteers for our qualitative study sojourned in their L3 countries on a dual-language SA (DLSA) programme in France or Germany.

These DLSA programmes had several features. Firstly, from high school, candidates could select an Admissions Office (AO) DLSA interview to guarantee a place at the home and host universities before other candidates took the regular Home University entrance examination. Secondly, they took English immersion classes during their freshman year, supplemented with approximately 100 contact hours of beginner L3 classes. Their DLSA

Table 3.1 Participants' English-speaking proficiency before and after SA

	<i>TSST rank</i> (<i>n</i> = 157)	<i>Pre-SA</i> <i>score</i>	<i>Post-SA</i> <i>score</i>	<i>Change %</i>	<i>Pre-SA</i> <i>CEFR</i>	<i>Post-SA</i> <i>CEFR</i>
Erin	2	635	940	48	High B1	C1/C2
Yukiko	6	545	850	56	Low B1	High B2
Anglo SA mean ^a		504	611	21	Low B1	High B1
DLSA mean ^b		545	622	14	Low B1	High B1
DLSA mean ^c		540	590	9	Low B1	Low B1

Notes: ^aIncludes students from all anglophone SA destinations (North America, Oceania and the UK); ^bIncludes all students from DLSA destinations (Germany, France, South Korea and Taiwan); ^cErin and Yukiko excluded from the DLSA mean.

aligned with the Japanese academic year, starting in April. They studied a mixture of courses:

- 1 Tailor-made orientation (in English, only DLSA students, in the spring in France),
- 2 English as a medium of instruction (EMI) undergraduate content (with local students),
- 3 L3 skills (with international students), and
- 4 An international summer school (ISS) learning local language and culture (in English with international students).

After SA, they had only one compulsory English immersion class and one L3 class per week as they took specialised courses, usually taught in Japanese.

We assessed participants' TSST English-speaking proficiency compared to the whole cohort before and after SA. Among the DLSA volunteers for this study, Erin and Yukiko (pseudonyms) outperformed most peers, including sojourners from anglophone countries (Table 3.1). Post-SA, Erin ranked second and Yukiko sixth out of the entire cohort of 157 students. Moreover, by increasing 48% (Erin) and 56% (Yukiko), they surpassed the mean increases for anglophone students (21%) and other DLSA students (9%). Therefore, we selected these two exceptional students to explore their CTS fluctuations for both languages before, during and after SA. Both participants were Japanese females. Erin went to Germany, while Yukiko studied in France.

Data collection

We contacted students who had selected DLSA destinations and shared a link for an initial open-response questionnaire. This survey asked them in Japanese about their English CTS and their motivation and

worries about studying in an L3 country. The first author interviewed the participants three times: (a) in March 2022, pre-departure; (b) in late August 2022, mid-SA; and (c) in January 2024, post-SA. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. The first interview developed from the initial survey, allowing participants to share their hopes/concerns. The second and third interviews explored CTS data from monthly online journals and retrospective timeline graphs. In their monthly journals, students recalled moments of high and low CTS in English and their L3. We encouraged them to write about their interlocutors, location, feelings and reasons. Before each interview, they sketched monthly CTS fluctuations for both languages using the retrospective timeline graphs. The x-axis represented time. Apart from the initial two points representing their first two pre-SA semesters, the x-axis scale was measured in monthly increments from March 2022 (pre-SA) until January 2024 (approximately one year after SA). The y-axis illustrated CTS from negative “cannot speak out (silent)” to positive “can speak out well.” The participants were told that zero represented low CTS, when they “could occasionally speak out.” These graphs do not aim to measure verifiable past experiences objectively; instead, they provide thumbnail sketches of past fluctuations that need to be developed into fuller portraits through interviews (Falout, 2016). The process allowed participants to derive meaning from their past in relation to their identities and provided a visual structure for the interviewer to investigate perceived causes of high, low, and changing CTS (Humphries et al., 2023a). During the interviews and journal writing, the learners could use English, Japanese, and their L3. However, apart from the initial questionnaire, most communication took place in English.

Data analysis

Within the QL analytical framework, we conducted comparisons within-case diachronically through time and across-case synchronically to explore developmental dynamics (Henry & MacIntyre, 2024). The iterative-inductive constant comparison memo-writing approach (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) guided the data collection and analysis. This approach enabled us to break down the data into manageable pieces, with each piece compared for similarities and differences. Recurring themes in journals, such as incidents of participants’ daily struggles to speak in the L3 target language with service staff in shops and cafes, helped us to capture feelings on the experiential microgenetic timescale (MacIntyre, 2020; Yashima, 2021). Subsequently, the interviews and timeline graphs could explore participants’ underlying reasons on the rational ontogenetic timescale (MacIntyre, 2020; Yashima, 2021). For example, they explained feelings of stress and shame mixed with anger and frustration as they perceived that many service staff interlocutors

demonstrated impatience or mockery when switching from the local L3 to English. Crucially, the longitudinal aspect of the timeline graphs helped us explore the stability of each participant’s perceptions as they reflected on and adapted to their social, cultural and linguistic challenges. In sum, it was an ongoing process, and as patterns emerged, we guarded against biases and assumptions by double-checking our interpretations against incoming data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

In addition to the extensive engagement and triangulation described above, we reinforced the credibility of the data collection and analysis through participant validation and peer debriefing (Rallis & Rossman, 2009). Erin and Yukiko read the final pre-publication results and confirmed that our description reflected their perspectives. Moreover, all four authors critically checked that the process was robust and agreed that the analysis reflected the participants’ beliefs.

Results

Yukiko

Yukiko’s graph (Figure 3.2) indicated negative CTS for both languages before SA, followed by upward trajectories during her sojourn. Her English CTS peaked at the end of SA, corresponding with her excellent TSST result, then declined steadily. In contrast, her French CTS

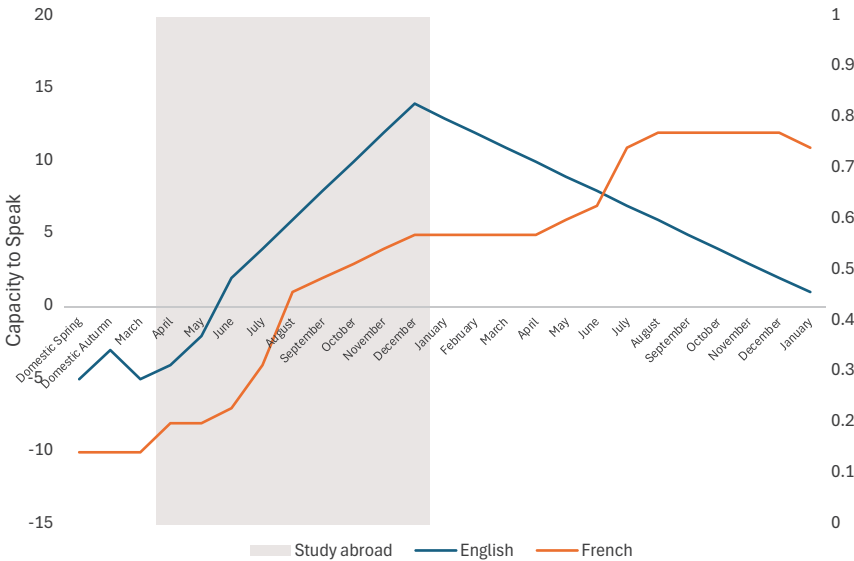


Figure 3.2 Yukiko’s CTS graph.

remained steady post-SA and then increased, surpassing English at the end of her first semester back in Japan.

Pre-SA

Yukiko entered Home University using the AO DLSA interview rather than the competitive general exam because she lacked confidence in her English after failing a high school entrance exam. Despite being locked into studying in France in her second year, she only knew French greetings, *bonjour* or *bonsoir*, before entering university.

Due to Yukiko's limited French knowledge, her L3 CTS was negative. She also felt that her English CTS was low as she lacked specialist knowledge and vocabulary to express herself. Yukiko used solitary self-talk, entering "the zone" for "thinking in English" by imagining scenarios to compensate for the lack of opportunities: "I pretend like there is a friend and simulate conversations" (Interview 1). Yukiko returned to describing this strategy in Interview 3, describing herself as "introverted."

When asked about her feelings about studying two languages, Yukiko described the linguistic proximity between her two European languages in contrast to her L1. Therefore, despite her limited French knowledge and introverted feelings, she showed optimism that her L3 CTS might improve through support from her L2 knowledge: "There is a connection between English and French ... so it's easier to learn in French" (Interview 1).

During SA

Initially, Yukiko's CTS was low for both languages, as her cohort began with tailored classes, "we couldn't see any French students" (Interview 2). She gained opportunities to improve her foreign language CTS when she joined ISS with international students; however, she faced challenges understanding anglophone classmates, damaging her L2 CTS because "they speak very fast and use difficult or academic words" (Journal, June). A key classroom turning point for boosting Yukiko's English CTS occurred when she needed to give a presentation after limited preparation time and with no script: "When I was in Japan, I tried to memorize every single word so I felt like I grew up" (Journal, June).

Socially, Yukiko's English CTS increased in two phases. Firstly, she built confidence with her French boyfriend (Marc) in the spring and summer, and secondly, she expanded her linguistic repertoire with three friends from South Korea (Yujin), Taiwan (Wenli), and France (Vanessa). Marc studied Japanese, so they interacted in their shared L2 with some translanguaging: "We mainly talk in English ... but sometimes we ask each other ... questions in Japanese and French" (Interview 2). Yukiko described Marc's English as "kind of broke" (Interview 3). Still, she sometimes felt inferior to him when

they communicated due to the proximity between his L1 and their shared L2, which could cause distress. Yukiko described a moment when she struggled with linguistic nuance due to the gap between Japanese and English:

I argued with [Marc] ... I made mistakes in choosing words, and I hurt my friend. French and English have similar words, so my friend really understands the meaning. But for me, it's not easy to pick an appropriate word from some words that have the same translation.

(Journal, August)

Despite some miscommunications, their time together helped her break away from the Japanese cohort and build her confidence. Their relationship finished at the end of the summer, but her friendship with Yujin, Vanessa and Wenli pushed her English CTS to new levels: "We discussed politics, it's kind of difficult stuff. So the TSST questions are not so difficult" (Interview 3). Yujin challenged her about Japan's wartime past, but Yukiko took a "God's view" as she became more assertive in English.

In contrast to her substantial increase in English CTS due to her friendships, Yukiko indicated that she struggled to improve her French. Her journal entries highlighted many moments when she felt hurt by local people switching to English. For example:

Sometimes the cashier asks me, "Do you need a plastic bag?" in a long and complicated way. At that time, I was always overwhelmed and froze. Then, cashiers realise that I can't speak French well and they switch in English. One day, one of them told me "Bye bye! Have a nice day! (in English)" was so humiliating.

(Journal, July)

The interviews and journals made it clear that Yukiko felt sensitive about her perceived French deficiency but was reluctant to translanguage with local people (apart from in her relationship with Marc).

Yukiko began adapting to French daily life during the summer and mentioned feeling "more comfortable to speak French, but it's not enough at all" (Interview 2). Yukiko credited her improvement to her ISS teacher in July. In the autumn, she had to immerse herself in EMI content classes; therefore, she felt she could not improve significantly due to the paucity of L3 communication practice.

Post-SA

After SA, Yukiko sketched a decline in her English CTS as she struggled to socialise due to her personality: "I'm kind of introvert. So when I feel

anxious ... I can't have confidence when I talk to someone." Due to feelings of isolation among Japanese classmates, she withdrew from the only English immersion course.

In contrast to her declining L2, Yukiko's French CTS increased at the end of her first post-SA semester. In Interview 3, she credited studying hard alone for a French test by applying her successful self-talk strategy and memorising vocabulary. After taking the test, Yukiko's L3 CTS flattened: "I stopped memorising... to pass the test. So it's slightly going down" (Interview 3).

Yukiko felt conflicted about speaking foreign languages with international visitors post-SA. From one perspective, she lamented: "There's not any opportunity to speak in English in Japan." However, she taught Japanese to two students from Hong Kong and the UK and translanguaged. With the Hong Kongese, "he doesn't speak English, so we have to communicate in Japanese," but with the British, "she's very beginner in Japanese. So I [speak] half in English, half in Japanese."

Yukiko also revealed how she could use French when necessary during her part-time job at an udon noodle restaurant. She solved a miscommunication by translating for some French customers. Describing their surprise and praise at her L3 use, "Why do you speak French that much?" she described her positive emotions: "I got so a lot of confidence from that event."

Despite gaining confidence from this successful interaction and positive affirmation, Yukiko admitted that she could not speak to French students when she heard them in an international common room on campus. She claimed she was "too shy" and contrasted that with the udon restaurant: "Customers I have to talk" (Interview 3). Her admitted introversion seemed to lower her CTS, blocking her from speaking without a purpose or obligation.

During the interviews and the journals, Yukiko rarely discussed the interplay of French and English in her language repertoire. When asked after SA about the benefits, she stated that learning multiple languages could "broaden my view ... [and] broaden my choices," explaining linguistic advantages: "because there is some way of saying that doesn't exist in Japanese" (Interview 3). However, her sensitivity to interlocutors and concern for her perceived mistakes limited her from accessing her multilingual repertoire. She seemed likelier to translanguage in one-to-one situations with familiar interlocutors perceived as weak in Japanese but willing to communicate, like Marc and the British exchange student.

Erin

In contrast to Yukiko, Erin's German CTS never reached the level of her English (Figure 3.3), peaking mid-SA, then declining continuously into

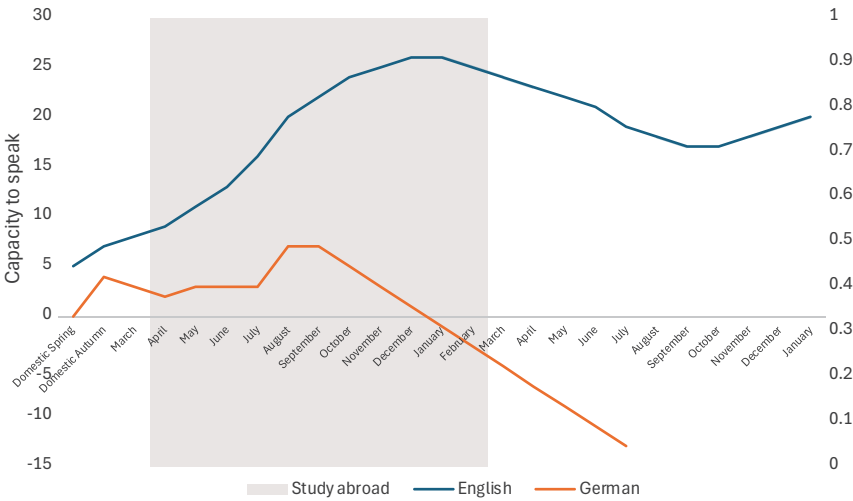


Figure 3.3 Erin's CTS graph.

negative post-SA. Like Yukiko, Erin's English CTS peaked at the end of her SA—corresponding with her phenomenal TSST score—but it then declined slightly before increasing again approximately a year after returning.

Pre-SA

Like Yukiko, Erin entered Home University using the AO DLSA interview, so she was locked into studying in her L3 country. When Erin was recruited, she had taken a year of absence due to the COVID-19 travel restrictions. During her gap, she studied German at a private institute. She was fluent in English from living in the USA for over four years during late primary and early secondary school. After experiencing English naturally, she preferred learning by speaking, “not by the school system of, like, learning grammar” (Interview 3).

As Erin had high L2 proficiency, when asked in the pre-SA questionnaire about her moments of low English CTS, she mentioned non-linguistic causes, such as her difficulty thinking logically without preparation. She hoped that her experience using English would help her express herself in German: “I know how to say my feelings in different language so that's a cool thing because I don't have to start from scratch” (Interview 1).

During SA

During SA, Erin was immersed in the international English-speaking community. She mentioned Sakura as an example of one of her closest

international friends. Sakura was an Anglo-Japanese who was studying full-time in Germany. They spoke together in English and had “a safe atmosphere [together] with [a] similar way of thinking” (Interview 2).

Living in Germany helped Erin to reflect on her personality and how she used English and Japanese:

There’s some difficulties that I had to face ... but at the same time I feel like I’m getting to know myself even like in Japan I didn’t really get to know or I wasn’t trying to know about myself.

(Interview 2)

While answering why she sketched an increase in CTS for both languages during the summer, Erin described a turning point in her self-awareness during Interview 2. She described herself as “ingoing” and agreed she was “introverted” in Japan. Erin had been bullied at secondary school and felt too much pressure to “sugarcoat” her language in Japanese society, caring about others’ thoughts. However, she could express herself better in German and English after realising that her interlocutors enjoyed talking without listening and/or judging her deeply. This awareness freed Erin to express herself, and her CTS rose: “I don’t have to be worrying about what others think about me every time” (Interview 2). She could focus on herself: “English offers you to express yourself in a self-centred like position” (Interview 3) and enjoyed this assertiveness: “I feel more comfortable. I feel like I can speak what I really want to say” (Interview 2).

The introspection involved in Erin’s personal growth during the sojourn included trauma. In the final interview, she described her SA as a “living hell.” Early in her sojourn, she needed to move dorms and caught COVID during that relocation. Moreover, she could not attend classes in the summer or autumn due to insomnia-induced exhaustion, nightmares and panic attacks from overstimulation. In Interview 2, Erin said, “I feel like I’m worthless ... my life is meaningless.” However, she gained resilience over time, and the trauma seemed to improve her English communication. She wrote in her journal about moments of high English CTS when she moved dorms, shared her problems with sympathetic friends, and spoke with a doctor and therapist: “It’s getting easier for me to express myself, especially those dark emotions” (Interview 2). Erin’s German CTS rose with her English in the summer as she became unshackled from her hypersensitivity to interlocutors’ reactions. However, Erin sketched a continuous downward slope from the autumn, which may have been compounded by her inability to attend classes.

Erin felt linguistically inadequate but didn’t fit the deficit learner ideology. Instead, she wanted to express her feelings in German: “I’m terrible at grammar ... I wanna focus on speaking or telling what I’m thinking” (Interview 2).

All participants wrote about using their L3 for daily transactions (e.g., talking to cashiers, clerks, and service staff) in high and low CTS moments. Erin also wrote about these incidents but added encounters in public places with weak-tie relationships where she approached strangers, often complimenting dog owners and asking to take photos of their pets.

Erin seemed to hold a translanguaging ideology, using German as a tool to suit the interlocutor, situation, and her goals. She pushed beyond basic transactions by asking questions, bartering, and engaging in small talk, sometimes leading to incomprehension or expressions beyond her linguistic repertoire. In these moments, Erin or her interlocutor sometimes switched to English. Her closest German-speaking friend was her buddy, Lena, who supported her in English during her traumatic challenges. They also used German playfully during lighter moments: “when we’re joking around I speak in German, or when I have a question ... like what is blah blah in German” (Interview 2).

Post-SA

One year after returning from Germany, Erin reflected on how multilingualism shaped her self-awareness: “I realised I’m not suffering because of myself. It’s just like how I’m coping with all this pain” (Interview 3). Multilingualism helped her meet people and access knowledge but also added confusion as she wrestled with different identities: “The disadvantage is that you get a lot of personalities within you. So you kind of get lost with, like, what you’re thinking and how to present yourself.”

European languages influenced Erin’s sense of identity and belonging. She sketched her German decreasing in her CTS graph, stating that it was “like zero in my brain right now.” Saying she could visit Germany but not live there, she preferred French: “I feel a little sparkle in my heart when I hear like French, not German.” In contrast, Erin’s English CTS remained strong. She sketched a shallow U-shape post-SA, explaining that her CTS increased in the second semester through English-speaking friendships discussing sensitive issues:

Most of the times, Japanese people don’t talk about their true emotions [or] ... delicate topics like mental health or politics or social issues. So but my interests are like that, you know. So just naturally, I happened to be talking to foreign friends.

Before SA, Erin might have been reluctant to discuss sensitive topics in Japanese to avoid unsettling her peers, but she had developed the confidence to express her feelings since addressing trauma in English during her sojourn.

Discussion

The two participants in this study provided unique cases because they outperformed peers who spent their SA in anglophone countries in their pre-post-SA English-speaking proficiency tests. The first sub-question explored whether L2 CTS experiences could explain their English-speaking improvement. Two trends seemed to emerge. Firstly, Erin and Yukiko wanted to refrain from integrating with Japanese peers. Breaking away from their Japanese cohorts and seeking new friends is similar to “Ruika,” who had appeared silent among peers pre-SA but thrived away from Japanese groups in the USA (Humphries et al., 2023b). These European destinations provide excellent options for Japanese wishing to avoid sojourners from their home country because only 0.3% and 1.4% of Japanese on SA selected Germany and France, respectively, in 2022 (JAOS, n.d.). Secondly, as previous research has noted, Japanese EFL students appear prone to the social evaluation aspects of language anxiety (King, 2013), and interlocutors are important for helping speakers feel safe and secure (Kang, 2005). Using English as a lingua franca helps to boost confidence between L2 English users, who can enjoy negotiating for meaning in a multilingual environment, becoming more tolerant of miscommunications and lowering their expectations for nativelike attainment (Köylü & Tracy-Ventura, 2022). Both participants benefited from caring non-Japanese L2 English interlocutors, helping them stretch their linguistic capabilities and express their emotions.

Speaking English with sympathetic L2 users in a multilingual/multicultural environment seemed to aid their emotional expression and self-awareness, leading to open-mindedness and therapeutic communication. Yukiko became more assertive and discussed sensitive topics, while Erin shared complex emotional and mental challenges. Multilingualism seems to be correlated with open-mindedness through the awareness and interest in cultural differences that can lead to self-reflection and acceptance of different values (Dewaele & Botes, 2020). Multilingual users may face reduced emotional stability (Dewaele & van Oudenhoven, 2009) but describe their emotional states with greater granularity (Koch et al., 2024). Erin and Yukiko described the emotional challenges they had faced from L1 peers in Japan, and they also faced stress from some interactions with local French and German speakers during SA. In contrast to the anxiety induced from interacting with L1 interlocutors (of Japanese, German and French), Erin and Yukiko seemed to take therapeutic benefits from speaking the shared L2 English with international students. Emotional expression can be facilitated by speaking another language, as “taboo words or emotions can be allowed to be expressed in a way that would not be allowed in the native language” (Costa & Dewaele, 2013, p. 3). Moreover,

despite the option to use Japanese in the interviews and their monthly journals, they both opted for English, sharing their feelings candidly.

The second sub-question examined the participants' multilingual CTS development through their LOTEs compared to English. Erin's retrospective graph data indicated that her German CTS peaked after four to five months, followed by a continuous decline because she withdrew from German classes and struggled emotionally. According to Busch and McNamara (2020), a person's trauma can be embedded in the linguistic memory, where the sound of the incident-connected language triggers intrusions and flashbacks; in contrast, a third unburdened language can help with coping, resilience and expression. Although Erin did not admit it explicitly, it is possible that L3 German triggered her distress, as she seemed to block the language from her mind post-SA and stated her reluctance to live in Germany again. Conversely, English was connected to support and self-expression, leading to increased CTS. Yukiko admitted to struggling with French during SA but sketched an upward CTS trajectory. Cross-linguistic interaction makes it difficult to pour energy into learning multiple languages concurrently (Henry, 2017). Like participants in the study by Siridetkoon and Dewaele (2018), Yukiko would put a language "on hold" while focusing on the alternate one. During the autumn of her SA, she reduced the intensity of her French study as she concentrated on her EMI courses. After SA, she focused on passing a French test, increasing her LOTE CTS while her L2 declined. Yukiko's LOTE success post-SA resembled "Yuzuru" from Takahashi's (2022) study. Despite limited opportunities to speak their LOTEs in Japan, they could compensate by accessing materials and studying hard individually.

The third sub-question searched on different timescales for stable, ontogenetic systems emerging from the experiential microgenetic fluctuations (MacIntyre, 2020; Yashima, 2021). Yashima (2021) theorised that repeated microgenetic experiences might lead to longer-term changes in the trait-like ontogenetic system. Tentatively, this seemed to occur with Erin but not with Yukiko. For Erin, recurring microgenetic traumas and new perspectives from international friends led her to confront previous Japanese cultural norms. She developed ontogenetic systems with different personalities for each language (Kramsch, 2009), believing that English matched her favoured personality but rejecting German. In contrast, Yukiko had a deficit ideology like "Maria" (Henry & MacIntyre, 2023), stemming from her failure to pass a high school English entrance exam. This early setback seemed to push her to study hard individually, but also generated anxiety about her CTS. Unlike Erin, who translanguageed to meet her communication needs, Yukiko felt insulted when French people switched to English during service encounters. Despite many microgenetic

successes in both languages, Yukiko's ontogenetic reluctance to speak remained post-SA and her introverted personality seemed to stretch across all three languages. Instead, she rationalised the need to study, often individually, to improve her CTS. Yukiko's case highlighted the importance of post-SA data collection because she showed an upward CTS trajectory for both languages during SA, with English looking strong.

Based on the differences in the stability of their ontogenetic systems, we cannot generalise one multilingual CTS model that would encompass both participants after their SA. We apply the value-neutral LX concept (Dewaele, 2018) for Yukiko, who seemed to have a stable ontogenetic system but experienced dynamic CTS, where her French could surpass her English (Figure 3.4).

In contrast, Erin perceived different experiences with each language that seemed to resonate with different values and aspects of her personality, forming different language identities. Therefore, we propose a model with separate but overlapping ontogenetic systems (Figure 3.5). The overlap exists because some core aspects of her person feed into both ontogenetic systems, and each system can influence the other over time.

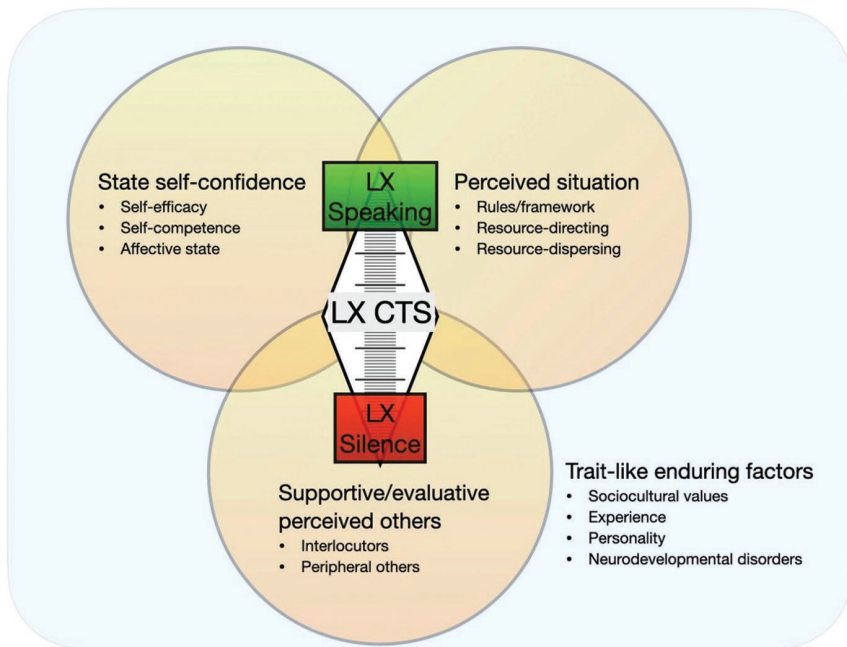


Figure 3.4 LX CTS.

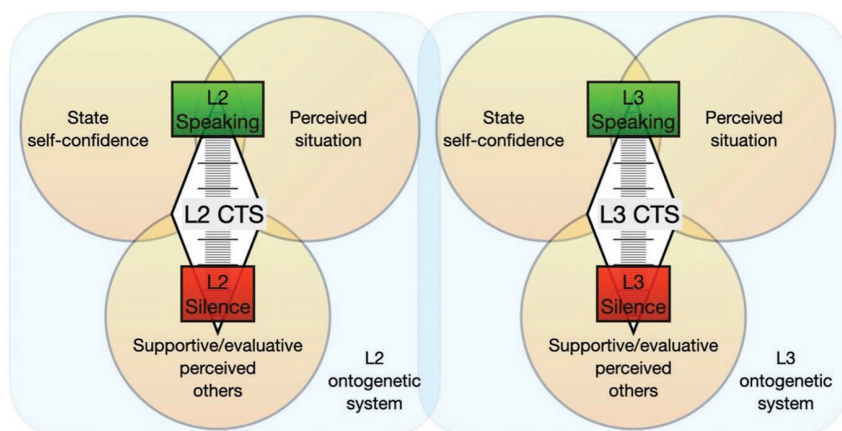


Figure 3.5 Separate ontogenetic CTS language systems.

Conclusion and implications

Silence among English learners in Japan has been widely observed and is recognised as a factor that can hinder language acquisition. Based on our research, we propose that engaging with LOTE and participating in SA programmes may help counteract this effect and encourage more active language use. Although most WTC research has been short-term, classroom-based, and focused on SA in anglophone countries, this study proposes and illustrates the benefits of another approach. The volition assumed in WTC may be weaker for some Japanese students than other learner-internal and sociocultural factors constraining them. As such, this study focused on CTS defined as learners' real-time judgements about their ability to speak in specific moments, and extended the analysis to include LOTE, situations outside the classroom, and data from before, during, and after SA in European countries.

Our study focused on two highly proficient Japanese speakers of English in Europe and uncovered some of the emotional trauma they experienced. We suggest three potential avenues for further research. Firstly, given that English has linguistic roots in French and German, and that Western European history and culture are intertwined with those of the UK and Ireland, different results may emerge in East Asia (e.g., South Korea). This study could be replicated in contexts where the sojourners are situated in environments that align more closely with their L1 and home culture. Secondly, this study examined exceptional English majors who could articulate themselves clearly in their L2. Future studies could explore DLSA participants with weaker L2 proficiency who are interviewed in their L1. Thirdly, Erin described her trauma in Germany, including panic attacks and insomnia, while Yukiko outlined her readjustment challenges post-SA.

Consequently, both participants withdrew from classes. Future research could examine coping strategies and the psychological resilience of SA students, aiming to strengthen institutional support.

Funding acknowledgement

This work is supported by JSPS KAKENHI (grant numbers 21K00721 and 25K04305).

References

- ALC. (n.d.). *The ALC telephone standard speaking test*. Retrieved August 9, 2024, from <https://tsst.alc.co.jp/biz/en/>
- Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological Review*, 84, 191–215.
- Bui, G., & Teng, F. (2019). Exploring complexity in L2 and L3 motivational systems: A dynamic systems theory perspective. *The Language Learning Journal*, 49(3), 302–317. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2019.1610032>
- Busch, B., & McNamara, T. (2020). Language and trauma: An introduction. *Applied Linguistics*, 41(3), 323–333. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amaa002>
- Cao, Y., & Philp, J. (2006). Interactional context and willingness to communicate: A comparison of behavior in whole class, group and dyadic interaction. *System*, 34(4), 480–493. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2006.05.002>
- Cenoz, J., & Gorter, D. (2019). Multilingualism, translanguaging, and minority languages in SLA. *The Modern Language Journal*, 103, 130–135. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12529>
- Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2008). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (3rd ed.). Sage.
- Costa, B., & Dewaele, J.-M. (2013). Psychotherapy across languages: Beliefs, attitudes and practices of monolingual and multilingual therapists with their multilingual patients. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*, 14(3), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14733145.2013.838338>
- Dewaele, J.-M. (2017). Are perfectionists more anxious foreign language learners and users? In C. Gkonou, M. Daubney, & J.- M. Dewaele (Eds.), *New insights into language anxiety: Theory, research and educational implications* [Kindle version]. Multilingual Matters.
- Dewaele, J. M. (2018). Why the dichotomy ‘L1 versus LX user’ is better than ‘native versus non-native speaker’. *Applied Linguistics*, 39(2), 236–240. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amw055>
- Dewaele, J.-M., & Botes, E. (2020). Does multilingualism shape personality? An exploratory investigation. *International Journal of Bilingualism*, 24(4), 811–823. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367006919888581>
- Dewaele, J. M., & Pavelescu, L. M. (2019). The relationship between incommensurable emotions and willingness to communicate in English as a foreign language: A multiple case study. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 15(1), 66–80. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17501229.2019.1675667>

- Dewaele, J.-M., & van Oudenhoven, J. P. (2009). The effect of multilingualism/multiculturalism on personality: No gain without pain for third culture kids? *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 6(4), 443–459. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790710903039906>
- Ducker, N. T. (2022). Bridging the gap between willingness to communicate and learner talk. *The Modern Language Journal*, 106(1), 216–244. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12764>
- Epstein, S. (1994). Integration of the cognitive and the psychodynamic unconscious. *American Psychologist*, 49(8), 709.
- Falout, J. (2016). Past selves: Emerging motivational guides across temporal contexts. In J. King (Ed.), *The dynamic interplay between context and the language learner* (pp. 47–65). Palgrave-Macmillan.
- Falout, J., Elwood, J., & Hood, M. (2009). Demotivation: Affective states and learning outcomes. *System*, 37(3), 403–417. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2009.03.004>
- Fukui, H., & Yashima, T. (2021). Exploring evolving motivation to learn two languages simultaneously in a study-abroad context. *The Modern Language Journal*, 105(1), 267–293. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12695>
- Henry, A. (2017). L2 motivation and multilingual identities. *The Modern Language Journal*, 101(3), 548–565. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12412>
- Henry, A., & MacIntyre, P. D. (2023). *Willingness to communicate, multilingualism and interactions in community contexts*. Multilingual Matters.
- Henry, A., & MacIntyre, P. D. (2024). Keeping in time: The design of qualitative longitudinal research in SLA. *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics*, 3(1), 100102. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rmal.2024.100102>
- Henry, A., & MacIntyre, P. D. (2026). Willingness to Communicate and the psychology of multilingual communication. In G. Sulis, S. Mercer, & Å Haukås (Eds.), *The psychology of multilingual learners and teachers* (pp. 13–32). Routledge.
- Humphries, S., Akamatsu, N., Tanaka, T., & Burns, A. (2020). Silence in Japanese classrooms: Activities and factors in capacities to speak English. In J. King & S. Harumi (Eds.), *East Asian perspectives on silence in English language education* (pp. 123–142). Multilingual Matters. <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781788926775-012>
- Humphries, S., Aubrey, S., & King, J. (2023a). Fluctuations in Japanese English majors' capacity to speak before, during and after studying abroad. *System*, 113, 103001. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2023.103001>
- Humphries, S., & Burns, A. (2015). “In reality it’s almost impossible”: CLT-oriented curriculum change. *ELT Journal*, 69(3), 239–248. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccu081>
- Humphries, S., Burns, A., & Tanaka, T. (2015). “My head became blank and I couldn’t speak”: Classroom factors that influence English speaking. *The Asian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 2(3), 164–175. <https://caes.hku.hk/ajal/index.php/ajal/article/view/230>
- Humphries, S., Ikeda, M., & Yashima, T. (2023b). Exploring perceived capacity to speak in silent English majors: A longitudinal study before, during, and after study abroad. *Journal of Silence Studies in Education*, 3(1), 16–31. <https://doi.org/10.31763/jsse.v3i1.82>

- Humphries, S., & Yashima, T. (2021). "I forgot the language:" Japanese students' actual multilingual selves and translanguaging challenges as English majors in Taiwan. In W. Tsou & W. Baker (Eds.), *English-medium instruction translanguaging practices in Asia* (pp. 143–161). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-3001-9_8
- JAOS (n.d.). *Ippan shadan hōjin kaigai ryūgaku kyōgi-kai (JAOS) ni yoru nihon-jin ryūgakusei-sū chōsa* [Survey on the Number of Japanese Students Studying Abroad by the Japan Overseas Study Council (JAOS)]. <https://www.jaos.or.jp/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/2022JAOS留學生統計調査230522.pdf>
- Kang, S.-J. (2005). Dynamic emergence of situational willingness to communicate in a second language. *System*, 33(2), 277–292. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2004.10.004>
- King, J. (2013). Silence in the second language classrooms of Japanese universities. *Applied Linguistics*, 34(3), 325–343. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/ams043>
- Koch, M. J., Kersten, K., & Greve, W. (2024). An emotional advantage of multilingualism. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, 27(5), 950–963. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1366728923000937>
- Köder, F., Rummelhoff, C., & Garraffa, M. (2024). Learning and using multiple languages: Experiences of adults with ADHD. *Ampersand*, 13, 100191. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amper.2024.100191>
- Köylü, Z., & Tracy-Ventura, N. (2022). Learning English in today's global world: A comparative study of at home, Anglophone, and lingua franca study abroad. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 44(5), 1–26. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263121000917>
- Kramsch, C. (2009). *The multilingual subject: What foreign language learners say about their experience and why it matters*. Oxford University Press.
- Larsen-Freeman, D., & Cameron, L. (2008). Research methodology on language development from a complex systems perspective. *The Modern Language Journal*, 92(2), 200–213. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.2008.00714.x>
- MacIntyre, P. (2020). Expanding the theoretical base for the dynamics of willingness to communicate. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 10(1), 111–131. <https://doi.org/10.14746/ssl.2020.10.1.6>
- MacIntyre, P. D., & Charos, C. (1996). Personality, attitudes, and affect as predictors of second language communication. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 15, 3–26. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0261927X960151001>
- MacIntyre, P. D., Clément, R., Dörnyei, Z., & Noels, K. A. (1998). Conceptualizing willingness to communicate in a L2: A situational model of L2 confidence and affiliation. *The Modern Language Journal*, 82(4), 545–562. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1998.tb05543.x>
- MacIntyre, P. D., & Legatto, J. J. (2011). A dynamic system approach to willingness to communicate: Developing an idiodynamic method to capture rapidly changing affect. *Applied Linguistics*, 32(2), 149–171. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amq037>
- Meyer, E. (2016). *The culture map: Decoding how people think, lead, and get things done across cultures*. PublicAffairs.
- Nakane, I. (2007). *Silence in intercultural communication: Perceptions and performance*. John Benjamins.

- Peng, J. E. (2020). Willing silence and silent willingness to communicate (WTC) in the Chinese EFL classroom: A dynamic systems perspective. In J. King & S. Harumi (Eds.), *East Asian perspectives on silence in English language education* (pp. 143–166). Multilingual Matters. <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781788926775>
- Peng, J. E. (2022). Willingness to communicate. In S. Li, P. Hiver, & M. Papi (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of second language acquisition and individual differences* (pp. 159–171). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003270546>
- Rallis, S. F., & Rossman, G. B. (2009). Ethics and trustworthiness. In J. Heigham & R. A. Croker (Eds.), *Qualitative research in applied linguistics: A practical introduction* (pp. 263–287). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Robinson, P. (2005). Cognitive complexity and task sequencing: Studies in a componential framework for second language task design. *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, 43(1), 1–32. <https://doi.org/10.1515/iral.2005.43.1.1>
- Sakui, K. (2004). Wearing two pairs of shoes: Language teaching in Japan. *ELT Journal*, 58(2), 155–163. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/58.2.155>
- Siridetkoon, P., & Dewaele, J.-M. (2018). Ideal self and ought-to self of simultaneous learners of multiple foreign languages. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 15(4), 313–328. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2017.1293063>
- Sulis, G., Haukås, Å., & Mercer, S. (2026). Interdisciplinary approaches to multilingualism and language learner and teacher psychology: An introduction. In G. Sulis, S. Mercer, & Å Haukås (Eds.), *The psychology of multilingual learners and teachers* (pp. 1–10). Routledge.
- Takahashi, C. (2022). *Motivation to learn multiple languages in Japan: A longitudinal perspective*. Multilingual Matters.
- Turnbull, B. (2020). Beyond bilingualism in Japan: Examining the translingual trends of a “monolingual” nation. *International Journal of Bilingualism*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367006919873428>
- Wen, W. P., & Clément, R. (2003). A Chinese conceptualisation of willingness to communicate in ESL. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 16(1), 18–38. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07908310308666654>
- Yashima, T. (2021). Nested systems and their interactions: Dynamic WTC in the classroom. In R. J. Sampson & R. S. Pinner (Eds.), *Complexity perspectives on researching language learner and teacher psychology* (pp. 68–85). Multilingual Matters.

4 The more, the merrier? Comparing conceptualisations of self-report multilingualism as a predictor of individual differences

*Nazila Fattahi, Faramarz Ebn-Abbasi,
and Elouise Botes*

Introduction

Multilingualism is often seen as a societal boon, with multilingualism linked to outcomes such as transferable skills (Greve et al., 2024), economic benefits (Grin & Vaillancourt, 1997), and broader workplace opportunities (Pietrzyk-Kowalec, 2023). Beyond utilitarian outcomes, multilingualism is also associated with personal positive outcomes, such as increased cultural empathy (Rolbin & Della Chiesa, 2010) and open-mindedness (Dewaele & Botes, 2020), with the nineteenth-century politician, Tomáš Masaryk, remarking that “The more languages you know, the more you are human”. However, it is in defining these ‘more languages’ that lies the rub; when is knowledge of a language enough to see potential benefits and how should this be measured? Definitions of multilingualism are varied and often tied to specific research fields. Kemp (2009) theorised that the complex nature of multilingual individuals’ language use and the researchers’ various ideologies, backgrounds, and purposes are the two factors responsible for the existence of multiple definitions of multilingualism. These definitions, however, reflect the intricate nature of this concept and the difficulties inherent in measuring it.

Simply put, multilingualism can be defined as the ability to use multiple languages. Such a straightforward definition, however, faces interpretive problems. Researchers need to clarify what they mean by multilingualism by specifying the degree of proficiency and effective capability an individual needs to possess in a language to be considered a multilingual in their study, as well as the method of measurement employed (Kemp, 2009). Due to the central role of proficiency in the discussion of multilingualism, it is one of the most recurrent criteria for the classification of multilinguals (Festman, 2019). In multilingual studies, different objective and subjective measures such as standardised tests and self-reports are used

by researchers to capture language proficiency. As standardised tests are often costly and time-consuming, researchers examining individual differences in the context of language learning, often utilise self-reports from participants to list the number of languages they can use and the associated proficiency of these languages (e.g., Dewaele & Botes, 2020; Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014). These self-reported multilingualism scores have been linked to individual differences such as language achievement (Calafato, 2024) and language emotions (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014).

However, in the use of self-reported multilingualism data, it is unclear to what extent different iterations of the data impact the end results. For instance, when utilising the data of self-reported multilingualism, should the researcher simply count the number of languages listed by participants or should the level of proficiency be considered in the numerical value used in analyses. After all, an English native speaking participant may be only able to simply say *merci* to a waiter in Paris but listed that they have English native proficiency and basic French proficiency in the questionnaire on their multilingualism level. In this example, when coding multilingualism, researchers are then faced with a dilemma, should this hypothetical participant be listed as having two languages in their repertoire or should the low level of proficiency be taken into account in calculating the dummy variable of multilingualism, and furthermore, how should this dummy variable be calculated?

In the current chapter, we will use self-reported demographic data and explore how different iterations of multilingualism predict individual differences variables. In doing so, we hope to broaden the understanding of the impact on results when self-reported multilingualism is used as an indicator variable in multivariate statistical analyses, specifically in the context of predicting individual differences in language learning so as to further understand the possible benefits that multilingualism may provide language learners.

Conceptualisation of multilingualism

Defining multilingualism has proved to be a daunting task for researchers due to its multi-faceted nature. The concept has been studied in different disciplines such as linguistics, psycholinguistics, neurolinguistics, and education. Some definitions point out the mere knowledge of multiple languages, while others emphasise the active and proficient use of those languages. For instance, Wei (2008) defines a multilingual as someone who is able to communicate in more than one language actively (through speaking and writing) or passively (through listening and reading). For linguists such as Cook (2003), multilingualism is the ability to understand and use multiple languages. In psycholinguistics, however, multilingualism is the knowledge and use of more than two languages with an emphasis on how these languages are

managed in the multilingual brain from acquisition to representation and processing (Festman, 2019). In their chapter on the neurolinguistics of multilingualism, Kadyamusuma et al. (2018), define multilinguals as someone “who regularly speak or utilise two or more different languages or dialects in their daily communication” (p. 271). The general impression gleaned from these conflicting definitions bears witness to the fact that multilingualism is not a fixed or universally agreed-upon concept.

Since multilingualism is per definition linked to the proficiency levels of the languages, the method of measurement used in studies is of great importance. One broadly recognised framework is The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, Council of Europe, 2020) which is developed by the Council of Europe in 2001, providing a standardised system for evaluating language abilities across different languages and contexts. The CEFR recognises six language proficiency levels of A1 to C2 which can be broadly grouped into three levels of Basic User, Independent User, and Proficient User. More specifically, these six levels are: A1 (Beginner) and A2 (Elementary), B1 (Intermediate) and B2 (Upper Intermediate), and C1 (Advanced) and C2 (Proficient). According to the descriptors (Council of Europe, 2020), a basic user (A1, A2) should be able to understand and use basic everyday expressions and phrases, an independent user (B1, B2) can understand and produce complex and technical discussions with a degree of fluency, more specifically, while a B1 user can manage simple speaking and writing a B2 user can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity with native speakers. Finally, a proficient user (C1, C2) possesses fluent, spontaneous, and precise speaking and writing abilities. These levels provide a structured way to assess an individual’s language ability, and they were determined through extensive research, analysis of language use, and consensus among linguistic experts. With the dominance of the CEFR framework in language proficiency measures, this study also adopts it as a primary reference point for measuring the language proficiency of multilingual participants.

For classifying multilingual individuals in their studies, researchers may use different methods. Self-reported data is often used to capture participants’ multilingualism. Although there is some disagreement on using self-report data as an indicator of language proficiency, there are many successful uses of this index in multilingual research (e.g., Dewaele & Stavans, 2014; Thompson & Lee, 2013). Some studies may require mastery in a language to be included in the multilingual individual’s repertoire while others may not impose such strict measures. Participants may be assigned to groups labelled by numbers based on the list of languages they report irrespective of their proficiency levels (e.g., bilingual vs. trilingual vs. quadrilingual, see Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014). However, the level of proficiency in a language may also be used as the criteria for grouping multilinguals (e.g., Thompson & Lee, 2013). To have a more accurate

picture of an individual's language repertoire and to capture the level of proficiency in each language, Dewaele and Stavans (2014) developed a more global measure of multilingualism. Their multilingualism index, or total proficiency score, is the sum of self-report competence scores in languages which considers the language user's collected language knowledge across languages. In a similar attempt, the present research has also strived to provide a more accurate measure of multilingual individual's language repertoire by considering the number of languages, the proficiency levels, and a mix of both metrics. As such, three competing definitions of multilingualism will be used in this study:

Plenitude Multilingualism: The number of languages known to a participant at any level of proficiency. This definition has been used in numerous studies examining multilingualism as a predictor (see Botes & Dewaele, 2020; Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014) and can be considered the most simplistic of the definitions tested in this study. For example, an L1 user of English (C2 level), with a B2 level in French, and an A1 level in German, will be considered trilingual in this measure.

Effective Multilingualism: The number of languages a participant is proficient in and can effectively use to the extent that they can generate the language spontaneously. This definition therefore is in line with the definition of Wei (2008) and the study of Thompson and Lee (2013), as it does not consider just the number of languages, but the ability to be able to effectively communicate in this language. The CEFR places spontaneous production of language at the B2 level (Council of Europe, 2020), as such only languages with a proficiency of B2 level and above are considered. In our previous example, (C2 English, B2 French, and A1 German), this participant will therefore be considered bilingual.

Complex Multilingualism: In line with the work of Dewaele and Stavans (2014), this definition of multilingualism considers the number of languages known to the participant and the proficiency of each language jointly in order to provide an overall global measure of multilingualism. A composite variable is calculated where the level of proficiency is given a weight (A1 = 1; A2 = 2; B1 = 3; B2 = 4; C1 = 5; C2 = 6) and the total value of a participant's linguistic repertoire is calculated. In the example previously given (C2 English, B2 French, A1 German), the participant will therefore have a multilingualism score of $6 + 4 + 1 = 11$.

The multilingual advantage

A substantial body of research has examined whether and how knowing multiple languages can benefit individuals framed under the Bilingual Advantage Hypothesis (BAH). Yet, the inconclusive results of the scholarly works investigating the role of multilingualism have highlighted the

intricate association between language, the cerebrum, and personality. From a neurological perspective, several studies reported that multilinguals developed what is referred to as ‘the polyglot brain’—cognitive abilities and neural mechanisms that enable individuals to learn and use multiple languages—and exhibited enhanced attentional control (Krizman et al., 2012), increased grey matter in adolescence and white matter in children (Kavé et al., 2008; Pliatsikas et al., 2020), and enhanced cognitive functions, such as multitasking and problem-solving (Bialystok et al., 2007; Costa et al., 2008) in comparison to monolinguals. Conversely, some studies have unveiled small effect sizes between these associations or contradicting results (see Adesope et al., 2010; Lehtonen et al., 2018).

Regarding the role of multilingualism as an individual differences variable in language learning, former studies showed that multilingualism can promote foreign language aptitude (Rogers et al., 2017), metalinguistic awareness, L1 lexicon size, and working memory (Dolas et al., 2022). Moreover, multilinguals tend to utilise better strategies for learning grammar (Kemp, 2007) and score better on language tests (Planchon & Ellis, 2014). In the broader nomological network of variables, linking multilingualism to other individual differences variables seems inevitable as previous works have demonstrated the significance of this concept to classroom emotions and other individual difference traits. These studies pinpoint that language learners who already know several languages are less prone to experience foreign language anxiety (FLA; Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014), experience higher levels of foreign language enjoyment (FLE; Botes et al., 2020; Dewaele et al., 2024), and exhibit communicative confidence (Dewaele et al., 2008). Moreover, Dewaele and van Oudenhoven (2009) reported that their multilingual participants’ personality profiles differed from those of their bilingual peers regarding open-mindedness, cultural empathy, and emotional stability. Furthermore, higher FLE and linguistic and cultural awareness, lower FLA, and earlier exposure to and familiarity with learning multiple languages can all directly and indirectly bolster WTC and, eventually, language learning and use (Dewaele, 2010; Dewaele et al., 2008; Zhang et al., 2024).

As such, within the current literature several competing definitions of multilingualism are available and within the studies utilising these competing definitions, several findings have been made linking increased multilingualism to favourable outcomes regarding language emotions, communication, and competency. Within this chapter, we therefore aim to compare and contrast these competing definitions of multilingualism in order to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: Do the conceptualisations of multilingualism (plenitude multilingualism, effective multilingualism, and complex multilingualism) predict

the individual differences variables of foreign language anxiety, foreign language enjoyment, self-perceived competency, and willingness to communicate?

RQ2: Which of the conceptualisations of multilingualism (plenitude multilingualism, effective multilingualism, and complex multilingualism) is the strongest predictor of the individual differences variables of foreign language anxiety, foreign language enjoyment, self-perceived competency, and willingness to communicate?

Method

Participants

A total of 349 language learners were recruited online through snowball sampling. Firstly, we used contacts in language teaching to spread the online questionnaire to their students. Secondly, we advertised the questionnaire on social media, specifically targeting social media outlets where language learners congregated, for example groups on Reddit, Facebook, and Discord dedicated to language learning as well as language learning oriented profiles on Facebook and Twitter. As a result, the sample group was international, with the majority of participants from the United States of America ($n = 67$), followed by the United Kingdom ($n = 65$), and the Netherlands ($n = 35$). The majority of participants were female ($n = 191$) with an average age of 28 years ($SD = 10.447$). The majority of the sample had tertiary education, with 150 having a Bachelor's degree, 77 having a master's degree, and 16 having a PhD, in contrast to 104 participants having a secondary school diploma and only 2 participants having no secondary school diploma.

The sample as a whole was highly multilingual with multilingualism captured in various ways. Participants were asked to list the number of languages they can use along with the corresponding CEFR level for each language listed. Participants were provided with an explanation of the CEFR levels and the proficiency associated with each level. Participants were further tasked with providing their first language(s), as well as a list of target languages they are currently learning and the corresponding CEFR levels of each target language. In addition, participants were asked to provide a narrative description of their language background, including when and how they acquired additional languages. Using all the above-mentioned information, the linguistic repertoire of each participant was individually coded according to three iterations of multilingualism:

- 1 **Plenitude Multilingualism.** Using the extensive language background data provided by participants, we calculated the total number of languages

known to participants at any level of proficiency. For plenitude multilingualism, $n = 25$ participants were bilingual, $n = 76$ were trilingual, followed by $n = 98$ quadrilinguals and $n = 81$ pentalinguals, with $n = 69$ having more than six languages in their repertoire.

- 2 Effective Multilingualism. Based on the CEFR competency levels provided by participants, we calculated the number of languages that a participant is proficient at a B2 level or above. Based on the results, $n = 78$ participants were found to be monolingual, $n = 149$ were bilingual, $n = 86$ were trilingual, $n = 36$ were quadrilingual, or more.
- 3 Complex Multilingualism. In order to take the number of languages and the proficiency levels of all languages listed by participants into account, we calculated complex multilingualism. Each level of the CEFR was assigned to an ordinal numerical value (A1 = 1; A2 = 2; B1 = 3; B2 = 4; C1 = 5; C2 = 6) and the total value of a participant's linguistic repertoire was calculated.

Individual differences' instruments

Participants were asked to select a single target language and answer the following instruments based on their experiences learning this specific target language:

Short-form Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale: ($\alpha = .893$; $\omega = .895$). An eight-item unidimensional measure examining anxiety in language learning was used, with items such as 'I get nervous and confused when speaking in my language class'. The scale is a short-form of the 33 item Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety scale developed by Horwitz et al. (1986), developed by MacIntyre (1992) and validated by Botes et al. (2022). Items were measured on a five-point Likert scale from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'.

Short-Form Foreign Language Enjoyment Scale: ($\alpha = .887$; $\omega = .885$). The nine-item short-form developed and validated by Botes et al. (2021) was utilised in this study to capture enjoyment in language learning. The measure is a shortened version of the 21-item Foreign Language Enjoyment scale developed by Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) and includes three subscales: Personal Enjoyment ($\alpha = .836$; $\omega = .837$; e.g., "I enjoy English class"), Social Enjoyment ($\alpha = .743$; $\omega = .749$; e.g., "We laugh a lot"), and Teacher Appreciation ($\alpha = .892$; $\omega = .893$; e.g., "The teacher is supportive"). Items were measured on a five-point Likert scale from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'.

Self-Perceived Competency Scale: ($\alpha = .965$; $\omega = .965$). The perceived competence of participants' target language was measured via the 12-item scale of McCroskey and McCroskey (1988). Participants were asked to rate their level of competence on a five-point Likert scale ranging from

“poor” to “excellent” in 12 situations, such as ‘talking with an acquaintance’ and ‘talking with a stranger’.

Willingness to Communicate Scale: ($\alpha = .965$; $\omega = .964$). The willingness of participants to communicate in their target language was measured via the 12-item scale of McCroskey (1992). Items asked participants to indicate to what extent they would be willing to communicate in different settings, such as ‘talk with a stranger while waiting in line’ or ‘talk in a small group of acquaintances’. Items were measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from ‘almost never’ to ‘almost always’.

Data analysis

Descriptive statistics, internal consistencies, and Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated in SPSS 28.0.1.1. The first research question was examined via three separate structural equation models (SEM), with each multilingualism measure predicting the four individual differences outcome variables of FLA, FLE, SPC, and WTC. Models were run using the ‘lavaan’ package in RStudio (Rosseel, 2012), with diagonally weighted least squares estimation due to the ordinal nature of the data (Li, 2016) and standard errors. Model fit was assessed via the guidelines specified by Kenny (2020) using the fit indices of the RMSEA (close fit $<.05$; reasonable fit $<.08$), SRMR (close fit $<.05$; reasonable fit $<.08$), CFI (close fit $>.95$; reasonable fit $>.90$), and TLI (close fit $>.95$; reasonable fit $>.90$). Three separate models were analysed as opposed to one large model, due to the concerns regarding statistical power given the sample size ($n = 349$) and due to the likelihood of large correlations between the multilingualism measures creating distortions in the results due to multicollinearity. Each measure of multilingualism was therefore assessed separately as a predictor of individual differences. Effect sizes in the study were interpreted via the effect size guidelines of Botes et al. (2025), with small (.200), medium (.350), and large (.500) categorisations for studies examining affective variables.

In turn, the second research question examined which measure of multilingualism was the strongest predictor of the individual differences variables via dominance analysis calculated in RStudio using the ‘domir’ package (Luchman & Luchman, 2022). Dominance analysis examines the individual contribution of each predictor in explaining variance in the outcome variable via the R^2 change when adding a predictor to a possible subset of regression models (Tonidandel & LeBreton, 2011). The average R^2 change is used to calculate a general dominance weight, which, in turn, is used to examine the relative importance or dominance of any one predictor in comparison to a group of other predictors. In addition, the possible correlation of predictor variables does not affect the general dominance weight, therefore the correlation between the measures of multilingualism

will not adversely skew results. Thus, via the general dominance weight, the second research question regarding the strongest version of multilingualism as a predictor of individual differences can be identified.

Results

Descriptive statistics and correlation matrix

Descriptive statistics for all variables can be found in Table 4.1 with the correlation matrix of all variables presented in Table 4.2. No concerns regarding normality was found.

Multilingualism as a predictor of individual differences

As a precursor to examining the SEMs, measurement models of each individual differences outcome variable was examined for fit (see Table 4.3). All measurement models were deemed acceptable and as such no adjustments were made to measurement syntaxes.

The results of each multilingualism measure as a predictor of individual differences is presented via the SEM illustrations in Figure 4.1, with the fit

Table 4.1 Descriptive statistics

	M	SD	Min	Max	Skewness	Kurtosis
Plenitude M.	4.481	1.641	2	10	.993	1.155
Effective M.	2.229	.912	1	4	.912	-.651
Complex M.	16.562	5.935	7	44	1.130	1.921
FLA	2.863	.934	1	5	.227	-.623
FLE	3.951	.632	1.444	5	-.846	1.133
SPC	2.837	.947	1	5	-.063	-.664
WTC	3.866	.695	1.250	5	-.603	.585

Note. M. = Multilingualism.

Table 4.2 Manifest correlation coefficient matrix

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
1. Plenitude M.	-						
2. Effective M.	.544***	-					
3. Complex M.	.849***	.801***	-				
4. FLA	-.054	-.135*	-.108*	-			
5. FLE	-.063	.011	-.056	-.262***	-		
6. SPC	.081	.304***	.220**	-.240***	.060	-	
7. WTC	.188*	.266***	.185***	-.154**	.200***	.439***	-

Note. M. = Multilingualism. *** $p < .001$ ** $p < .01$ * $p < .05$.

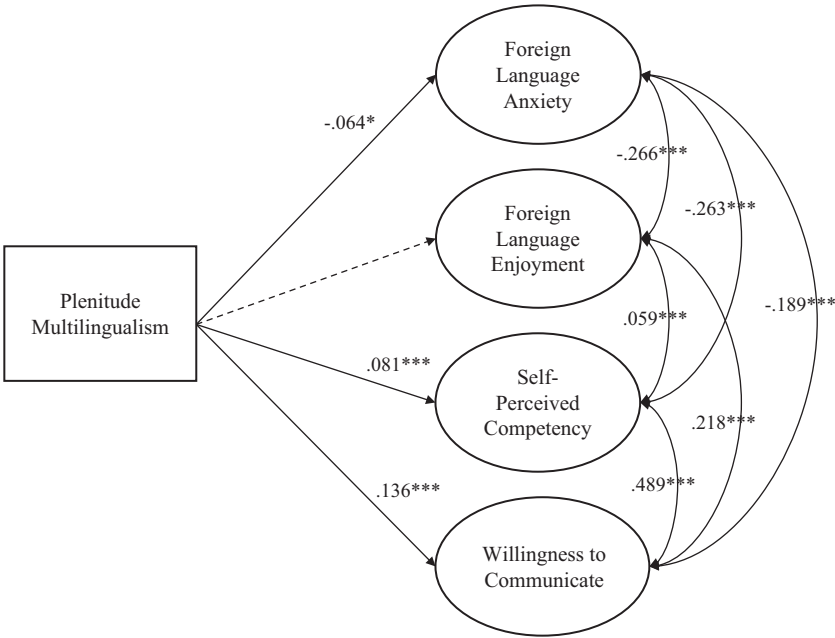


Figure 4.1 Structural equation models: plenitude multilingualism.

Table 4.3 Fit indices of measurement models

RMSEA 90% CI								
	χ^2	df	RMSEA	Lower	Upper	SRMR	CFI	TLI
FLA	75.175	20	.089	.068	.111	.039	.959	.943
FLE	66.264	24	.071	.051	.092	.031	.977	.966
SPC	121.417	54	.060	.046	.074	.054	.996	.995
WTC	113.025	54	.056	.041	.071	.076	.971	.947

indices of each model shown in Table 4.4. All three SEMs tested reached close fit. The statistical significance of paths was identical across all three predictors of multilingualism, with all three predictors significantly predicting FLA, SPC, and WTC. In addition, no measure of multilingualism significantly predicted FLE. However, differences between the measures of multilingualism can be seen in the strength of predictions. FLA was significantly negatively predicted by plenitude multilingualism ($\beta = -.064$; $p < .05$), however with a significantly smaller effect size in comparison to effective multilingualism ($\beta = -.147$; $p < .001$) and complex multilingualism

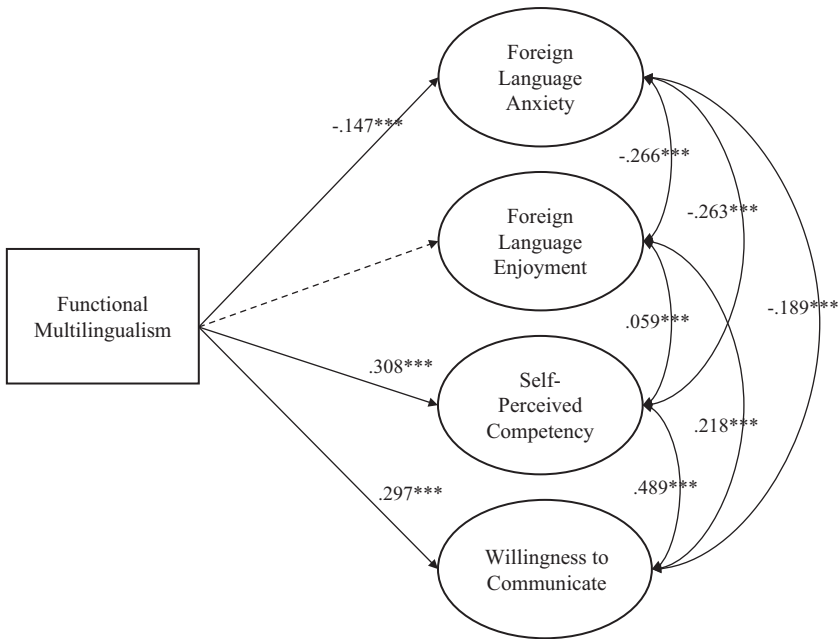


Figure 4.2 Structural equation models: effective multilingualism.

Table 4.4 Fit indices of structural equation models

	χ^2	df	RMSEA	SRMR	CFI	TLI
Plenitude M.	777.775	585	.031	.062	.990	.989
Effective M.	761.129	585	.030	.062	.990	.990
Complex M.	773.677	585	.030	.062	.990	.990

Note. M. = Multilingualism. *** $p < .001$ ** $p < .01$ * $p < .05$.

($\beta = -.120$; $p < .001$). Similarly, effective multilingualism had the largest effect size in positively predicting SPC ($\beta = .308$; $p < .001$) and WTC ($\beta = .297$; $p < .001$), in comparison to plenitude multilingualism (SPC: $\beta = .081$; $p < .001$; WTC: $\beta = .136$; $p < .001$) and complex multilingualism (SPC: $\beta = .225$; $p < .001$; WTC: $\beta = .217$; $p < .001$). Overall, based on the effect sizes, effective multilingualism (where only the number of languages that a participant can effectively and spontaneously communicate in) was the strongest predictor of individual differences variables. However, in order to statistically compare predictors, dominance analyses was conducted (Figures 4.2 and 4.3).

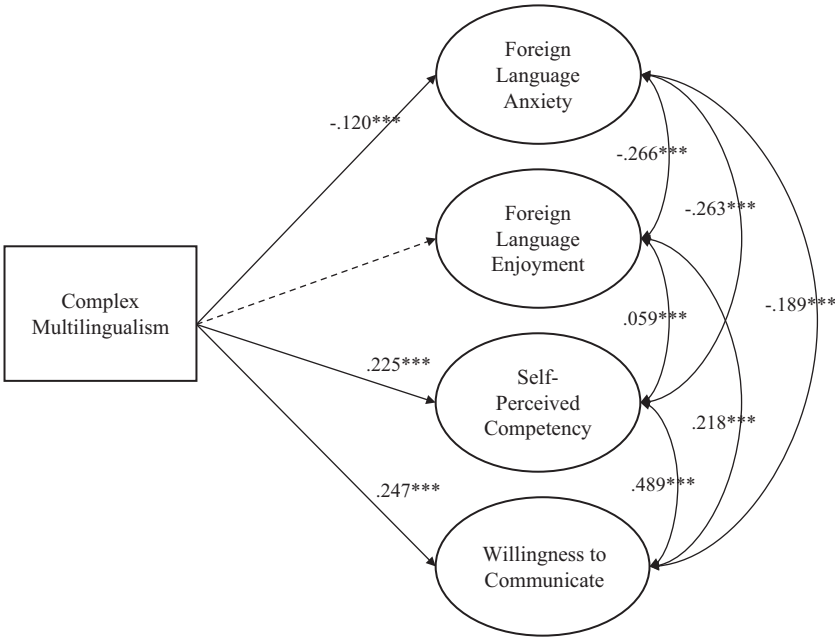


Figure 4.3 Structural equation models: complex multilingualism.

Dominance of multilingualism predictors

Dominance analyses were conducted with all three multilingualism measures predicting each individual differences outcome in turn. The general dominance weights and rankings of predictors are presented in Table 4.5. For FLA, SPC, and WTC, effective multilingualism emerged as the most dominant predictor, followed by complex multilingualism, and with plenitude multilingualism ranked last. In contrast, complex multilingualism was the most dominant predictor of FLE, followed by effective multilingualism, and with plenitude multilingualism again ranked last. However, it should be noted that FLE was not significantly predicted by any measure of multilingualism (see Figure 4.1) and as such the dominance results ought to be interpreted with caution. The results of the dominance analysis therefore concurred with the effect sizes found in the SEMs regarding effective multilingualism as the strongest overall predictor, followed by complex multilingualism.

Discussion

This chapter set out to explore three different iterations of multilingualism and their respective relationships with individual differences outcomes, namely language emotions, willingness to communicate, and perceived

Table 4.5 Dominance analysis results

	<i>General dominance weight</i>	<i>Standardised dominance %</i>	<i>Rank</i>
Outcome: FLA			
Plenitude multilingualism	.003	.126	3
Effective multilingualism	.011	.537	1
Complex multilingualism	.007	.336	2
Outcome: FLE			
Plenitude multilingualism	.003	.221	3
Effective multilingualism	.005	.386	2
Complex multilingualism	.005	.392	1
Outcome: SPC			
Plenitude multilingualism	.017	.144	3
Effective multilingualism	.061	.559	1
Complex multilingualism	.032	.297	2
Outcome: WTC			
Plenitude multilingualism	.006	.079	3
Effective multilingualism	.051	.696	1
Complex multilingualism	.016	.225	2

competence in the target language. All three measures of multilingualism were significantly negatively related to FLA, significantly positively related to WTC and SPC, and not significantly related to FLE. The finding that multilingualism in any iteration did not predict enjoyment, contradicted the results of Botes et al. (2020) and Dewaele et al. (2024), who found significant positive relationships between multilingualism and FLE. However, previous studies have demonstrated that FLE is more strongly associated with classroom and teacher-related variables than interpersonal variables, as opposed to the negative emotion of FLA, which is linked to interpersonal variables (Dewaele et al., 2023). Therefore, the level of multilingualism in this study did not predict any level of enjoyment of language learning, but did predict the level of anxiety experienced by the foreign language learner. The relationships between the outcome variables of FLE, FLA, WTC, and SPC, conformed with the status quo of the literature (see Bensalem, 2022; Dewaele & Li, 2022; Dewaele et al., 2023), with FLA significantly negatively related to all other outcome variables, and FLE, SPC, and WTC all significantly positively related. However, although similar patterns of significance emerged for all three iterations of multilingualism as predictor variables, considerable differences in the strength of predictions were found.

The results indicated that in terms of statistical dominance as well as the variance explained in individual regression paths, effective multilingualism (i.e., the number of languages a participant is proficient in and can effectively use to the extent that they can generate the language spontaneously, thus a B2 level or above), was the superior predictor. Complex multilingualism

(i.e., considering all languages known to the participant and the proficiency of each language jointly in order to provide an overall global measure of multilingualism) followed as the next strongest predictor. Finally, plenitude multilingualism (i.e., the number of languages known to a participant without considering proficiency level) was the least strong predictor. The dominance of the predictors is also reflected in the effect sizes, as using the effect size guidelines recommended by Botes et al. (2025), the effect sizes of effective multilingualism and complex multilingualism as predictors can be considered small to moderate ($.147 < \beta < .308$; $.120 < \beta < .247$), and the effect sizes of plenitude multilingualism can be considered small ($.064 < \beta < .136$). These differences in dominance are observed in spite of the rather large correlations found between complex multilingualism and plenitude multilingualism ($r = .849$; $p < .001$) and complex multilingualism and effective multilingualism ($r = .801$; $p < .001$). It may therefore be that the benefits of multilingualism as predicted in explanatory models are more prominent when the level of proficiency is also considered in the operationalisation of multilingualism. Small amounts of variance are explained when proficiency is not included and languages in the repertoire are simply counted. Therefore, for researchers interested in including multilingualism as a predictor in explanatory models, it is recommended that proficiency take centre stage in the calculation of a multilingualism variable. This finding is in line with the definitions of multilingualism by Wei (2008) and Kadyamusuma et al. (2018), who both emphasise the need to incorporate effective use of the language in defining the concept of multilingualism.

The results further demonstrate the importance of considering measurement specifications in the design of studies. In an explanatory model using plenitude multilingualism, the conclusion would have been drawn that multilingualism is a rather poor predictor of individual differences, whereas conclusions drawn regarding effective multilingualism would have highlighted multilingualism as a particularly valid predictor of individual differences in language learning. In line with the current methodological reform in applied linguistics (see Plonsky, 2024), the results of this chapter illustrate that researchers have to be cognizant of the way they quantitatively capture multilingualism and how this measurement may affect the results of studies. In addition, the numerous competing definitions and measurements of multilingualism are also likely to limit comparisons of results across studies. Broad generalisations as to the effect of multilingualism based on the current heterogeneous measures available in the literature, can also not be reliably made. Furthermore, possible confounding or mediating effects on both the individual conceptualisation of multilingualism and language proficiencies identified in the literature, such as the role of heritage languages (Haukås, 2022; Melo-Pfeifer, 2015), language status (Romanowski & Guardado, 2020), and age of acquisition (Muñoz & Singleton, 2018), are difficult to include in large quantitative studies. As such,

although insight may be gained in quantitative studies examining large explanatory models, it is likely that in-depth examinations of multilingualism remains best performed via qualitative methods.

Limitations

Several limitations within this study ought to be taken into account. Firstly, although proficiency was included in two of the operationalisations of multilingualism, the levels of proficiency were self-reported. As people's ability to judge their own competency has been found to be limited and susceptible to bias (Dunning, 2011; Strube et al., 1986), it is likely that the proficiency scores reported by participants are not objective. Future studies examining proficiency, as obtained through valid measures, and its role in multilingualism operationalisation is recommended. Furthermore, the sample used in this study was collected via snowball sampling and is rather heterogeneous. The impact of various language-, national-, and personal contexts that may impact the results of such a study, were not taken into account. For example, the sample is majority Western and highly educated. Given that Western dominated research tends to lead to overgeneralisations in research (Henrich et al., 2010), future research examining multiple iterations of multilingualism in more diverse settings is needed. Especially since snowball sample has been found to lead to over-sampling of specific groups in foreign language research and may bias results (see Dewaele & Botes, *to appear*). Thirdly, the participants in this study were asked to select a single language to provide responses to the questionnaire. Therefore, the variability in their preferences (e.g., based on proficiency, frequency of use, or emotional attachment) might have introduced some heterogeneity in the data, which should be considered when interpreting the results. In addition, although latent explanatory models were used to examine the effect sizes of each multilingualism predictor, the comparison of predictors within dominance analysis was conducted using observed variables due to the limited power offered by the sample size. Finally, multilingualism awareness is reported to be tied to identity for certain groups, such as immigrants (Haukås, 2022) and be affected by its "collective and socio-constructive nature" (Melo-Pfeifer, 2015, p. 199). For example, the differentiation of heritage language learners who can have a range of proficiencies in the heritage languages and are considered 'multilingual' were not taken into account in this chapter. Future studies can apply our new conceptualisations to examine individuals' identities with diverse socio-cultural backgrounds.

Conclusion

This chapter set out to examine the effect of different operationalisations of multilingualism on explanatory models of individual differences in foreign

language learning. Effective multilingualism, which limits the amount of languages considered in an individual's linguistic repertoire to only those that can be used to a high degree of competency, emerged as the strongest predictor of individual differences. Plenitude multilingualism, which is the number of languages an individual lists in their repertoire without considering proficiency, was the weakest predictor of individual differences. The findings suggest that proficiency plays a key role in the operationalisation of multilingualism and researchers are advised to take proficiency into account when multilingualism is used as a quantitative variable in explanatory studies. As such, the quality of languages in a participant's linguistic repertoire seems to have a stronger predictive effect than the sheer quantity reported.

References

- Adesope, O. O., Lavin, T., Thompson, T., & Ungerleider, C. (2010). A systematic review and meta-analysis of the cognitive correlates of bilingualism. *Review of Educational Research*, 80(2), 207–245. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654310368803>
- Bensalem, E. (2022). The impact of enjoyment and anxiety on English-language learners' willingness to communicate. *Vivat Academia*, (155), 6.
- Bialystok, E., Craik, F. I., & Freedman, M. (2007). Bilingualism as a protection against the onset of symptoms of dementia. *Neuropsychologia*, 45(2), 459–464. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neuropsychologia.2006.10.009>
- Botes, E. L., Dewaele, J. M., & Greiff, S. (2020). The power to improve: Effects of multilingualism and perceived proficiency on enjoyment and anxiety in foreign language learning. *European Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 8(2), 279–306. <https://doi.org/10.1515/eujal-2020-0003>
- Botes, E., Dewaele, J.-M., & Greiff, S. (2021). The development and validation of the Short-form Foreign Language Enjoyment Scale (S-FLES). *The Modern Language Journal*, 105, 858–876. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12741>
- Botes, E., Resnik, P., Greiff, S., & Stempfer, L. (2025). Effect size guidelines for individual differences in L2 learning studies: A second-order synthesis. *Learning and Individual Differences*, 121. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2025.102721>
- Botes, E., van der Westhuizen, L., Dewaele, J.-M., MacIntyre, P. D., & Greiff, S. (2022). Validating the short-form foreign language classroom anxiety scale (S-FLCAS). *Applied Linguistics*, 1–28. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amac018>
- Calafato, R. (2024). The moderating effect of multilingualism on the relationship between EFL learners' grit, enjoyment, and literacy achievement. *International Journal of Bilingualism*, 29(1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/13670069231225729>
- Cook, V. (2003). *Effects of the second language on the first*. Multilingual Matters.
- Costa, A., Hernández, M., & Sebastián-Gallés, N. (2008). Bilingualism aids conflict resolution: Evidence from the ANT task. *Cognition*, 106(1), 59–86. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cognition.2006.12.013>
- Council of Europe. (2020). *Common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment – Companion volume*. Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg. www.coe.int/lang-cefr
- Dewaele, J. (2010). Multilingualism and affordances: Variation in self-perceived communicative competence and communicative anxiety in French L1, L2, L3

- and L4. *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, 48(2–3), 105–129. <https://doi.org/10.1515/iral.2010.006>
- Dewaele, J. M., & Botes, E. (2020). Does multilingualism shape personality? An exploratory investigation. *International Journal of Bilingualism*, 24(4), 811–823. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367006919888581>
- Dewaele, J. M., & Botes, E. (2025). *Socio-demographic variables as sources of variation in foreign language emotions: A cautionary tale about non-random sampling*. [Unpublished Manuscript].
- Dewaele, J. M., & Li, C. (2022). Foreign language enjoyment and anxiety: Associations with general and domain-specific English achievement. *Chinese Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 45(1), 32–48.
- Dewaele, J. M., & Stavans, A. (2014). The effect of immigration, acculturation and multicompetence on personality profiles of Israeli multilinguals. *International Journal of Bilingualism*, 18(3), 203–221. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367006912439941>
- Dewaele, J. M., & Van Oudenhoven, J. P. (2009). The effect of multilingualism/multiculturalism on personality: No gain without pain for third culture kids? *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 6(4), 443–459. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790710903039906>
- Dewaele, J. M., Botes, E., & Greiff, S. (2023). Sources and effects of foreign language enjoyment, anxiety, and boredom: A structural equation modeling approach. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 45(2), 461–479.
- Dewaele, J. M., & MacIntyre, P. D. (2014). The two faces of Janus? Anxiety and enjoyment in the foreign language classroom. *Studies in Second Language Learning Teaching*, 4(2), 237–274. <https://doi.org/10.14746/ssl.2014.4.2.5>
- Dewaele, J. M., Petrides, K. V., & Furnham, A. (2008). The effects of trait emotional intelligence and sociobiographical variables on communicative anxiety and foreign language anxiety among adult multilinguals: A review and empirical investigation. *Language Learning*, 58(4), 911–960. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9922.2008.00482.x>
- Dewaele, J. M., Sanz Ferrer, M., Kamal Ahmed, I., & Albakistani, A. (2024). Does multilingualism affect foreign language classroom anxiety and foreign language enjoyment? *Porta Linguarum an International Journal of Foreign Language Teaching and Learning*, (9), 13–29. <https://doi.org/10.30827/portalin.viIX.29895>
- Dolas, F., Jessner, U., & Cedden, G. (2022). Cognitive advantages of multilingual learning on metalinguistic awareness, working memory and L1 lexicon size: Reconceptualization of linguistic giftedness from a DMM perspective. *Journal of Cognition*, 5(1). <https://doi.org/10.5334/joc.201>
- Dunning, D. (2011). The Dunning–Kruger effect: On being ignorant of one’s own ignorance. In J. M. Olson & M. P. Zanna (Eds.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (pp. 247–296). Academic Press. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-385522-0.00005-6>
- Festman, J. (2019). The psycholinguistics of multilingualism. In D. Singleton & L. Aronin. (Eds.), *Twelve lectures on multilingualism* (pp. 233–269). Multilingual Matters.
- Greve, W., Koch, M., Rasche, V., & Kersten, K. (2024). Extending the scope of the ‘cognitive advantage’ hypothesis: Multilingual individuals show higher flexibility

- of goal adjustment. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 45(4), 822–838.
- Grin, F., & Vaillancourt, F. (1997). The economics of multilingualism: Overview and analytical framework. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 17, 43–65.
- Haukås, Å. (2022). Who are the multilinguals?: Pupils' definitions, self-perceptions and the public debate. In W. Ayres-Bennett & L. Fisher (Eds.), *Multilingualism and identity: interdisciplinary perspectives* (pp. 281–298). chapter, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Henrich, J., Heine, S. J., & Norenzayan, A. (2010). The weirdest people in the world? *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 33(2–3), 61–83.
- Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, 70, 125–132. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1986.tb05256.x>
- Kadymusuma, M., Higby, E., Obler, L., Singleton, D., & Aronin, L. (2018). The neurolinguistics of multilingualism. In D. Singleton & L. Aronin (Eds.), *Twelve lectures in multilingualism* (pp. 269–295). Multilingual Matters.
- Kavé, G., Eyal, N., Shorek, A., & Cohen-Mansfield, J. (2008). Multilingualism and cognitive state in the oldest old. *Psychology and Aging*, 23(1), 70–78. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0882-7974.23.1.70>
- Kemp, C. (2007). Strategic processing in grammar learning: Do multilinguals use more strategies? *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 4(4), 241–261. <https://doi.org/10.2167/ijm099.0>
- Kemp, C. (2009). Defining multilingualism. In L. Aronin & B. Hufeisen (Eds.), *The exploration of multilingualism* (pp. 11–26). John Benjamins.
- Kenny, D. A. (2020). *Measuring model fit*. Retrieved from <https://davidakenny.net/cm/fit.htm>
- Krizman, J., Marian, V., Shook, A., Skoe, E., & Kraus, N. (2012). Subcortical encoding of sound is enhanced in bilinguals and relates to executive function advantages. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 109(20), 7877–7881. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1201575109>
- Lehtonen, M., Soveri, A., Laine, A., Järvenpää, J., de Bruin, A., & Antfolk, J. (2018). Is bilingualism associated with enhanced executive functioning in adults? A meta analytic review. *Psychological Bulletin*, 144(4), 394–425. <https://doi.org/10.1037/bul0000142>
- Li, C. H. (2016). Confirmatory factor analysis with ordinal data: Comparing robust maximum likelihood and diagonally weighted least squares. *Behavior Research Methods*, 48, 936–949.
- Luchman, J., & Luchman, M. J. (2022). Domir: Tools to support relative importance analysis. R package version 1.0.0. <https://github.com/jluchman/domir>
- MacIntyre, P. D. (1992). *Anxiety and language learning from a stages of processing perspective* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). The University of Western Ontario, London, ON, Canada. Retrieved from <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/digitizedtheses/2155>
- McCroskey, J. C. (1992). Reliability and validity of the willingness to communicate scale. *Communication Quarterly*, 40(1), 16–25.
- McCroskey, J. C., & McCroskey, L. L. (1988). Self-report as an approach to measuring communication competence. *Communication Research Reports*, 5(2), 108–113. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08824098809359810>

- Melo-Pfeifer, S. (2015). Multilingual awareness and heritage language education: Children's multimodal representations of their multilingualism. *Language Awareness*, 24(3), 197–215.
- Muñoz, C., & Singleton, D. (2018). Lecture 8: Age and multilingualism. In D. Singleton & L. Aronin (Eds.), *Twelve lectures on multilingualism* (pp. 213–230). Multilingual Matters. <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781788922074-010>
- Pietrzyk-Kowalec, P. (2023). Multilingualism and the job market in the European Union: A comprehensive analysis. *Proceedings of The World Conference on Education and Teaching*, 2, 1–8. 10.33422/etconf.v2i1.71.
- Planchon, A., & Ellis, E. M. (2014). A diplomatic advantage? The effects of bilingualism and formal language training on language aptitude among Australian diplomatic officers. *Language Awareness* v., 23(3), 203–219. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09658416.2012.742907>
- Pliatsikas, C., Meteyard, L., Verissimo, J., DeLuca, V., Shattuck, K., & Ullman, M. T. (2020). The effect of bilingualism on brain development from early childhood to young adulthood. *Brain Structure and Function*, 225(7), 2131–2152. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00429-020-02115-5>
- Plonsky, L. (2024). Study quality as an intellectual and ethical imperative: A proposed framework. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 44, 4–18. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190524000059>
- Rogers, V., Meara, P., Barnett-Legh, T., Curry, C., & Davie, E. (2017). Examining the LLAMA aptitude tests. *Journal of the European Second Language Association*, 1(1), 49–60. <https://doi.org/10.22599/jesla.24>
- Rolbin, C., & Della Chiesa, B. (2010). “We share the same biology...” Cultivating cross-cultural empathy and global ethics through multilingualism. *Mind, Brain, and Education*, 4(4), 196–207.
- Romanowski, P., & Guardado, M. (Eds.). (2020). *The many faces of multilingualism: Language status, learning and use across contexts* (Vol. 33). Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co KG.
- Rosseel, Y. (2012). Lavaan: An R package for structural equation modeling and more. Version 0.5–12 (BETA). *Journal of Statistical Software*, 48(2), 1–36.
- Strube, M. J., Lott, C. L., Le-Xuan-Hy, G. M., Oxenberg, J., & Deichmann, A. K. (1986). Self-evaluation of abilities: Accurate self-assessment versus biased self-enhancement. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51(1), 16.
- Thompson, A. S., & Lee, J. (2013). Anxiety and EFL: Does multilingualism matter? *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 16(6), 730–749. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2012.713322>
- Tonidandel, S., & LeBreton, J. M. (2011). Relative importance analysis: A useful supplement to regression analysis. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 26(1), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-010-9204-3>
- Wei, L. (2008). Research perspectives on bilingualism and multilingualism. In L. Wei & M. G. Moyer (Eds.), *The Blackwell guide to research methods in bilingualism and multilingualism*, (pp. 1–17). Blackwell Publishing.
- Zhang, Q., Song, Y., & Zhao, C. (2024). Foreign language enjoyment and willingness to communicate: The mediating roles of communication confidence and motivation. *System*, 103346. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2024.103346>

5 Psychotypology-guided strategy development and multilingual learner emotions when learning a linguistically distant language

Yan-Yi Lee and Karen Forbes

Introduction

Globalisation has expanded the language learning industry like never before. With a mere few clicks on the Internet, today's learners have an array of languages at their disposal. Increasingly frequent cross-continental trade and political collaborations also mark a new era wherein people find motivation to learn languages spoken in distant corners of the world.

Despite this trend, current literature documents little on how distant languages can be effectively learned and how learner emotions evolve under pedagogy that is mindful of linguistic distance. Anecdotal evidence (common sayings like 'it's all Greek/Chinese to me') and research point to linguistic distance being challenging to navigate (Jessner, 2008; Ringbom, 2006), yet there is scant awareness of how learners feel when having to navigate an unfamiliar language as complete beginners.

This lends promise to Kellerman's concept of psychotypology (1983) (i.e., how learners perceive similarities or differences between languages). With no pedagogical guidance, linguistic distance can be debilitating (e.g., 'I don't recognise anything or even how to start'); but strategic psychotypological thinking can be the first step to break down a seemingly tough language to learn (e.g., 'I'll start small by breaking down the morphological composition—something I can still recognise'). The trials and tribulations of tackling a distant language can be dynamic, and the emotional trajectories that come with it, intriguing.

This chapter explores how strategic psychotypological thinking among multilinguals with diverse repertoires can empower learners to look beyond surface-level linguistic similarities and overcome linguistic barriers and, in doing so, seeks to further our understanding of the cognitive-affective link when learning to read a distant language.

Here, multilingualism is broadly defined as knowledge of more than one language, regardless of the level of proficiency. And under this, strategic

psychotypological thinking is defined as the ability to see how languages are connected to one another, regardless of how similar or distant they may seem on the surface. It concerns the process of becoming language-aware, either by reflecting on one's own language learning trajectories in the past, or by exploring new strategies. This chapter is designed to explore just how this process unfolds, with a close look from the dynamic angle of learner emotions.

Literature review

Learning typologically distant languages

In language learning, there is a general consensus that a target language similar to one's existing background language is often easier to learn, largely due to the opportunity to rely on cognates and comparable linguistic structures (Rothman et al., 2019). As such, discussions around multilingual transfer in language learning have often centred around languages that share common ancestry. Common examples involve students in a western or northern European context transferring linguistic knowledge or strategies to another western European target language, with studies in this area also covering different language skill sets, such as grammar (Rast, 2010), metasemantic problem-solving (Dahm, 2015), translation (Rast, 2010; Smidfelt & van de Weijer, 2019), and phonology (Nelson et al., 2021).

Such studies have laid a crucial foundation for cognitive transfer in applied linguistics. However, as linguists we are aware of the incredible diversity of languages around the globe, and while human languages do ultimately share some universal features (Cristofaro, 2010), there are language pairs that, at surface level, may seem to share nothing obvious in common. European learners of Korean or Japanese learners of Arabic can be such examples, since these are language pairs that belong to different language classifications (i.e., linguistic family trees) from a historical linguistic perspective (Campbell, 2013).

The phenomenon of learning a distant language is by no means negligible under the current trends of language education; global connectivity is ever-expanding, which has sculpted an increasingly complex language learning landscape. This also means that the languages that learners opt for, or are compelled to learn, may share little to no commonalities with their first languages. While there isn't yet a comprehensive review to illustrate this phenomenon, we can imagine its magnitude by looking at the large body of studies on English education across Asia, or the widespread interest in Korean due to South Korea's soft culture (Chan & Chi, 2011).

Furthermore, the rise of global superpowers—East Asia (Chen et al., 2017) and the Arab world (Facchin, 2019) to name a couple—has likewise stimulated the Chinese, Japanese, and Arabic language teaching industries worldwide.

Emotions in the context of learning distant languages

Although there is no systematic review examining learner emotions when navigating linguistic distance, documentation of anxiety is present (see Elaldi, 2016; Han, 2014 for examples of English language anxiety in Turkey and China, respectively). Such descriptions of anxiety are not surprising—linguistic distance implies the need to venture into the unfamiliar. Unfamiliarity also implies the need to commit time and energy to learning a whole new learning system and language base from the beginning.

However, the rise of positive psychology in applied linguistics (Dewaele et al., 2019) suggests that learners do not necessarily have to experience negative emotions when learning a distant language, especially when supported by an effective teaching and learning model. Pronounced linguistic barriers may slow down learning, but it equally encourages learners to put their problem-solving and strategy development skills to the test; success in overcoming challenges and finally mastering a distant language can also bring forth pride and enjoyment during the learning process (Yin, 2021). As such, while linguistic distance is often portrayed as challenging and energy-consuming, there is no evidence that emotions triggered by linguistic distance should purely be negative.

Psychotypology: a promising tool for the learning of distant languages

Coined by Kellerman in 1983, psychotypology refers to a learner's perception of similarity or distance between two languages. Psychotypology shapes the initial thoughts that emerge when learners process new content in a target language and it is also particularly relevant to adult learning—in Knowles' (1996) well-known theory of andragogy, adults are believed to learn new ideas by drawing on previous experience and what they already know of the world. Transferring this to a linguistic context, psychotypology is often an instinctive reaction of adults to make sense of new target language input (e.g., 'the grammatical logic here looks similar to another language I know, let's see if it makes sense here'). Noteworthy is that in Lee (2023), it has been documented that psychotypology need not only be perceived on a whole-language level (i.e., 'Japanese is not similar to English'), but for more meaningful use of psychotypology, learners can be encouraged

to think about psychotypology in relation to the many different elements that make up a language (such as syntax, grammar, script, morphology, vocabulary, language and thought). To illustrate, instead of generic claims such as ‘Japanese is not similar to English’, learners may be motivated by statements like the following:

Japanese is not similar to English overall, but there are many loan words from European languages that I can draw from.

Japanese is not similar to English overall, but I can still transfer my metalinguistic knowledge of parts of speech, punctuation, and prepositions (which still apply across languages) to help break down a sentence.

Such examples outline the potentially empowering role of psychotypology—instead of being paralysed by stark surface-level differences, learners can think about cross-linguistic commonalities when faced with linguistic distance. There is hence promise in understanding how such a cognitive process may, in turn, shape learners’ emotional learning trajectories.

Strategy-based instruction: definition, progress, and new applications

When it comes to strategies in language learning, a longstanding misconception is that learners would likely invent strategies themselves as an instinctive reaction, a natural part of their language development (e.g., Kellerman, 1991). More recently, however, scholars have shown that when learners are left to their own devices, strategy use and the multilingual awareness involved do not always develop naturally (Park & Starr, 2015), and that explicit guidance is crucial for learners to ignite awareness of strategies they have.

It is with this mindset that some researchers began to focus on strategy-based instruction (SBI). SBI is an interventionist approach to raise awareness and use of strategies in language learning settings (Nguyen & Gu, 2013), with hopes of empowering students to take as much control as possible in their language learning. SBI rose to the forefront after scholars increasingly realised that there is no basis to label any specific learning strategies as inherently ‘good’ or ‘bad’ (Macaro, 2001); rather, it purports to have learners freely explore, experiment with, and develop strategies based on what they know of their preferences as learners (e.g., will this strategy be helpful for me, and why?), enhancing the idea of building learner autonomy (Oxford, 2015) through non-linear strategy development. To date, SBI has seen much success in the language learning field (see Ardasheva et al., 2017; Plonsky, 2011) and its status in the language classroom remains prominent.

Adding psychotypology to SBI

Traditionally, SBI studies have focused on the teaching of particular language skills, such as grammar (e.g., Ghaemi & Jadidi, 2017), writing (e.g., Forbes, 2020), and listening (e.g., Dalman & Plonsky, 2025), yet there is less focus on particular strategies which may support the learning of linguistically distant languages. To this end, a specific intervention of SBI was developed which was informed by the principles of psychotypology, referred to as the ‘Strategy-based Instruction with Awareness of Psychotypology’ (SIPPs) (Lee, 2023). This larger doctoral study on which this chapter is based was inspired by the lack of understanding of multilingual thinking in the context of learning a distant language, coupled with the promising potential of psychotypology in SBI. Implementing a design-based research methodology (Wang & Hannafin, 2005), the SIPPs study sought to understand how a psychotypology-guided approach to strategy development could support learners to navigate linguistic distance when reading at beginner-level in Mandarin Chinese. However, as noted above, it is not only important to consider learners’ cognitive processes in language learning but also their emotional trajectories. This chapter therefore seeks to answer the following research question: ‘When learning a linguistically distant language, how do language learner emotions evolve under a psychotypology-led strategy-based instruction programme?’.

Context and methods*Participants*

The data presented in this chapter derives from a larger intervention study, where learners were recruited from Mandarin as a second language programmes in Taiwan (see Lee, 2023). The focus here will be on three individual cases—Bayu, Emilio, and Mary—whose data contribute to a multiple-case study. Participants were beginner-level learners of Mandarin Chinese and immigrated to Taiwan for their academic pursuits. All were adults and had different language backgrounds (Indonesian/English, Spanish/English, and English/French respectively as main languages in their repertoire), so learners had a multilingual repertoire to work with—either dormant or active. These cases are not necessarily ‘typical’ of the learners in the SIPPs, but rather, their cases yield thought-provoking data that can provide insights on psychotypology and its contribution to emotional empowerment when learning a distant language. To avoid positive bias (Tight, 2022), cases that lay out both positive and sceptical viewpoints are presented.

Design of the intervention

After discussion with the programme administrator, the intervention was both designed and taught by the researcher. This decision was made in light of Ardasheva et al. (2017), who found that SBIs were often successful with the researcher playing the role of the instructor.

The central aim of the SIPP study was to build learners' psychotypological awareness by having them carefully reflect on the structures of Mandarin and their own background languages, pinpointing the conceptual ways in which they differ, while also identifying any similarities or linguistic universals (Cristofaro, 2010). That is, it uses a guided approach to have learners think more deeply about how languages work more generally, what linguistic features span across all languages, what language learning strategies have helped them in the past, and why those strategies made sense.

Based on that awareness, learners were trained to develop strategies when reading. When they encountered a particular word, phrase, or sentence that they perceived as unfamiliar, they were taught to first analyse the linguistic barrier they perceived, and to determine whether a transfer of linguistic knowledge, a transfer of strategies, or the development of a completely new strategy would make sense. An example can be seen in Box 5.1.

Box 5.1 Example of a strategy in the SIPP

The learner sees the character '花'. They don't know what it means, but they think of prefixes in English and remind themselves that radicals (a concept similar to prefixes) exist. They identify the grass radical in 花 and infer that it is a plant.

Here they have used the transfer of linguistic knowledge (radicals/prefixes) and the transfer of strategies (identifying a radical/infering).

Overall, the SIPP intervention was not so much a 'language' course, but rather, a training programme on strategy use as informed by psychotypological awareness. There was no explicit focus on emotional development, although it was hypothesised that the focus on cognitive thinking would contribute positively to it. The SIPP covered psychotypology-guided thinking on multiple aspects of beginner-level reading in Mandarin Chinese, including character scripts, morphology, syntax, and text reading (see Table 5.1).

Instruments and Procedures: With an interest in emotions, this chapter focuses on data relating to learners' perceptions of the SIPP intervention.

Table 5.1 Key topics and strategy instruction during the Strategy-based Instruction Programme with Awareness of Psychotypology (SIPPs)

<i>Session no.</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Strategy instruction</i>
1	General multilingual awareness	A session designed for learners to reflect on their multilingual journey: what might psychotypology mean, how were their strategies like in the past, and what do they know about cross-linguistic universals?
2	Writing Script I	Learners were taught, and brought to reflect on, how Chinese characters are constructed and how that compares cross-linguistically; they were given some examples to practice psychotypology-informed strategies
3	Writing Script II	An extension of the previous session
4	Morphology	Learners were taught, and brought to reflect on, the ten main ways that Chinese words are constructed morphologically and how that compares cross-linguistically; they were given some examples to practice psychotypology-informed strategies
5	Syntax	Learners reflected on Chinese syntax and how to break down information in a sentence; they were given some examples to practice psychotypology-informed strategies
6	Text reading	Learners reflected on the strategies they use when reading a text in a foreign language and how those strategies can transfer to a Chinese reading context

This was collected via open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews following the final session.

The open-ended questionnaire was completed by all students and contained five questions. It concerned the impact, if any, that a psychotypology-guided strategy development instruction had on learners’ learning (e.g., ‘What do you think of the course’s approach of connecting cross-linguistic thinking with the development of reading strategies? What impact does it have on your learning?’). Learners’ reflections on the course in general and its pedagogical approach were also encouraged.

Semi-structured interviews conducted with each participant allowed for any elaborations or clarifications from the questionnaires. Through the dynamics of conversation, learners were guided to explain how they felt under psychotypological training. Each interview was around 15 minutes long, yielding a dataset of approximately 2,000 words each.

The interview was based on the questionnaire responses and learners were asked to further elaborate their thoughts. English was the main language used for interviews, although if they wished to, learners had the option to switch to Spanish (a language that the researcher herself was comfortable to work with).

Data was later analysed in a data-driven, inductive approach, which took into account Miles and Huberman's (1994) classic procedures of data reduction, data display, and conclusion-drawing. In the within-case analysis, themes freely emerged based on responses to the questions on their perceptions towards the psychotypology approach and their emotional trajectories during the intervention. This was followed by a cross-case analysis of the thematic similarities and differences between the three learners, using a constant-comparative approach.

Findings

The findings here present individual cases of the three learners, with a description of their multilingual background and reports of how they felt about psychotypology throughout the intervention.

Bayu, the practicality-driven multilingual

Bayu was an Indonesian graphic design student in Taiwan, with Indonesian and Javanese as his L1s and English as his L2 (learned through school in Indonesia). Aside from focusing on his studies, Bayu was also working part-time in the service industry in Taiwan and wished to learn the language quickly through intense immersion.

At the start of the intervention, Bayu perceived Mandarin as very distant from other languages in his repertoire, confirming that he saw Mandarin as psychotypologically distant overall. In the first session warm-up, he mentioned that he did not feel too intimidated by or anxious about Chinese due to being constantly immersed in Taiwanese society for part-time work purposes. If he felt any anxiety at all, it was induced by the need to gather as much competence in the language as soon as possible.

When Bayu was asked to recall his very first impression towards the SIPPs, he recounted a small level of appreciation, but it wasn't quite what he was used to as a multilingual. He reflected:

... you help me think about the connection between languages and use creative strategies... Like, there is possibility to think about how language and strategy connect. I always use instant method and I don't think about this a lot usually.

—Semi-structured interview (SSI)

Based on Bayu's descriptions in his interview, it is clear that he understood what psychotypology was more broadly ('you help me think about the connection between languages') and what the goal of the SIPPs intervention was ('there is possibility to think about how language and strategy connect'). This was followed by a statement indicating what he is used to when learning Chinese ('the instant method', implying that the preference was to quickly absorb linguistic information as they come without looking too much into its structure or comparing it cross-linguistically).

This 'alien feeling' towards psychotypology did not dissipate over the weeks. When asked how he felt as the intervention advanced to the latter sessions of morphology, syntax, and text reading, Bayu recalled:

I learn some new information about Chinese language every time, but I still wanted to learn quickly and just remember the information that you teach. I do not always have time to think about language connection and strategy when I revise my Chinese after class.

—SSI

When asked how he felt overall about the SIPPs and whether it had any effect on their learning, Bayu took the chance to hint at its limited role in shaping his learner emotions:

I like learning new ways of how people learn Chinese. I know what you want to teach but it does not fit my time, lifestyle or learning style. I don't dislike or like the learning process. The challenge for Chinese for me is still the same.

—Open-ended questionnaire (OEQ)

He appreciated psychotypology in his acquisition of Mandarin and saw its value for language learners. Nevertheless, as a learner who needed to acquire Mandarin as quickly as possible for work, he found psychotypology to be time-consuming to think about and 'not quick enough' for his learning, thus hindering his learning speed ('I know what you want to teach but it does not fit my time, lifestyle or learning style'). As such, psychotypology did not have a direct effect on his learning emotions ('I don't dislike or like the learning process')—his data does not suggest that psychotypology played any noticeable role in shaping his emotions, and his perception of Mandarin as a psychotypologically distant language remained constant throughout.

Overall, Bayu still did well in all of the intervention's reading tasks, something he attributed to his 'studying and memorising every day'. Hesitant to give up his immediate needs and long-established learning ways, Bayu is named as the practicality-driven multilingual when it comes to attitudes and emotions towards psychotypology.

Emilio, the transformed multilingual

Perhaps the most dynamic case in the SIPP study was that of Emilio, a humanities student from Guatemala. He spoke Spanish as an L1 and prior to the study, he already had French and English in his repertoire. English was an international language that he studied in school since childhood, and French was another language that he learned as part of the high school curriculum.

At the beginning, Emilio showed noticeable concern over being able to learn Mandarin properly. Despite starting strong as a trilingual, Emilio showed noticeable resistance towards the idea that multilingualism would be any help at all in his Mandarin Chinese learning journey. During the first session on psychotypology and multilingual reflection, Emilio expressed that, even though French, English, and Spanish were generally similar, he ‘didn’t know the grammar of L1 Spanish well enough to transfer concepts to L3 French’. He claimed to ‘not use any strategies’ when reading in English, possibly discounting any automated strategies. If he is no expert in his L1 and does not actively use any in his second, he thought, how could he realistically use his background languages to scaffold the daunting journey of learning Chinese?

Despite initial scepticism, Emilio surprisingly displayed pleasure in psychotypology-led thinking in latter sessions of the intervention, continuously asking questions, being active in voicing his thoughts on any conceptual similarities between Chinese and his background languages, and eagerly trying out strategies. This attitude was echoed in his open-ended questionnaire response:

When I look at Chinese, it all looks very different and a bit intimidating. But in the class, you give us some clues to think about ways that Chinese and Spanish are similar or different. Every time in class, I discover new ways to say that Chinese is similar to Spanish. I begin to focus on the good parts.

—OEQ

Initially a sceptic who gave the SIPP the benefit of the doubt, Emilio’s case showed that with time and some patience, a psychotypology-guided approach can change how learners feel about what they know linguistically and the types of strategies that they can use. In this case, some simple guiding questions in each session led him to realise that a lot of linguistic knowledge is ‘buried’ deep in memory and can be ‘reactivated’ if needed. While initially worried about linguistic distance, Emilio went on to ‘focus on the good parts’ (SSI)—meaning that instead of being paralysed by distance, he sought structural or conceptual similarities across languages, however unobvious, to help him make sense of Chinese.

He also voiced how he felt about the SIPPs towards the end:

I think if you are a foreigner you will need to create your own strategies, I don't know if you can have a Bible. This course helped me with what I call 'deep thinking', it gives me a sense of what I am doing when I learn Chinese, even if I still struggle remembering the radicals... All this, it always redirects me for every new thing I read, and I know every word, I have to think differently about it.

—SSI

Because of his noticeable change in attitudes, Emilio is known as the transformed multilingual in this study—a name that comes with an interesting case of psychotypologically awakened multilingual empowerment.

Mary, the stimulated multilingual

A student who consistently had positive reflections to share was Mary. She was a Canadian psychology researcher in Taiwan with an existing record of language learning. Coming from Eastern Canada, she was raised as an English-French bilingual. Her long-term stay in the Netherlands meant that she had tried to pick up L3 Dutch, and before the study, she had some experience with L4 Korean as a fan of the Korean soft culture.

At the beginning of the intervention, Mary mentioned that she knew she had a long journey to go with learning the distant features of Mandarin, but she was excited, as she already showed many signs of interest in her own multilingualism. She also reported that she had never been in a language class with explicit focus on cross-linguistic differences, and she was 'more than excited to see how it goes'.

Across the sessions, Mary did well in her reading tasks, and was not worried about making mistakes. Trial and error during psychotypological thinking and strategy development played a role in having her test her knowledge of language:

Thinking about it, yeah, I do think that your classes have made me feel positive about my progress. I like that it's all very encouraging and that mistakes are a way to test how well you know the language and your own mode of learning. I look forward to the content, like yesterday I was just thinking this, you know, that I felt excited to try more strategies that I never had before.

—SSI

Mary seemed to showcase similar attitudes throughout all sessions. She left the course with a statement that showcased how psychotypology had empowered her as a multilingual learner:

This course did encourage me that there was indeed a lot I could do with what I know in my languages and what I know in my life (as a learner). Chinese is hard, but people just have to know how to break it down, using whatever you may have.

—OEQ

Mary's statement carries an element of hope and empowerment for future language learning endeavours ('there was indeed a lot I could do with what I know in my languages and what I know in my life (as a learner)'). Therefore, despite Chinese still being distant to her, she now has the confidence to know how to digest her learning healthily by 'break(ing) it down, using whatever you may have'.

Session to session, Mary was consistently excited to revisit her multilingual repertoire, which included both her knowledge of language and the strategies that she knew she was capable of using. Her affective mood in learning Chinese was consistent, and she can be seen as the stimulated multilingual.

Discussion

The three cases above reveal an array of emotional experiences with psychotypology, and the data also provide interesting perspectives on learning to read in a linguistically distant language. This discussion mainly seeks to answer the proposed research question, which then allows a refreshed look at psychotypology and its previously unexpected role in shaping learner emotions:

When learning a linguistically distant language, how do learner emotions evolve under a psychotypology-led strategy-based instruction programme?

Motivation plays a role in the acceptance of psychotypology

Psychotypology is helpful but its influence is also governed by learners' motivations to pursue a language. Bayu expressed an immediate interest in acquiring words, phrases, and the ability to read as soon as possible for his part-time role. This governed his willingness to accept psychotypology as a learning tool, as he believed it could be a departure from his ultimate learning objective. The influence of his expectations over his motivation

to use psychotypology echoes with expectancy-value theory (Wigfield & Eccles, 2020); that is, even though psychotypology was not perceived as an unhelpful tool, it was not seen as helpful either for his goals, and thus played no evident role in his emotional trajectory. The reverse could be seen for Mary—Mary used words such as ‘excited’ at the idea of psychotypology, and by giving it a try, Mary reported positive experience with confronting what she believed were pronounced linguistic challenges. That is, in line with MacIntyre et al.’s (2019) overview on the relationship between emotions and motivation, it seemed that for Mary, psychotypology was a catalyst that created positive emotions and subsequently, motivation to learn. These cases accentuate the idea that learners come into the classroom with a complex range of needs, emotions, and backgrounds, which all affect what strategies are ultimately used and how learners ultimately perform (Oxford & Gkonou, 2021).

Psychotypology as a catalyst to reactivate cross-linguistic knowledge and gain confidence as a multilingual

For both Emilio and Mary, a psychotypological approach was a catalyst to get them to dig deeper into what they know about languages and use that to empower their exploration of Mandarin. Especially for Emilio, psychotypologically guided questions at the start of every session seemed to have reactivated his dormant metalinguistic knowledge from English, French, and Spanish, and he grew to be pleasantly surprised at how much he actually knew about languages. Once a sceptic of his own abilities but now a confident learner, Emilio’s learning journey shows how linguistic knowledge growth and the motivation to explore one’s multilingual empowerment can ultimately lead to enjoyment in language learning.

While psychotypology was cognitively and linguistically eye-opening for him, this transformed into self-efficacy and crucially, a multilingual growth mindset. Such a mindset is interconnected with self-regulated learning (SRL) in a way similar to the findings in Bai and Wang (2020), where growth mindset was found to be a strong predictor of SRL.

Psychotypology as a liberating tool when learning a distant language

Also for both Mary and Emilio, but perhaps more for Mary, psychotypology was a liberating tool for learning Chinese as it helped her ‘know how to break it down’ using whatever (psychotypological) tools available. She saw psychotypology in this way from the start, as it encouraged her to make mistakes with experimentation, to analyse unfamiliar concepts, and to try new strategies like never before. The fact that she mentioned how she was ‘feel(ing) positive about my progress’ and how she felt encouraged when ‘there was indeed a lot I could do with what I know in my

languages' lends support to this revelation as well. The maintenance of positive emotions throughout with the help of psychotypology, resulting in a strengthening of cognition and activity engagement, resonates strongly with Fredrickson's (2001) broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions. The broaden-and-build theory maintains that positive emotions can shape momentary thoughts, which helps individuals construct resources during an endeavour. Psychotypology helped create such positive emotions, facilitating the use of intellectual resources (i.e., strategies and multilingual thinking) when reading in Mandarin.

Psychotypology and its role in learner emotions: a much needed update

Traditionally, psychotypology has been discussed predominantly from a cognitive lens, mainly in the sense of comparing structures and features between languages. This study adds to the existing literature on psychotypology by uniquely incorporating a focus on learner emotions. Skehan (2008) wrote that psychotypology was 'linked to psychological factors which impact on performance' (p. 415), without much clarification of what the 'psychological' factors were exactly and how they could have impacted learner outcomes. A decade later, Cho (2018) also wrote that 'perception of language proximity is conceptualised as a dynamic construct that can either facilitate or hinder learning' (p. ii), leaving out an explanation on how exactly learning could be affected by psychotypology or whether it develops over time.

At the surface level, Skehan's (2008) and Cho's (2018) statements ring true; learners can indeed feel intimidated by perceived linguistic distance and begin to envision the likelihood of their success. Depending on how they react to that sentiment, it can take a toll on their learning performance. This study, however, moves past that initial perception and focuses on psychotypological thinking in strategy development across time. When well guided and with some level of acceptance, psychotypology can empower the learner to leverage a 'can-do' attitude and not pause their learning in the face of linguistic barriers, ultimately supporting them to 'dig deeper' into less obvious cross-linguistic similarities. It allows them to realise the infinite possibility of their existing multilingual resources and make use of them when overcoming linguistic blocks. This aligns with MacIntyre and Gregersen's (2012) argument that positive emotions and an imagining of possibilities in learning help to pull in resources and keep the learner open to new ways to acquire language.

Overall, the way that psychotypology, a predominantly cognitive tool, has emotionally uplifted at least two of the three learners is noteworthy; it also raises the broader, interesting topic of how the cognitive and emotional sides of learning connect. Classically rooted in Vygotsky's work, the inextricable cognition-emotion link seems to have been neglected

somewhat in applied linguistics (Swain, 2013); and, as Arnold (2020) notes, a concern for affect in the classroom is just as critical as cognition. The ability of psychotypology to ignite emotional growth in multilingual learners hopefully rekindles interest in reuniting the two broader perspectives in language learning.

Conclusion

Fuelled by curiosity about how learners embark on the (often) daunting journey of learning a distant language, this chapter constitutes a preliminary window into the vibrant intersection between psychotypology (which, by tradition, is a cognitively focused mode of thinking) and how it can influence the emotional trajectory of the learner. Although the emotional affordance of psychotypology can vary according to the motivation and circumstances of the learner, there is evidence here to suggest that psychotypology can encourage learners to think deeper on multiple linguistic levels, to overcome pronounced linguistic barriers, and to maintain a positive attitude in the face of learning discomfort. The study points to an intricate cognitive-affective link when learning—psychotypological distance may dishearten learners at the first instance, but designed psychotypological thinking can empower the learner to break down language into manageable sections, focusing on similarities rather than differences.

The study also sets the foundation for future studies. For instance, there is value in pursuing intervention-based insights on instructors' 'affective coaching' (Inözü et al., 2008) in the context of learning challenging distant languages. With little attention given to affective strategies more broadly (Oxford & Gkonou, 2021), researchers could also examine affective strategies in contexts with pronounced linguistic challenges. A limitation to note in this study is that the psychotypological approach may be more useful for learners who are already at least bilingual—for learners learning their L2 with only their L1 to draw knowledge from, a psychotypological approach may be perceived differently, and this may be worth some scholarly attention. Finally, this study also implies the need for a theoretical review of psychotypology—from an emotional, rather than a cognitive perspective.

With a refreshed lens into what psychotypology can offer psychologically, we may be starting an interesting chapter on the emotions of multilingual learners.

Bibliography

- Ardasheva, Y., Wang, Z., Adesope, O. O., & Valentine, J. C. (2017). Exploring effectiveness and moderators of language learning strategy instruction on second language and self-regulated learning outcomes. *Review of Educational Research*, 87(3), 544–582. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654316689135>

- Arnold, J. (2020). Affective factors in language learning. In A. M. Padilla & M. Chamot (Eds.), *The handbook of language learning and teaching* (pp. 25–40). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003019497-2>
- Bai, B., & Wang, J. (2020). The role of growth mindset, self-efficacy and intrinsic value in self-regulated learning and English language learning achievements. *Language Teaching Research*, 27(1), 207–228. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168820933190>
- Campbell, L. (2013). *Historical linguistics*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Chan, W., & Chi, S. (2011). Chapter 8. Popular media as a motivational factor for foreign language learning: The example of the Korean Wave. In W. Chan, K. Chin, M. Nagami, & T. Suthiwan (Eds.), *Media in foreign language teaching and learning* (pp. 151–188). De Gruyter Mouton. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781614510208.151>
- Chen, Y. L., Yang, T. A., & Chen, H. L. (2017). Challenges encountered in a Chinese immersion program in the United States. *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher*, 26(3), 163–170. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40299-017-0337-2>
- Cho, K. (2018). *Exploring the role of perception in language learning: A Plurilingual and ecological perspective on students' perceptions of French-English proximity* [Master's Thesis, University of Toronto].
- Cristofaro, S. (2010). Language universals and linguistic knowledge. In J. Song (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of linguistic typology* (pp. 227–249). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199281251.001.0001>
- Dahm, R. (2015). Developing cognitive strategies through pluralistic approaches. In G. De Angelis, U. Jessner, & M. Kresic (Eds.), *Crosslinguistic influence and crosslinguistic interaction in multilingual language learning* (pp. 43–70). Bloomsbury Academic.
- Dalman, M., & Plonsky, L. (2025). The effectiveness of second-language listening strategy instruction: A meta-analysis. *Language Teaching Research*, 29(3), 1039–1068. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688211072981>
- Dewaele, J.-M., Chen, X., Padilla, A. M., & Lake, J. (2019). The flowering of positive psychology in foreign language teaching and acquisition research. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10, Article 2128. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02128>
- Elaldi, S. (2016). Foreign language anxiety of students studying English language and literature: A sample from Turkey. *Educational Research and Reviews*, 11(6), 219–228. <https://doi.org/10.5897/ERR2015.2507>
- Facchin, A. (2019). *Teaching Arabic as a foreign language: Origins, developments and current directions*. Amsterdam University Press.
- Forbes, K. (2020). *Cross-linguistic transfer of writing strategies: Interactions between foreign language and first language classrooms*. Multilingual Matters.
- Fredrickson, B. L. (2001). The role of positive emotions in positive psychology: The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions. *American Psychologist*, 56(3), 218–226. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.56.3.218>
- Ghaemi, F., & Jadidi, E. (2017). The effect of strategy-based grammar instruction on Iranian EFL learner's grammar achievement. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research*, 4(6), 223–233.
- Han, L. (2014). Foreign language speaking anxiety: A study of Chinese language learners. *Journal of the Council of Less Commonly Taught Languages*, 15, 99–117.

- İnözü, J., Tuyan, S., & Çakır Sürmeli, E. (2008). Foreign language student empowerment through affective coaching. In T. Claes, F. McMahon, & D. S. Preston (Eds.), *Education and leadership* (pp. 173–188). Brill. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789401205900_011
- Jessner, U. (2008). A DST model of multilingualism and the role of metalinguistic awareness. *The Modern Language Journal*, 92(2), 270–283. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.2008.00718.x>
- Kellerman, E. (1983). Now you see it, now you don't. In S. Gass & L. Selinker (Eds.), *Language transfer in language learning* (pp. 112–134). Newbury House.
- Kellerman, E. (1991). Compensatory strategies in second language research: A critique, a revision, and some (non-) implications for the classroom. In R. Phillipson, E. Kellerman, L. Selinker, M. Sharwood Smith, & M. Swain (Eds.), *Foreign/second language pedagogy research: A commemorative volume for Claus Faerch* (pp. 142–161). Multilingual Matters.
- Kellerman, E. (1995). Cross-linguistic influence: Transfer to nowhere. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 15, 125–150. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190500002658>
- Knowles, M. (1996). *Andragogy: An emerging technology for adult learning*. In R. Edwards, A. Hanson, & P. Raggatt (Eds.), *Boundaries of adults learning* (pp. 82–98). Routledge.
- Lee, Y. (2023). *Strategy instruction programme with awareness of psychotypology (SIPPs): Developing beginner-level reading skills in a psychotypologically distant language* [PhD Thesis, University of Cambridge].
- Macaro, E. (2001). *Learning strategies in foreign and second language classrooms*. Continuum.
- MacIntyre, P., & Gregersen, T. (2012). Emotions that facilitate language learning: The positive-broadening power of the imagination. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 2(2), 193–213. <https://doi.org/10.14746/ssl.t.2012.2.2.4>
- MacIntyre, P. D., Ross, J., & Clément, R. (2019). Emotions are motivating. In M. Lamb, K. Csizér, A. Henry, & S. Ryan (Eds.), *The Palgrave handbook of motivation for language learning* (pp. 183–197). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Miles, M. B. & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (2nd ed.). Sage.
- Nelson, C., Krzysik, I., Lewandowska, H., & Wrembel, M. (2021). Multilingual learners' perceptions of cross-linguistic distances: A proposal for a visual psychotypological measure. *Language Awareness*, 30(2), 176–194. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09658416.2021.1897132>
- Nguyen, L. T. C., & Gu, Y. (2013). Strategy-based instruction: A learner-focused approach to developing learner autonomy. *Language Teaching Research*, 17(1), 9–30. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168812457528>
- Oxford, R. L. (2015). Expanded perspectives on autonomous learners. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 9(1), 58–71. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17501229.2014.995765>
- Oxford, R. L., & Gkonou, C. (2021). Working with the complexity of language learners' emotions and emotion regulation strategies. In R. Sampson & R. Pinner (Eds.), *Complexity perspectives on researching language learner and teacher psychology* (pp. 52–67). Multilingual Matters.

- Park, M. & Starr, R.L. (2015). The role of formal L2 learning experience in L3 acquisition among early bilinguals. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 13(3), 274–291. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2015.1088544>
- Plonsky, L. (2011). The effectiveness of second language strategy instruction: A meta-analysis. *Language Learning*, 61(4), 993–1038. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9922.2011.00663.x>
- Rast, R. (2010). The use of prior linguistic knowledge in the early stages of L3 acquisition. *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, 48(2–3), 159–183. <https://doi.org/10.1515/iral.2010.008>
- Ringbom, H. (2006). The importance of different types of similarity in transfer studies. In J. Arabski (Ed.), *Cross-linguistic influences in the second language lexicon* (pp. 36–45). Matters. <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781853598579-007>
- Rothman, J., Alonso, J. G., & Puig-Mayenco, E. (2019). *Third language acquisition and linguistic transfer*. Cambridge University Press.
- Skehan, P. (2008). Interlanguage and language transfer. In B. Spolsky & F. M. Hult (Eds.), *The handbook of educational linguistics* (pp. 411–423). Blackwell Pub. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470694138.ch29>
- Smidfelt, L., & Van de Weijer, J. (2019). Prior language knowledge and intercomprehension at the first encounter of Italian as an additional language: A translation task. *Moderna Sprak*, 113(1), 1–24.
- Swain, M. (2013). The inseparability of cognition and emotion in second language learning. *Language Teaching*, 46(2), 195–207. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444811000486>
- Tight, M. (2022). Positivity bias in higher education research. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 77(2), 201–214. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hequ.12388>
- Wagner, M. J. (2015). Survey research in applied linguistics. In B. Paltridge & A. Phakiti (Eds.), *Research methods in applied linguistics A practical resource* (pp. 83–89). Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Wang, F., & Hannafin, M. J. (2005). Design-based research and technology-enhanced learning environments. *Educational Technology Research and Development*, 53(4), 5–23. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02504682>
- Wigfield, A., & Eccles, J. S. (2020). From expectancy-value theory to situated expectancy-value theory: A developmental, social cognitive, and sociocultural perspective on motivation. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 61, 101859. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2020.101859>
- Yin, X. (2021). The interplay of EFL students’ enjoyment, hope, pride, and self-regulation. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 803476. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.803476>

6 Just about the language? Relating vision to multilingual learners' Mandarin learning engagement

Siyang Shen and Martin Lamb

Introduction

Engagement is part and parcel of any learning success. In the context of language learning, motivated individuals often choose to engage in a course of learning initially, but not all of them will stay engaged for long enough to attain ideal language outcomes, especially in face of challenging obstacles. As a powerful motivational strategy widely acknowledged in psychology of language learning and teaching (PLLT) research, vision is potentially an energising force that can facilitate individuals' actual engagement (Dörnyei, 2020). In this chapter, we report on a longitudinal exploratory inquiry into the role of vision in the engagement dynamics of six Mandarin learners with English as their first language (L1) at a British university. Mandarin is often considered a challenging language for non-heritage English L1 learners because of its linguistic and cultural distance from English, and anecdotally, there is evidence of high drop-out rates on courses at both school and university levels (Xu & Moloney, 2020). In this study, we examine how far these individuals were able to remain engaged in Mandarin learning over the year, and the role that vision appeared to play in this process.

Engagement

Engagement has emerged as an important concept in the PLLT field over the past two decades. It refers to how involved a language learner is in a learning situation (Hiver et al., 2021). While the core of engagement is usually seen as action, it is not only through behaviours that students engage. Individuals also get themselves involved in language learning cognitively (deep thinking), affectively (emotional reactions), and socially (collaborative relations with others). In the language learning process, these dimensions are often interconnected. As highlighted in Mercer et al. (2021), authentic engagement encompasses “multiple dimensions and certainly not just behaviour” (p. 145), which can contribute to more meaningful

learning and potentially better outcomes compared to mere compliance with academic conventions. In this chapter, we therefore conceptualise engagement as a holistic construct that comprises behavioural, cognitive, affective, and social aspects.

As Hiver et al. (2024) noted, engagement researchers are increasingly focused on how engagement is facilitated by environmental conditions (Shernoff et al., 2016) and psychological needs (Mercer, 2019). Such studies are usually situated in educational realities and are concerned with generating implications for language classrooms. This pedagogical emphasis can be particularly relevant to language education in our current time, when students are often faced with a plethora of distractions (Mercer & Dörnyei, 2020). In general, contemporary undergraduates arguably face more potential distractions than in the past, for example from non-stop online connectivity and the wide range of leisure options available in the modern university. This means that, besides knowing individuals' motivational intentions for language learning, it is equally important that we understand how and under what conditions students engage with the target language.

However, the traditional positivist approach in engagement research has several limitations (Hiver et al., 2024); while useful in identifying trends in a group level (e.g. Bonner et al., 2023), it does not enable us to address the context-sensitive and dynamic features of engagement (Sang & Hiver, 2021). Recent years have seen some pioneering work to explore engagement on an individual level, such as Zhang's (2022) study of a high achiever's engagement patterns over time, or Sulis' (2023) longitudinal work that highlights the links between individuals' whole multilingual repertoire and language learning engagement. Moving forward, we need more studies like this which foreground the learner perspective and their individuality.

Visions of multilingual learners

One important area for such inquiries, as highlighted in Mercer (2019), is the power of various motivational antecedents in influencing a language learner's sustained learning engagement. Before delving into the specific area, however, we should clarify some key terms we use in the context of this chapter. Aligning with Haukås (2022) and Cenoz (2013), we take a holistic view of multilingualism; this is to see a *second language* (L2) as any language learned after the L1 and *multilingual users* in a broadened sense, that is, people who speak more than one language, including those traditionally perceived as *bilingual* speakers (communicative in two languages).

In PLLT research, the concept of *vision* has arisen as a salient motivational catalyst that can have distinctive implications for the engagement of multilingual learners. In fact, the motivational capacity of vision was

initially theorised within the L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2009), specifically in its two components: *ideal L2 self* and *ought-to L2 self*. Both constructs tend to have visionary elements and represent a person's different types of anticipated self-images in the future (Dörnyei, 2020). The ought-to L2 self indicates a preventional tendency (e.g. aiming to realise a scenario to prevent negative eventualities). The ideal L2 self implies a more promotional force where the learner aspires to achieve certain self-images to enable other good situations to materialise. As such, vivid and concrete visions generated by the ideal self are usually considered a stronger motivator compared to the ought-to self, which has led to further theorisation and applications of vision-based pedagogies in language teaching (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014; Vlaeva & Dörnyei, 2021).

Adding to our understanding of vision as a motivational precursor, Henry (2017, 2023) proposes the notion of *ideal multilingual self* in response to the increasingly complex realities of language learning in this globalised era. Different from an ideal L2-specific self, the ideal multilingual self is conceptualised as emerging from the interactions of ideal Lx self and ideal Ly self. As illustrated in Henry and Thorsen (2017, p. 359), the harmony between different language-specific self-guides in one's multilingual repertoire can enhance the ideal multilingual self, which in turns “provides an additional layer of purpose” to their desire to learn specific languages. It is worth noting that these language mental representations are usually psychologically distant from the present self and can reflect different levels of concreteness in the details of the desired scenarios that may impact their motivational capacity (Trope & Liberman, 2010). We refer vision to both types of self-images including ideal language-specific and multilingual selves, given that the ought-to language self did not emerge as relevant in the study.

Learning languages other than English

Similar to other research areas in PLLT, English has been the primary target language in engagement research. Although around 30% of empirical engagement research in the two decades involves languages other than English (LOTEs), less than a third of those focus on non-European LOTEs (Hiver et al., 2024), showing a lack of balance even within the sparse research landscape of LOTEs. In predominantly English-speaking countries, for example, a widespread belief that “English is enough” has resulted in a sense of purposelessness among learners or apathy in foreign language classrooms (Lamb et al., 2020). This is also the case for Mandarin learning in the UK (e.g. Wang, 2023). More positively, however, this also means that English L1 learners who *do* overcome such a mindset and continue to engage with LOTEs in their post-compulsory phase are usually

highly intrinsically motivated (Lanvers, 2024). Often, these individuals perceive languages as more than a utilitarian tool and imagine a multilingual personal future (Kramsch, 2009).

The learning of Mandarin Chinese has been becoming more widespread in English-dominant contexts, with China's growing politico-economic power (Gong et al., 2020) and the extensive diaspora of Chinese communities (Xu & Moloney, 2020). Yet, it remains rarely investigated in engagement research. In this study, we explore the potential relations between engagement and vision in the context of Mandarin learning, and address the following research questions (RQs):

RQ1. How do the students engage with Mandarin learning over their first academic year at university?

RQ2. To what extent does their vision relate to language learning engagement of Mandarin over the year?

The current study

Research site

This longitudinal study was conducted in a Year 1 beginner Chinese course at a British university. The Chinese language course was embedded in Chinese-related single and joint honours degree courses, including weekly 8.5 hours' teaching components of lectures and practical seminars across the academic year. No prior Mandarin learning experience was expected from students when they enrolled, although most had at least some exposure to Chinese before the module. The course was designed to prepare most of the student cohort to go for their study-aboard (SA) year to mainland China or Taiwan in Year 2 or 3.

This current study is drawn from a larger longitudinal project that documented the engagement of six volunteers out of approximately 20 first-year undergraduate students in a Mandarin course. All participants (Amelie, May, India, Lin-Qiang, Leyla and Mark, all are self-selected pseudonyms) grew up in the UK with English as their L1 and had previously studied at least two foreign languages either at school or independently. In other words, they were all highly multilingual. In this chapter, we will first draw on the engagement experiences of all participants in response to RQ1, before focusing on two students as contrasting cases to address RQ2.

Methods

The original project applied an ethnography-informed multi-method approach (Shen, 2025) that involved several data sources to trace students'

engagement transformations holistically in the situated context over time. Here we draw only on participants' narrative data generated from in-depth interviews and an engagement tracker (ET). The study received ethical approval from the University of Leeds Ethics Committee.

Data generation

Narrative data were collected by the first author through three in-depth recorded interviews and a weekly interaction with individual participants. The average length of each interview was approximately 100 minutes. The weekly ET had an average of 59 message entries over the year from a student. The main research language was English, although the later phase (i.e. Semester 2) saw a significant increase in participants' voluntary written and spoken use of Chinese expressions (the first author's L1) in both data sources.

In-depth interviews took place across the academic year with the time interval roughly three months. The interviews had a twofold focus on their multilingual visions and perceptions on their own engagement. The following are some examples of interview questions in relation to vision:

- How do you imagine the role of Mandarin in your future life?
- Do you imagine yourself becoming more multilingual? Does this excite you (If yes)? Why (if no)?

Engagement-related questions were formulated mostly based on students' documentation of their own engagement on the ET and their learning behaviours during classroom observations (not discussed in this chapter), such as:

- What language tasks did you enjoy most last semester?
- Do you prefer working in a group or on your own in the practice class?
- Is there any moment you felt disheartened about your Chinese studies? (If yes) How did you cope with it?

Before each interview, the first author discussed with participants their preferred interviewing space (Mann, 2016), considering emotional and physical needs such as anxiety level and hearing difficulty. As a result, five of the interviews took place in open-air spaces on their campus, and the rest indoors.

Throughout the year, participants reported their weekly engagement level and rationales on the ET. At the beginning of the project, it was explained that engagement referred to their involvement in Chinese learning over the course, both behaviourally and psychologically. In line with the holistic understanding of the construct in this study, we asked individuals to

rate their overall engagement instead of its distinct dimensions and specify the (de)motivating learning activities that had occurred during the week. A prompt message was sent at the end of every week (except for fortnightly during the academic breaks) asking “How would you rate your engagement this week from 1 to 10?”.

Data analysis

A reflexive thematic analysis was conducted on the dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2022). To prepare the data, all interview recordings were transcribed with *Otter.ai*, and text messages on ETs were transferred to Word documents. All transcripts were then imported to *Atlas.ti*.

We used a combination of inductive and deductive analysis to address the RQs. First, we read the transcripts multiple times and developed the code list focusing on the constructs of vision and engagement. Although this stage benefitted from our knowledge of multilingualism and PLLT research, the process remained highly inductive, given that there was no specific pre-assumed conceptualisation for the data interpretation. This was then followed by a deductive phase where we compared the initial codes with existing theoretical lenses and selected those that had more explanatory power for the current context. Based on them, codes were adjusted and merged before being synthesised into overarching themes. For example, while we identified different types of vision in the data (i.e. language-specific and multilingual), what emerged as surprisingly salient in this study is different levels of specificity in language visions described by participants (Trope & Liberman, 2010). Some students could elaborate on how they imagine themselves using Chinese in a concrete situation, whereas others only gave broad ideas of options of what to achieve with the language. The latter type of vision, as will be discussed soon, was interpreted as *vaguer* than the former.

For students’ self-rated engagement levels on ET, we applied descriptive statistics to produce the means and the standard deviations across two semesters as supplementary data. They were mainly used to understand participants’ overall engagement at a group level as well as how a learner’s engagement trend compared to other individual participants. This allowed us to decide on our final data presentation (e.g. identifying potentially similar and contrasting cases to co-present).

Findings

RQ1: Differing levels of active engagement

We found that participants demonstrated an overall good level of engagement with Mandarin learning in their first academic year at university,

with the average level above 6 during and out of semesters. Although there were a few weeks where some students experienced lower engagement and reported between levels 0 and 4, these were mostly due to unforeseen circumstances, including health conditions, competing academic workloads, or simply the need for a holiday recharge. Among 138 engagement level responses, over 80% of them were rated above 5, with more than two-thirds between 7 and 10. This shows that our participants tend to represent profiles of engaged LOTE learners in an English-dominant context, possibly energised by their highly intrinsic motivation for enrolling in the language course in a post-secondary phase (Lanvers, 2024). Furthermore, within these motivated individuals, we differentiated between three types of experience that were frequently experienced: namely *Very High Engagement*, levels 9–10 ($n = 14$); *High Engagement*, levels 7–8 ($n = 65$, including six responses of level 6.5 rounded up to 7); and *Moderate Engagement*, levels 5–6 ($n = 37$). We will now elaborate on the three engagement categories, drawing from ETs of all students.

Very high engagement

Behind the most highly rated weekly engagement (levels 9–10), there appears to be a strong emphasis on behavioural and cognitive involvement with the course content, often indicating their proactive attitude to learning activities in and outside the classroom. For example, during a reading week (wk) where no teaching took place, May and India followed their self-directed plans and were extremely satisfied with the progress made:

Reading week was really good, nice to relax. I caught up on my missed lectures from being ill, made flashcards and revision, and did my Chinese coursework as well. Very productive :D

[May, wk7]

I was able to use this week to really improve my Chinese and get prepared to the coming 4 weeks!

[India, wk7]

These dedicated learning behaviours were usually accompanied by positive emotions. For example, at the beginning of Semester 2, Leyla was motivated by a change in the level of interactivity in her Chinese classes:

It's been great! Honestly, I was a bit intimidated by the new lecture structure at first because it's much more interactive, but I've gotten used to it now. I think I'll give it a 10! [Leyla, wk12]

Leyla's excitement also appeared to be associated with her sense of achievement, when she could adapt to and become "used to" more challenging forms of learning. Likewise, this feeling of fulfilment was experienced by Mark who spent a Chinese-speaking weekend in a Mandarin retreat in a neighbouring town near the university. Managing to communicate with Mandarin L1 speakers and his peers using a mixture of Chinese and English, he wrote: "It was so difficult, [but] also motivating" [Mark, Christmas Break]. Not only does this incident reflect Mark's affective reaction, but it also suggests his social engagement with cognitively demanding language activities outside the classroom. Being a neurodivergent individual who had been mainly interested in Chinese classic cultural texts, he later highlighted in our interview retrospectively that this social event was a meaningful opportunity that rekindled his desire to "actually talk to Chinese people in Chinese" [Mark, Interview 2].

High engagement

The high engagement range (levels 7–8) was the most frequently reported by the participants over the year. Similar to the highest range above, the affective dimension of engagement is seen in their narratives, although it does not appear to show as much intensity. For example, when rating their engagement levels between 7 and 8, participants did not typically use strong positive vocabulary in their descriptions such as "love", "great", or "*really* good", which were often used in the previous category. Instead, they usually expressed their positive emotions in a less intense manner (e.g. "it's fun"; "我的一周过得很好 (my week felt very nice)"). More specifically, some participants foregrounded external feedback as an emotional catalyst for their engagement with Mandarin learning in the face of challenging tasks, especially those comments from significant others including family members and their favourite teachers. Lin-Qiang, for instance, expressed this sentiment when he worked at home during the Easter Break (EB):

生词很多很难,再怎么写也很难,[但]父母觉得我写得又快又漂亮,我非常高兴 (There are so many new Chinese characters which still remain so difficult no matter how many times I have written them. [However] my parents said my handwriting was efficient and pretty and that made me very happy).

[Lin-Qiang, EB]

Likewise, approaching the end of Semester 1, when Lin-Qiang was slightly disoriented by a new grammatical structure, receiving encouraging feedback from his tutor became "a marvellous boost to my [his] confidence" [Lin-Qiang, wk9]. Nevertheless, for individuals like May and Amelie who

had prior Chinese learning experience, this increase of difficulty in course content did not seem to require external regulation but itself serves as a stimulus for their cognitive involvement. When encountering challenging grammatical issues, which caused her peers to experience fluctuations in their engagement, May remained consistently engaged and rated between levels 7 and 8 for seven consecutive weeks. She explained that there was “no particular reason” behind her focused attention except for “just [liking] to put effort in” [May, wk8]. Similarly, Amelie appeared to thrive during challenging language tasks with which she demonstrated high engagement, whereas she felt less energised to study when “it [course content] wasn’t so difficult” [Amelie, wk5].

Moderate engagement

Participants in the very high and high engagement ranges (levels 9–10 and 7–8) appeared to perceive Mandarin learning as a central part of their student life. In comparison, for those in the moderate engagement range (levels 5–6), Mandarin learning activities were less of a priority for them, although they still stayed generally engaged with the course content. Specifically, we found that participants tended to experience a dip in engagement when undergoing demotivating or distracting episodes in relation to either Chinese studies or other events. In the topic of asking for directions, many participants experienced some frustration in Week 14’s practices and showed less emotional engagement, given the large syntactic distance between Chinese and their existing language repertoires. Lin-Qiang, for example, identified a particularly challenging language point: “这周语法很难 (The grammar is very hard this week), 最难学的是‘左’和‘右’ (the most difficult part is expressions about ‘left’ and ‘right’)”.

Meanwhile, competing priorities also meant participants became less behaviourally involved in Mandarin learning, even when they had strong willingness to learn. This is often because during those times their capacity was significantly influenced by academic workloads from other degree components. When facing multiple deadlines, for example, Amelie was occupied by “keeping up with” them [Amelie, wk13 and wk14]. Similarly, India suggested at EB that she had to invest most of her energy in other assignments outside of the Chinese course “and then focus on Chinese afterwards” [India, EB]. Well-being is also an important factor, a lack of which can potentially lead to lower engagement across all four of its dimensions. For instance, Mark described his experience at one difficult point:

I’ve been ill for the last week, so I missed nearly all of my classes. I’ve tried to do what I can at home, like watch the lecture captures and work through the textbook, but it’s not as good as being there.

[Mark, wk11]

In Mark's case, due to the sickness, he had to be absent from more classes, meaning that there were fewer chances for him to participate in language activities (behavioural) and discuss new language knowledge with his peers and the teacher (social). Meanwhile, watching a class recording was not "as good as being there" possibly because it was less stimulating emotionally. However, we should note that although Mark's health condition impacted his engagement in wk11, the narrative above shows his intentional efforts to reengage cognitively and behaviourally in his Chinese studies independently (i.e. watching lecture videos and doing exercises at home). This underlines the desire to remain engaged and persist in the face of challenging circumstances in this engagement category.

RQ2: Relating vision to engagement over time

In addition to the three engagement patterns, we have also found that whereas some people's engagement remained steadily high across the two semesters, others have more fluctuating trajectories. As shown in Table 6.1, except for Lin-Qiang and India who continued to stay highly engaged (levels 7–8) in Semester 2, most other students experienced a change in their overall engagement trajectory between semesters, moving to a lower-level range (i.e. Leyla and Amelie) or a higher one (i.e. May).

Detailed analysis of the interview transcripts during the year reveals the potential impact of visions in this process. More specifically, we found evidence of how participants' mental representations of their language futures may link with their here-and-now engagement with language learning. We present in Figure 6.1 how individuals' engagement level changes in relation to the clarity of their vision between Semesters 1 and 2. While learners who developed more concrete self-images were engaged either steadily or more actively across the two semesters (i.e. May, Mark, India, Lin-Qiang), Leyla and Amelie both experienced a fall from high to moderate engagement in Semester 2.

This suggests that an individual's vision seem to either facilitate or hinder their longer-term engagement. To illustrate this association, we present India's and Amelie's experiences as two contrasting representations. India was the student who had highest overall engagement (Table 6.1) and remained in the high engagement category in both semesters (Figure 6.1). Amelie, however, was one of the two students who dropped from overall high engagement to moderate engagement across two semesters (Figure 6.1). It was found that India had developed more specific and multidimensional language visions than Amelie did.

Case 1: "One day, one time, in the future, that's gonna be me"

India was one of the few participants who had been elaborating on future self-images in relation to Chinese and other languages since the start of

Table 6.1 Overview of individuals' engagement during and out of semesters over Year 1

Participant	Mean				SD			
	Sem. 1	Sem. 2	Holidays	Overall	Sem. 1	Sem. 2	Holidays	Overall
Amelie	6.9	6.0	8.0	6.6	1.2	1.5	2.2	1.7
Leyla	7.1	5.8	5.3	6.2	2.5	2.3	1.7	2.3
Lin-Qiang	7.0	7.0	5.8	6.8	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.1
Mark	6.2	5.5	5.0	5.5	1.7	2.3	2.8	2.2
May	5.9	6.9	5.3	6.3	2.9	1.9	4.1	2.7
India	7.3	7.0	6.9	7.0	1.6	1.4	1.0	1.4

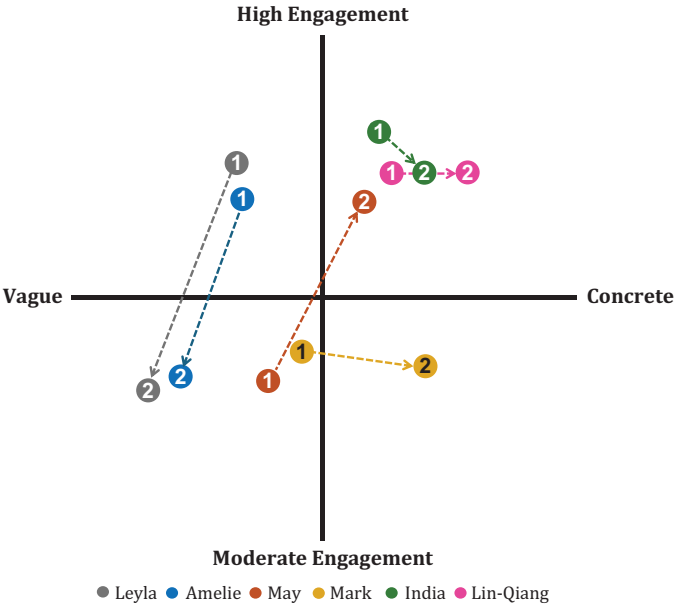


Figure 6.1 Changes of engagement/vision across the two semesters.

the academic year. Having previously learned multiple languages at school including Italian, Latin, French and Chinese, she associated her multilingual identity with her career ambition of working internationally. Particularly, she considered Mandarin as the most compatible with her professional plans and chose it as a degree over her heritage language Italian:

I really liked it [Italian] as a language, but I felt like I wanted to do something that fit more with politics. Italian politics is interesting, but

it wasn't as interesting as, for instance, like Chinese politics... everyone has a dream, I do wanna work in like, the Foreign Office. I mean, ((a pause of two seconds)) my dream is to be like a diplomat or an ambassador somewhere. [Interview 1]

As India later stressed, imagining scenes of speaking different LOTEs confidently would make her “feel really happy and excited”, as she perceived being communicative “the [final] goal for most language learners” [Interview 1]. This broad multilingual vision was also reflected in her ideal language-specific self of wanting to become a proficient Mandarin user, contributing to her high engagement over Semester 1. For instance, she tended to be more willing to put in more effort than most participants, such as previewing the new content before class (e.g. wk7). This indicates (at least) her active behavioural and cognitive involvement with Mandarin learning.

Furthermore, while India's vision at this point had reflected some important details of her career goal, her imagined language situations, especially in relation to Chinese, appear to become more multidimensional and “real” as she progressed in the Chinese course. They included but were not limited to her professional ambition. Outside the class, India strived to create for herself an immersive environment for Chinese learning and engaged with Chinese modern cultural artefacts such as music or TV shows. India talked about her fascination from watching a Chinese variety show: “I kind of said to myself, one day, one day I'm going to be able to speak like this” [Interview 2]. This had encouraged her to experiment with different ways of learning. For example, when she watched an English movie, she would sometimes switch on the subtitles in Chinese for her to read while listening to the original audio. She had enjoyed this process: “我真的很喜欢这种学习 (I really like this way of learning Chinese)” [wk16, level 8]. This shows how she was actively involved both cognitively and affectively beyond the instructed environment.

This desire to move closer to her ideal Mandarin self appeared to permeate her daily practices. Semester 2 had seen a significant increase of Mandarin use in India's weekly communication with the first author, which was often initiated by herself. It indicates her increased attempts to engage socially with Chinese L1 speakers. In fact, the interactions with Mandarin speakers comprised an important part of India's vision at this stage. For example, it was noticeable that her imagination in the upcoming SA year in Taiwan became more contextualised, with vivid visual and audio details as if she were experiencing it:

When we [the Chinese course cohort] go to Taiwan, and like, I should go into a shop, and although they'll reply to us in English initially, because it's like that thing of, they want to practice their English as well, and we're

a foreigner. But like, I can't wait for that surprise of like, 'oh, my gosh, she can speak Mandarin, wait!'... They always say the people who go to Taiwan come back [to the UK] with really thick Taiwanese accent... But I do love the Beijing accent and I've learned the 儿 ('ér', an add-on sound unique to Beijing accent), so I think it's going to be funny! [Interview 3]

Compared to the earlier general visualisation of her career future, this quote from our last interview shows more concrete details, with India specifying the location, time, and social relation in her imagined situation using Chinese. This more elaborate language-specific ideal self in Semester 2 also stimulates her attempts to deepen understanding by drawing on her multilingual repertoire, which is a sign of active cognitive involvement in everyday learning. For instance, when learning “太累了 (so tired)”, she compared it to “*stravolta* 用意大利语 (in Italian)” [wk17, level 7]. At the end of the year, she envisioned a diverse multilingual future for herself, where positive Chinese learning experience gave her confidence to embark on more LOTE journeys:

After I've learned Chinese, I want to learn Korean, I want to learn German... I want to learn as many as possible. Because you think there's nothing that can stop me. If I can learn Chinese, I can learn this. [Interview 3]

Case 2: “All sorts of things, but I'm not sure which one is THE ONE”

Having been learning various LOTEs since school year 2, Amelie perceived LOTE learning very much “a safe zone” at university [Interview 2]. Her multilingual experiences involved French, Spanish, Italian, and Chinese. With Chinese specifically, she developed a great interest through secondary school in its writing system, which she described as “attractive to learn” [Interview 1] and suggested that she “really enjoy[s] writing them [Chinese characters]” [Interview 2]. Having benefitted from her previous multilingual experience, including Mandarin private tutoring, Amelie found the start of the course more manageable than her peers. In the course, she was particularly energised by new Mandarin vocabulary and liked to envision possible conversational situations where it is used. “When I learned like a new word or something” Amelie said, “you think, oh, I can imagine having a conversation and using that, and it kind of feels exciting” [Interview 1]. This excitement motivated her to engage with novel and “quite hard” language knowledge, which she found enjoyable [wk5, level 8]. This process highlights the cognitive and affective dimensions of her learning involvement.

However, although Amelie's vision contained certain social scenarios in Chinese, it seemed rather broad with no reference to a specific place or

interlocutor. Throughout the year, she did not report any particular social interactions with Mandarin speakers (apart from with course tutors) and used very minimal Chinese in her messages. Similarly, a lack of specificity is also shown in how she envisaged her career in our first conversation:

Amelie: I've thought about like all sorts of things, for example doing, like, editing for books, or for example, I would love to translate books like from Chinese to English, like a book, like a novel, that would be really cool too... or just like being a translator, you could do something like that. [Or] speech and language therapist as well. You can do language therapy for people, which would be another interesting one.

Siying: Many options!

Amelie: That's what I mean! But I'm not sure which one is, like, THE ONE.

While pointing out diverse professional pathways she could pursue, Amelie did not exhibit a clear ideal language-specific self, namely, a particular self-image of Mandarin she hoped to approach. Moving towards Semester 2, Amelie's vision of Mandarin did not seem to become more focused despite the increase of language input in the course, but rather it indicates more uncertainty by, for example, adding more possible career directions, including some not directly related to Mandarin or other LOTEs. "I don't really know what I'm going to do with it [Chinese] after uni. Do you know what I mean?" Amelie paused, "I think I'd love to teach English to foreign students, but then I don't know" [Interview 2]. Noticeably, Semester 2 saw Amelie experiencing more points of moderate or lower engagement, where she "[kept] getting distracted" [EB, level 5] or did not feel "so ready to practice Chinese" [wk17, level 4]. Moreover, not only was lack of clarity seen in Amelie's visualisation of her future with Mandarin, but she also showed less confidence in her multilingual vision. The self-doubt was manifested in her narratives near the end of the academic year, as here:

Siying: Do you think becom[ing] a more multilingual person is one of your goals?

Amelie: I think it used to be, like when I was in GCSE, I did three languages at GCSE, French, Spanish, Italian, so I thought, 'oh, yeah', but now...

Discussion

Our longitudinal approach has shown how language learning engagement can change in intensity and form over a year of learning Chinese.

The study confirms that engagement is a multidimensional construct, indicating not only how individuals engage with language learning behaviourally and socially, but also how they get involved in less observable ways, cognitively and affectively (Mercer et al., 2021). Moreover, by documenting engagement holistically at an individual level, we have identified three different modes of active engagement among these initially motivated multilingual learners. Very high engagement appears to be associated with very positive affective involvement (e.g. enjoyment), cognitive involvement (e.g. applying learning strategies), and social interactions (e.g. communication with Mandarin L1 speakers). As shown by the data, this type of engagement appears to entail primarily an internal regulating process where participants demonstrated a high level of agency in self-planning or adapting to their learning activities, even when the tasks were challenging (Martin et al., 2017). In comparison, high engagement and moderate engagement usually occurred following positive or negative changes in external conditions, such as more tailored learning materials or competing commitments. Furthermore, high engagement usually reflects a more positive response to external changes than the moderate state. Moderate engagement, on the other hand, indicates less facilitating influence from the context, often resulting in Mandarin learning becoming less central in learners' student lives.

These findings also foreground the complex dynamics of engagement in response to the learning context, which is currently under-investigated (Hiver et al., 2024). Apart from external conditions, we have identified the influence of learners' vision on their engagement. While Henry (2017) emphasised the motivational capacity from highly abstract visions in multilingual learning, we found that having specific mental self-representations can be more energising for engagement in the current context. As concrete visions have a high level of specificity as to "*when* an event occurs, *where* it occurs, to *whom* it occurs, and *whether* it occurs [original emphasis]" (Trope & Liberman, 2010, p. 442), they are more "real" and therefore actionable to individuals (Dörnyei & Kubanyova, 2014). For example, India had depicted these aspects in her ideal Mandarin self, including the time and the place of herself using Chinese (e.g. a specific professional goal), the social relationships that might be involved (e.g. being a customer in a Taiwanese shop), and the likelihood of becoming a fluent Chinese and multilingual user (e.g. increased confidence of learning more LOTEs). In this sense, these mental images are perceived less distal events, and so can act as a roadmap for India to engage with her proximal learning environment (Ballard et al., 2018) and prepare for her longer-term aspirations. Her successful moves towards this language-specific vision are in harmony with her overall multilingual vision, which, as she suggested, boosted her confidence to learn more LOTEs in the future.

In contrast, this multidimensionality of visions is not reflected in Amelie's ideal language self, which appears to be vague, lacking specific details in the domains discussed above. Throughout the year, Amelie's career vision was described as full of possibilities (i.e. editor, translator, speech and language therapist, and English teacher), but short of precise focus. In other words, it was unclear what she hoped herself to achieve with this new language. This sense of uncertainty is seen not only in Amelie's reflections about her future professional life in relation to Chinese, but also in her self-efficacy for becoming a successful Mandarin and multilingual speaker (e.g. "oh God no [another new language]!"). As discussed earlier, the difference in the visions between Amelie and India is reflected in the change of their reported engagement across two semesters. While both experienced a high level of engagement in Semester 1, Semester 2 witnessed a noticeable fall in Amelie's engagement with her aspired self-image becoming fuzzier and less closely related to Chinese as well as other LOTE's in her language repertoire.

In short, their experiences indicate that the successful development of robust visions can contribute to the one's sustained active involvement in language learning (Dörnyei, 2020), yet the continuing vagueness in visions may deprive learners of this capacity and cause a reduction in engagement, even when they are initially highly motivated. As presented above, a vivid vision can facilitate more authentic and multifaceted engagement (Mercer et al., 2021). For India, for example, wanting to "be able to speak like this" had prompted the learning behaviour of watching a film multilingually, reflecting at least the cognitive and affective dimensions of her engagement. In the longer term, her elaborate vision also tends to benefit the overall stability of her involvement, as well as encourage other types of engagement including social interactions with Chinese L1 speakers.

Conclusion and future directions

In this study, we inquired into the nature of multilingual students' engagement in learning Mandarin and how this interacted with vision over their first academic year at a British university. The study has demonstrated the generally high but also variable learning engagement of six British first-year students of Mandarin, although their voluntary participation could indicate their comparatively greater initial motivation within the group. It has shown that their levels and quality of engagement were reflected in the specificity of their future self visions; the more concrete a learner's vision of their language future in specific life domains such as career, relationships, or leisure time is, the more stable or active their involvement in language learning is likely to be over time. From a pedagogical perspective, the findings confirm that the positive potential of vision-focused interventions may

apply not only to English teaching settings, but also to LOTE classrooms (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014). In fact, it could be argued that for beginner learners of a linguistically and culturally distant language (Lee & Forbes, 2026), developing personally meaningful visions could be especially useful in motivating individuals to overcome challenging moments and continue to engage with language learning (Dörnyei & Henry, 2022).

Going forward, we need more investigations of the interactions between vision and engagement among multilingual learners. These learners often have complex language learning histories, and it is possible that when they have the opportunity to reflect systematically on these past experiences, their future visions may become sharper and can interact with their engagement in different manners. Moreover, as individuals differ in cognitive capacity for mental imagery (Dörnyei, 2020), the motivational power of vision may not be as salient in some learners' engagement (e.g. for people with Aphantasia). While we are tapping into the exciting potential of vision as a facilitator for engagement, it is important to acknowledge individual differences and keep exploring implications of diverse motivational constructs for LOTE engagement. Antecedents shared in exceptional language high achievers, for example, might be worth investigating, such as growth mindset, integrative inclination, and cosmopolitan orientation (Mentzelopoulos & Dörnyei, 2022). Finally, we would like to encourage future inquiries to consider innovative research approaches for delving more deeply into individuals' psychological processes (e.g. the forming of mental imagery) such as art-based methods, especially those whose voices are under-represented across the PLLT and multilingualism fields, including neurodivergent and vulnerable groups. By making an effort to understand diverse multilingual experiences, we may offer more meaningful and responsible support for individuals' engagement with their language learning.

References

- Ballard, T., Vancouver, J. B., & Neal, A. (2018). On the pursuit of multiple goals with different deadlines. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 103(11), 1242–1264. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000304>
- Bonner, E., Garvey, K., Miner, M., Godin, S., & Reinders, H. (2023). Measuring real-time learner engagement in the Japanese EFL classroom. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 17(2), 254–264. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17501229.2021.2025379>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2022). *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*. Sage.
- Cenoz, J. (2013). Defining multilingualism. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 33, 3–18. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S026719051300007X>
- Dörnyei, Z. (2009). The L2 motivation self system. In Z. Dörnyei, & E. Ushioda (Eds.), *Motivation, language identity and the L2 self* (pp. 9–42). Multilingual Matters.

- Dörnyei, Z. (2020). *Innovations and challenges in language learning motivation*. Routledge.
- Dörnyei, Z., & Henry, A. (2022). Accounting for long-term motivation and sustained motivated learning: Motivational currents, self-concordant vision, and persistence in language learning. *Advances in Motivation Science*, 9, 89–134. <https://doi.org/10.1016/bs.adms.2021.12.003>
- Dörnyei, Z., & Kubanyiova, M. (2014). *Motivating learners, motivating teachers: Building vision in language education*. Cambridge University Press.
- Gong, Y., Ma, M., Hsiang, T. P., & Wang, C. (2020). Sustaining international students' learning of Chinese in China: Shifting motivations among New Zealand students during study abroad. *Sustainability*, 12(15), 6289. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12156289>
- Haukås, Å. (2022). Who are the multilinguals? In W. Ayres-Bennett, & L. Fisher (Eds.), *Multilingualism and identity: Interdisciplinary perspective* (pp. 281–298). Cambridge University Press.
- Henry, A. (2017). L2 motivation and multilingual identities. *The Modern Language Journal*, 101(3), 548–565. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12412>
- Henry, A. (2023). Multilingualism and persistence in multiple language learning. *The Modern Language Journal*, 107(1), 183–201. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12826>
- Henry, A., & Thorsen, C. (2017). The ideal multilingual self: Validity, influences on motivation, and role in a multilingual education. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 15(4), 349–364. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2017.1411916>
- Hiver, P., Al-Hoorie, A. H., & Mercer, S. (2021). *Student engagement in the language classroom*. Multilingual Matters.
- Hiver, P., Al-Hoorie, A. H., Vitta, J. P., & Wu, J. (2024). Engagement in language learning: A systematic review of 20 years of research methods and definitions. *Language Teaching Research*, 28(1), 201–230. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688211001289>
- Kramsch, C. J. (2009). *The multilingual subject: What foreign language learners say about their experience and why it matters*. Oxford University Press.
- Lamb, M., Csizér, K., Henry, A., & Ryan, S. (2020). Introduction. In M. Lamb, K. Csizér, A. Henry, & S. Ryan (Eds.), *The Palgrave handbook of motivation for language learning* (pp. 621–640). Springer International Publishing.
- Lanvers. (2024). *Language learning beyond English: Learner motivation in the twenty-first century* (1st ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Lee, Y. Y., & Forbes, K. (2026). Psychotypology-guided strategy development and multilingual learner emotions when learning a linguistically distant language. In G. Sulis, Å. Haukås, & S. Mercer (Eds.), *Interdisciplinary approaches to the psychology of multilingual learners and teachers*. Routledge.
- Mann, S. (2016). *The research interview: Reflective practice and reflexivity in research processes*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Martin, A. J., Ginns, P., & Papworth, B. (2017). Motivation and engagement: Same or different? Does it matter? *Learning and Individual Differences*, 55, 150–162. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2017.03.013>
- Mentzelopoulos, K., & Dörnte, Z. (2022). *Lessons from exceptional language learners who have achieved nativelike proficiency: Motivation, cognition and identity*. Multilingual Matters.

- Mercer, S. (2019). Language learner engagement: Setting the scene. In X. Gao (Ed.), *Second handbook of English language teaching* (pp. 1–19). Springer.
- Mercer, S., & Dörnyei, Z. (2020). *Engaging language learners in contemporary classrooms*. Cambridge University Press.
- Mercer, S., Talbot, K. R., & Wang, I. K. H. (2021). Fake or real engagement - Looks can be deceiving. In P. Hiver, A. H. Al-Hoorie, & S. Mercer (Eds.), *Student engagement in the language classroom* (pp. 143–162). Multilingual Matters.
- Sang, Y., & Hiver, P. (2021). Engagement and companion constructs in language learning: Conceptualising learners' involvement in the L2 classroom. In P. Hiver, A. H. Al-Hoorie, & S. Mercer (Eds.), *Student engagement in the language classroom* (pp. 17–37). Multilingual Matters.
- Shen, S. (2025). Piecing together the puzzle: Understanding language learning motivation through an ethnography-informed multi-method approach. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching* (pp. 1–18). <https://doi.org/10.1080/17501229.2025.2600522>
- Shernoff, D. J., Kelly, S., Tonks, S. M., Anderson, B., Cavanagh, R. F., Sinha, S., & Abdi, B. (2016). Student engagement as a function of environmental complexity in high school classrooms. *Learning and Instruction*, 43, 52–60. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2015.12.003>
- Sulis, G. (2023). Exploring learner engagement with languages (LX) within and beyond the English classroom. *Language Teaching Research (OnlineFirst)*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688231216869>
- Trope, Y., & Liberman, N. (2010). Construal-level theory of psychological distance. *Psychological Review*, 117(2), 440–463. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0018963>
- Vlaeva, D., & Dörnyei, Z. (2021). Vision enhancement and language learning: A critical analysis of vision-building in an English for Academic Purposes programme. *Language Teaching Research*, 25(6), 946–971. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688211014551>
- Wang, C. (2023). *A study of the motivation of adult learners who learn Chinese as a foreign language in the UK*. [Doctoral dissertation, University of Reading]. <https://doi.org/10.48683/1926.00112916>
- Xu, H. L., & Moloney, R. (2020). Motivation for learning Chinese in the Australian context: A research focus on tertiary students. In M. Lamb, K. Csizér, A. Henry, & S. Ryan (Eds.), *The palgrave handbook of motivation for language learning* (pp. 621–640). Springer International Publishing.
- Zhang, Z. (2022). Learner engagement and language learning: A narrative inquiry of a successful language learner. *Language Learning Journal*, 50(3), 378–392. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2020.1786712>

7 Learners' multilingual selves

A cross-country comparison of students' LOTE motivation in Estonia and Hungary

Bochra Kouraichi

Introduction

Motivation is considered one of the most important aspects shaping learners' language learning journey (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). Upon starting my Ph.D. in Hungary, I was surprised to discover through my university experience, teaching, and research that students in this context often have a low level of motivation to learn foreign languages. To address the low motivation of learners to learn foreign languages, a large body of research on language learning motivation has been carried out in Hungary since the late 1990s. The current foreign language learning situation is not significantly different since students' motivation to learn foreign languages is still low (Csizér, 2020). During my doctoral studies, I received a visiting fellowship to Estonia where I collected part of the present data. In contrast to Hungary, language motivation research is still scarce in Estonia¹ (see Meristo, 2020, 2022, as exceptions). I was thus motivated to explore learners' motivation to study Languages Other Than English (LOTEs) in Estonia and Hungary and compare these two distinct contexts. Indeed, while Hungary and Estonia share a common Soviet legacy, they have different language policies and levels of achievement when it comes to foreign languages (Lovakov et al., 2022). Students in Hungary are more interested in learning English than other foreign languages (Csizér & Lukács, 2010). They are required to take a LOTE alongside English at high school but often do not achieve a high proficiency level in this language (see Kouraichi & Lesznyák, 2022). As for Estonia, the limited research available suggests that English has replaced Russian as the first foreign language (Ehala & Koreinik, 2021). It is thus worth investigating LOTE learning motivation in these two distinct linguistic and socio-cultural settings.

Over the past two decades, language learning motivation research has largely been conducted through the lens of Dörnyei's (2009) Second Language Motivational Self-System (L2MSS) (Boo et al., 2015). In a review of L2MSS studies spanning the period between 2005 and 2021, Liu

(2024) points out the dominance of studies on learners of English but also highlights a progressive shift in focus to other languages in recent years. In fact, the recent shift in language learning motivation research has placed increasing focus on LOTE learning in the era of global English dominance (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021; Lanvers, 2024). Studies on LOTE have recently proliferated covering a wide range of languages in different parts of the world (Li & Liu, 2023; Wang & Fischer, 2023). Liu (2024) also mentions that, as of 2020–2021, motivation research has started to merge the two themes of LOTEs and multilingualism; this may be due to the fact that

LOTEs and multilingualism are increasingly seen as interdependent concepts and there is a shift from a monolingual focus (be it English or LOTEs) to a multilingual perspective that takes into account learners' (developing) repertoire of multiple languages (e.g., approaching LOTEs/English learning from a multilingual perspective).

(p. 13)

Following Haukås et al. (2021), multilingualism is understood here as “the dynamic and integrated knowledge and/or use of more than one language or language variety” (p. 84). In this study, therefore, LOTE motivation is considered from a multilingual perspective that recognizes these languages as part of the participants' broader repertoire, including their home languages and English. By adopting a multilingual perspective, this study contributes to current motivation research by aiming to understand the complex connections between the languages in a learner's repertoire, rather than viewing them as isolated entities.

Literature review

The L2 motivational self-system

As mentioned earlier, over the past few decades, the L2MSS has been the most popular theoretical framework in language learning motivation research (Boo et al., 2015; Mahmoodi & Yousefi, 2022). Drawing on Markus and Nurius' (1986) concept of possible selves and Higgins' (1987) self-discrepancy theory, the L2MSS model offers a dynamic and adaptable framework to illustrate learners' motivation to learn an additional language. It centers on the notion of possible selves which are characterized as “a dynamic, forward-pointing conception that can explain how someone is moved from the present towards the future” (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 213). In other words, it is about one's potential view of their desires, goals, and fears as future L2 users. The L2MSS framework

includes three main components: the ideal L2 self, the ought-to L2 self, and the L2 learning experience. According to Dörnyei (2009), learners' internal desires are at the center of the L2 ideal self, which acts as an internal motivator for language learners. Driven by a strong desire to narrow the gap between their present language level and future proficient L2 users, L2 learners envision their ideal L2 self as the language users they would like to become in the future. In addition, Csizér (2020) suggests that learners' connection with the target language community is an integral aspect of their ideal L2 self. The second component of the L2MSS model, the ought-to L2 self, is the language user that one thinks they should become to fulfill the expectations of their family, social environment, or significant others. The third category, the L2 learning experience, was originally described as "the impact of the L2 teacher, the curriculum, the peer group, and the experience of success" (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015, p. 88). According to Dörnyei (2019), the L2 learning experience is "undertheorized," which led to it being considered as "the Cinderella" of the L2MSS model (p. 22). In his efforts to redefine this category, Dörnyei (2019) reconceptualized it to describe learners' engagement during the L2 learning process. In addition, Li and Liu (2023) developed a framework of the L2 learning experience of learners of Chinese that includes learners' emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishments. As such, this revised version of the L2 learning experience extends beyond the classroom environment to encompass any aspect of the learners' language learning journey. Indeed, students' engagement with the learning experience may go beyond the classroom, as suggested by Sulis (2023).

To date, several studies have drawn on the L2MSS to examine LOTE's motivation. In a study by Meristo (2022) on Estonian university students' motivation to learn French, findings indicated that students aimed for a future self as proficient speakers of French and living in France. Another study by Howard and Oakes (2024) explored LOTE motivation among university learners of French in England, Ireland, Sweden, and Poland. The quantitative results showed students' high motivation to learn French in the UK, which may be influenced by the social status of French. Moreover, the ought-to self did not affect students' drive to learn French. In the Finnish context, Huhtala et al. (2019, 2021) used narrative inquiry to examine university students' motivation to choose LOTEs, namely French, German, and Swedish, as their major or minor. A key factor in maintaining students' motivation was their ideal L2 self. A professional L2-related vision was also reported to be an emerging theme. In all these studies, the ideal L2 self emerged as the most prominent element that drives LOTE students' motivation, thus revealing its key role in shaping a learners' willingness to learn a language.

The ideal multilingual self

The concept of ‘multilingual turn’ introduced by May (2014) has significantly influenced all areas of applied linguistics, including language motivation research. It calls researchers to take a multilingual perspective where languages are not seen as isolated entities but rather as interconnected within an individual’s language repertoire.

Building on the growing prominence of multilingualism in applied linguistics (The Douglas Fir Group, 2016), leading motivation scholars have advocated for the incorporation of a multilingual perspective in research on language learning motivation (Busse, 2017; Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017; Henry, 2017; Ushioda, 2017). Drawing on Dörnyei’s (2009) L2MSS model and aiming to understand the cross-linguistic interactions between the different languages in a learner’s repertoire, Henry (2017) proposed the concept of multilingual self guides, which emerge from the complex interactions between the languages in a learner’s repertoire together with the influences of attitudes and beliefs about multilingualism (p. 553). To illustrate the differences between the self guides shaping a learners’ motivation, he distinguishes between a contentedly bilingual self and a multilingual ideal self. The contentedly bilingual self is a confident speaker of the second language (typically, English) who does not display any need or has any particular interest in speaking another language. In contrast, an ideal multilingual self reflects an individual’s aspiration to become multilingual more broadly, regardless of the specific language (Henry, 2017). Thompson (2020) notes the dynamicity of the ideal multilingual self, arguing that: “as language learning is inherently dynamic, formation of selves and perceiving positive language interactions are ever-changing and are highly dependent on the context” (p. 173). Recently, Liu (2022) put forward the ought-to multilingual self, which refers to students’ obligation to have a multilingual repertoire due to the general demand of mastering a third or fourth foreign language. Indeed, it is worth noting that becoming multilingual is not always a choice but can be an obligation, as is often the case of immigrants or refugees. Hajar (2024), for instance, examined the multilingual self of six displaced Syrians studying Turkish at a private language center. Learners’ long-term goal was to move to Turkey and integrate into the culture and society of the host country, which represented their ideal multilingual self. Their ought-to self was influenced by the pressures of finding a job and escaping military service. Wang (2024) discussed the multilingual ought-to self for two Chinese LOTE learners of German. By examining the trajectory of learners to become multilingual, the study results give insight into Chinese cultural norms and the influential role of the social milieu in students’ language learning motivation. In light of these studies, Henry’s (2017) model could be used to explore LOTE motivation and could add to the L2MSS from a multilingual perspective.

Against this background, this study seeks to respond to the calls to focus more on LOTE from a multilingual perspective and fill the current gap related to the Estonian and Hungarian contexts. The study investigates the following research questions:

RQ1. What motivates university students to study LOTE in Estonia and Hungary?

RQ2. How do students describe their LOTE motivation in terms of the L2MSS categories?

RQ3. How is the ideal L2 self different from the ideal multilingual self?

Methods

Sampling

Participants were contacted via email through their language instructors, were informed about the study, its aims, and how their data will be securely and anonymously stored. They were invited to volunteer for an interview and confirmed their participation by registering through a Google Form. Most respondents in Estonia were not available for an interview as it was the end of the semester, which resulted in an imbalance in the number of participants in the two contexts. A total of 18 students were interviewed in Estonia ($n = 6$) and Hungary ($n = 12$). Besides their L1 and LOTE(s), all interviewees knew English, which was the language used during the interview.

Estonian participants

Participants were recruited from two universities in Estonia. Two males and four female learners of LOTE volunteered to be interviewed. They all speak Estonian as their first language except for Bella, who was born and raised in Estonia to Russian parents. She uses Russian at home and went to a Russian school. Her case is quite common among students in Estonia in the post-Soviet era and due to geographical proximity with Russia (Lovakov et al., 2022). Participants were from various majors and levels (B.A. and M.A.) and had different self-reported proficiency levels in French, Italian, and Spanish. Table 7.1 shows the demographic details of participants as well as their chosen pseudonym.

Hungarian participants

Participants were recruited from three Hungarian universities. Both Hungarian ($n = 5$) and international ($n = 7$) students took part in the study. There were four male and eight female students from different majors and

Table 7.1 Demographic information of Estonian participants

<i>Number</i>	<i>Participant</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>First language</i>	<i>LOTE</i>	<i>Level</i>
1	Bella	Female	Russian	French	C1
2	Joelle	Female	Estonian	French	C1
3	Chris	Male	Estonian	Spanish	B1
4	Maarit	Female	Estonian	Spanish	B2
5	Mark	Male	Estonian	Italian	B2
6	Rita	Female	Estonian	Italian	C2

Table 7.2 Demographic information of Hungarian participants

<i>Number</i>	<i>Participant</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>First language</i>	<i>LOTE</i>	<i>Level</i>
1	Greta	Female	Hungarian	German	B1
2	Nadine	Female	Hungarian	Spanish	B1
3	Yas	Female	Arabic	Spanish	C1
4	Annabella	Female	Hungarian	German	B1
5	Zoè	Female	Hungarian	French/ German/ Spanish/ Arabic/ Lingala	A1–2
6	Ahlem	Female	Arabic	German	A2
7	Meilo	Male	Farsi	Chinese	B1
8	Leona	Female	Hungarian	Spanish	C1
9	Scott	Male	Hungarian	German	B1
10	Mate	Male	Hungarian	Portuguese	B2
11	Lulu	Female	Chinese	German	B1
12	Dogomosho	Male	Turkish	German	B2

levels (B.A., M.A., and Ph.D.). Five participants (Annabella, Meilo, Mate, Lulu, and Dogomosho) were Ph.D. students who were required to attain a B1 level in a LOTE according to their doctoral school regulations. More biographical information is provided in Table 7.2.

Instruments and procedures

Interviews were conducted online via Zoom. All participants were interviewed in English even when I shared another language with interviewees (Arabic, French, Spanish, and German). Before conducting each interview, I emailed participants a brief summary of the research, a consent form to record the interview, and overall description of the questions. While Haukås and Tishakov (2024) recommend providing participants with questions prior to an interview, I chose not to share the questions as

I aimed to provide students with the opportunity to reflect spontaneously on their language learning experience. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed using Otter.ai. Transcripts were revised manually and analyzed following a thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Data analysis

The analysis was guided by the six-step process of thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). I started by familiarizing myself with the data by reading and revising the generated transcripts and taking notes of any preliminary ideas. Based on the research questions and drawing on the L2MSS model (Dörnyei, 2009) and the notion of the multilingual ideal self (Henry, 2017), I then wrote down initial codes that describe learners' LOTE experiences. The final codes were grouped into broader themes (e.g., "cultural motivation," "future proficient self"). In the next stage, these themes were refined and grouped together (e.g., "visiting the target language country" and "fascination by the culture" were combined into one theme). The last phase consisted of reporting on each theme and selecting vivid examples. The findings are organized in terms of the L2MSS model and ideal multilingual self categories.

Findings

This section presents the findings of the study, which are structured into the following categories: the ideal L2 self, the multilingual self, the ought-to self, and the learning experience. To contextualize the findings, the pseudonym of each participant is followed by the country (Estonia (EE)/Hungary (HU)) and their respective LOTE (French (Fr), Spanish (Sp), Italian (It), Portuguese (Pt), Lingala (In), Chinese (Ch), and German (Gr)).

The ideal L2 self

Four participants reported having an L2 ideal self which guided their motivation to learn a specific LOTE. Their desire to learn these languages was not simply about mastering vocabulary and grammar, but it was rather driven by their willingness to interact with another culture. Indeed, when learning a foreign language, students are exposed to its related culture whether through social connections or their own effort to explore the target language culture. This connection is illustrated in the experience of participants whose cultural exposure, whether through books, music, or personal relationships, has boosted their motivation to learn a LOTE. In Bella's case, for instance, her ideal L2 self is deeply rooted in her passion for the French culture, literature, theater, and musicals. Her goal of becoming

proficient in French is not merely about the language itself but also about engaging with the cultural aspects that interest her. Bella's motivation is thus shaped by her aim to immerse herself in the French culture: "One of my goals was to get to know the French culture quite well, because I was interested in culture, in literature, in theater, and especially in French musicals" (Bella_EE_Fr). For Bella, every new French class is a step closer to the vibrant world of French arts and traditions.

Maarit, also from Estonia, recounts an experience that significantly changed her relationship with Spanish language. At 16, her life took an unexpected turn when her family moved to Finland, where a warm Mexican-Finnish family welcomed them. During a summer spent with them, Maarit was introduced to the rich Mexican culture through music, food, and conversations. This vivid cultural immersion ignited her interest in Spanish, leading her to develop an ideal L2 self. The following excerpt illustrates how social ties and cultural immersion can lead to the development of an ideal self that seeks to build cultural understanding and social connection:

When I was 16, my family moved to live in Finland. And then there was a Finnish family and the father was Mexican. So, he took my family into his home and helped them with the whole process of immigration. And I stayed with them for the summer for three months. And then during that time, this Mexican dad introduced me to his culture, played the guitar, sang songs and cooked Mexican meals. So that's how my interest sparked.
(Maarit_EE_Sp)

Another Estonian participant, Mark, offers a broader perspective on how his language learning experience was a way to better understand the world. In his opinion, learning a language is not just acquiring a new skill but an opportunity to gain a global perspective and engage with different cultures: "Well, when you learn a language, you get closer to another culture. And I think that is a very valuable experience in these times. It makes you more aware of the world" (Mark_EE_It).

Moving to the Hungarian context, Mate's experience with Portuguese resonates with the previous accounts. His ideal L2 self is driven by his love for the Portuguese culture. He started learning the language after visiting Portugal as part of the Erasmus+ program. His motivation to continue learning the language is a result of his successful social integration within the host country. This connection between language and culture reinforces his ideal L2 self as someone who is not only proficient in Portuguese but also culturally immersed:

Then I just fell in love with the language and with the culture as well. So when you learn the language, you get insights into the culture as well.

And since I loved the culture of the country and everything in connection with Portugal and Brazil, but back then just Portugal, I decided to continue.

(Mate_HU_Pt)

Thus, for both Hungarian and Estonian participants, the journey of learning a LOTE is not just about learning a new language; it's about promoting cross-cultural understanding and sparking their curiosity for exploring the world.

In addition to their socio-cultural impact, two LOTE learners shared how languages represent springboards to their future professional life. Rita, who spent 20 years in Italy, states that Italian has become part of her identity and that she now speaks it more fluently than her native Estonian. She depicts a vivid picture of her future career, where language is the key to opening new professional possibilities as follows:

It does contribute to my future career plans, because me and my husband plan to travel to Egypt. He's originally from Egypt. And it does contribute a lot to my future plans. Because I've already been working in Italy in the banking area. So, in finance, having a degree in Italian, it gives me the possibility to enter the Italian banks in Cairo.

(Rita_EE_It)

Alongside Rita's vision, Meilo, a dedicated badminton player, tells his story of language learning and his pursuit of excellence. He was inspired by a famous badminton player to choose to learn Chinese. The badminton player's dedication to learning Chinese during his recovery from an injury created an aspirational image for Meilo. Meilo then envisions himself learning Chinese in a similar manner, showcasing the motivational influence of role models:

There's a Danish badminton player that I'm following on his YouTube channel, and he had an injury for one year. He couldn't play tennis properly and he missed one year. He just focused on learning Chinese and sharing the videos and everything. And so, you know, it makes me motivated to learn Chinese as well.

(Meilo_HU_Ch)

For Meilo, the player's determination exemplifies how challenges could be met with passion and perseverance, which inspires him to continue own linguistic adventure. Both stories showcase the transformative role that LOTE learning may play with these learners' professional goals and aspirations.

The ideal multilingual self

Five participants reported on their desire to become multilingual more broadly; in this case, their motivation was not just guided by their willingness to learn a specific language but also by their desire to broaden their language repertoire regardless of the specific language. Their ideal multilingual self was shaped by a variety of factors. For instance, Leona's motivation to become multilingual is largely due to her love for languages and her desire to be considered exceptional: "Well, I want to speak as many languages as I can, of course, because I just love languages and I feel really special" (Leona_HU_Sp).

In contrast, Yas offers a unique perspective, connecting the ideal multilingual self with the preservation of linguistic and cultural diversity. Her concern about the dominance of English and its potential to 'kill' other languages showcases her eagerness to learn and use LOTEs. She supports linguistic diversity as well as the cultural heritage that languages carry as she explains:

If we continue to only use English on a daily basis, then that would kill so many languages and heritage that they kind of hold on their shoulders. So that would not really be good as far as culture is concerned.

(Yas_HU_Sp)

Her statement shows her advocacy for the preservation of minority languages and their associated cultures. Along these lines, Bella's experience showcases her awareness that speaking English only may not be sufficient in the future. Her motivation to learn LOTEs alongside English is driven by uncertainty about the global dominance of English and the possibility that linguistic demands might change: "I guess nowadays it is not really enough to speak English because, as I have already mentioned, no one knows. Well, will English be a universal language forever? Or something can change? Or can it always change?" (Bella_EE_Fr). As such, Bella expresses her uncertainty about the future of a universal language that fuels her determination to explore other linguistic horizons.

Zoè, another Hungarian participant, reported that one of the factors shaping her ideal multilingual self was her willingness to integrate with local communities. For instance, while living in the Democratic Republic of Congo, she experienced firsthand how speaking the local language, Lingala, transformed her interactions and even ensured her safety:

I lived in the Democratic Republic of Congo, in Kinshasa, and I could easily take a picture because I spoke the local language Lingala. They wouldn't accept me on the streets, but I was safe because I spoke the

local language, I could tell them. And then we were just friends. It makes everyday life much easier.

(Zoè_HU_In)

Her story indicates that linguistic skills pave the way for cross-cultural understanding. Moreover, they are a practical tool for social integration and building trust with locals.

These accounts illustrate that foreign language learning is a journey toward understanding diverse cultures, forging meaningful social bonds, and preserving the rich heritage of every language. It should be noted that, while there are similarities between the factors driving students' ideal L2 self and their ideal multilingual self, mainly in relation to the cultural aspect of LOTE learning, they also differ, for instance, in terms of the interactions between different languages and English.

The ought-to L2self

Interestingly, only one participant mentions having an ought-to self among interviewees. Lulu's accounts illustrate a good example of family pressure to reach an advanced level in German. Her Chinese parents put pressure on her to excel and persevere. She then strives to meet her family's expectations to be proficient in German: "This is our family's standard. If you do something, you have to persist and try your best and don't give up and don't quit" (Lulu_HU_Gr). Lulu recounted her family's pressure during her language learning journey and illustrated her goal to meet their expectations.

The L2 learning experience

The L2 learning experience had a vital impact on learners L2/multilingual ideal self, especially in terms of their classroom experience and the role of their teachers. Beyond cultural, personal and social influences, students' experiences with learning LOTEs illustrate how a positive and motivating classroom atmosphere can transform their learning experience. The significant impact of passionate and talented teachers was a common thread among the stories shared by interviewees. For instance, Bella describes her experience of learning French at university as follows:

Here in university, I guess it is really really great to learn French because we have such a great and highly skilled teachers who are very interested in their own subject, so they really motivate everyone to learn French, so it is a really interesting and exciting career to learn French here.

(Bella_EE_Fr)

Her excitement captures the positive experience that her dedicated teachers created. Dogomosho echoes Bella's enthusiasm as he owes his motivation to learn German to his teacher. He shares the crucial role that his teacher played in supporting his language learning and transforming his approach to home assignments: "I choose to take this language course because of the teacher. She keeps me very motivated, and I have this feeling that I need to do my homework with joy" (Dogomosho_HU_Gr). Both Bella and Dogomosho express their gratitude toward their teachers who positively influenced their language learning journey.

Besides teachers' expertise, Mark recalled positive classroom dynamics that made him enjoy learning Italian:

With Italian in university, our classes are all very fun and interactive. It's like never before, before having taken those Italian classes. And I've been in a class where everyone just felt free and made jokes. So, in class, we learned Italian in a very fun way. We became friends with everyone in the class, including the professors. And even now, it is all very informal. That makes the environment so much more rewarding.

(Mark_EE_It)

In addition, Yas described a memorable hands-on experience of experiential learning as follows:

Well, I remember during our second year of learning Spanish, we would actually make Spanish dishes and bring them to the classroom. And that was really special and interesting because not only we had to look up the whole recipes in Spanish and kind of try to guess what eggs are, what flour is. That made it really fun and special in a way. And it made the whole learning process more enjoyable.

(Yas_HU_Sp)

Stepping outside of the classroom, however, the environment may not always be favorable for practicing the new language. Maarit recalls the limited opportunities to practice Spanish outside of the classroom in Estonia:

Maybe one thing I would like to mention in the end is that what might be difficult when learning a foreign language. For example, for me, I couldn't really practice Spanish outside of the classroom because I live in Estonia. So not many people speak Spanish. But if you choose to speak a language that they speak around you, it would definitely help you learn it.

(Maarit_EE_Sp)

Overall, these narratives illustrate how a passionate teacher who creates an interactive and supportive classroom dynamic can not only ignite a love for the foreign language but also endow students with the confidence to overcome challenges beyond the classroom.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that LOTE learners have similar experiences in Estonia and Hungary. These shared experiences illustrate the multifaceted nature of language learning motivation and the pivotal role of the learner's self in shaping their language learning journey.

The first research question examined students' drive to choose to learn a specific LOTE. The results demonstrate that students are primarily driven by positive associations with the target language, particularly in relation to the culture and society where the language is spoken. A recurring theme in the data is the fascination with the target culture, which often forms a key determinant of their ideal L2 self. For instance, Bella's case strongly resonates with the results of Meristo (2022) with regard to students' integrative motivation to explore French culture. Bella was captivated by the values and traditions of French society, and these cultural aspects directly influenced her decision to pursue a degree in French. Her desire to become part of that world illustrates how deeply cultural affinity can drive language learning.

The second research question focused on the motivational dynamics of LOTE learners in terms of the L2MSS categories. Consistent with previous research (e.g., Huhtala et al., 2019, 2021), the ideal L2 self was the most salient component in students' motivational narratives. This self-image reflected aspirations related to career ambitions, travel opportunities, or cultural immersion. For instance, Meilo described how a role model from the world of badminton, who spoke the target language fluently, inspired him to pursue Chinese language learning. This example supports Dörnyei's (2009) assertion that identifying with role models can be a powerful trigger for developing the ideal L2 self, as learners project themselves into desired future identities through the lens of their idols.

The analysis of interview excerpts revealed that the ideal multilingual self as a broader vision of oneself as a competent speaker of multiple languages is shaped by an interplay of individual interests, aspirations, and socio-cultural aspects. Participants' motivations to study a LOTE often resulted from a desire to form authentic connections with speakers of the language, immerse themselves in new cultures, and expand their worldview. These motivations extend beyond academic goals, indicating a more personal approach to language learning.

Determining whether to classify students' LOTE-related aspirations under Dörnyei's (2009) ideal L2 self or Henry's (2017) ideal multilingual self proved challenging in some instances. While many learners spoke of their LOTE experience as distinct and language-specific, others integrated this experience into a broader multilingual identity. This complexity echoes Thompson's (2020) view that learners may possess multiple, coexisting ideal selves that do not necessarily converge into a unified multilingual identity. Thus, motivational orientations are often fluid and context-dependent, shaped by both personal affinities and linguistic ideologies. In contrast, the ought-to L2 self was less prevalent in the data. Only one participant, Lulu, expressed a strong sense of duty to improve her German due to family expectations. Her case resonates with Wang's (2024) study on Chinese learners of LOTE, where the ought-to self played a more prominent role, suggesting that this motivational dimension may be more culturally prevalent in certain contexts, particularly in Asia. In European settings, such external pressures appear to be less influential, with learners more commonly driven by internal aspirations. Another significant factor contributing to students' motivation was the classroom experience itself. Participants consistently highlighted the impact of skilled, enthusiastic, and supportive teachers on their motivation and enjoyment of language learning. Maarit's experience stood out in particular; she appreciated her teacher's efforts to engage students in the target language outside of classroom. This aligns with Sulis (2023), who advocates for extending language exposure beyond formal instruction. Such extracurricular interactions were not only beneficial for language development but also helped students internalize the language as part of their identity.

Lastly, the third research question explored the distinction between learners' ideal L2 self and ideal multilingual self. The findings clearly indicate that these constructs, though related, serve different functions and are shaped by different aspirations. The ideal L2 self is typically oriented toward deep engagement with a particular language, often connected to professional goals, cultural immersion, or travel. In contrast, the ideal multilingual self reflects a broader appreciation for linguistic diversity, intercultural communication, and the uniqueness of each language within a multilingual repertoire. Some participants expressed their enthusiasm for languages and desire to go beyond English to maintain linguistic diversity and resist monolingual tendencies in a globalized world. Others emphasized the importance of building personal and social connections through language, reinforcing the multidimensional nature of their multilingual identities.

Conclusion

This chapter presented a small-scale qualitative study exploring learners' multilingual selves at Estonian and Hungarian universities. Using

semi-structured interviews with 18 LOTE learners and employing a thematic analysis approach, the study aimed to investigate and compare the motivation of multilingual learners in these two contexts. It responds to the recent call in language learning motivation research to shift the focus from English language only to include various LOTEs, and to incorporate a multilingual perspective on motivation. This study stresses the centrality of self-driven motivations in LOTE learning and highlights the differences between language-specific and multilingual aspirations. It also suggests that recognizing and supporting learners' ideal selves – both L2 and multilingual – can play a central role in sustaining motivation, fostering deeper engagement, and enriching the language learning experience. It equally highlights the importance of including learners from countries with shared historical backgrounds yet differing foreign language policies and performance, such as Estonia and Hungary, which remain under-represented in the broader LOTE literature. While the findings provide valuable insights into LOTE learners' motivations, particularly in Central and Northern Europe, they may not fully represent the experiences of LOTE learners in other contexts, particularly in Asia (Wang, 2024). For future studies, African and Asian countries that are characterized by their rich multilingualism and diverse linguistic landscape are worth further exploration. Moreover, a longitudinal study that looks into learners' LOTE journey can yield more insightful findings as to the dynamics of learners' L2 and multilingual selves. By acknowledging students' ideal multilingual self, educators can tailor their teaching methods to be more inclusive, offering opportunities for learners to engage with multiple languages and cultures in meaningful ways. An interdisciplinary curriculum that integrates cultural studies, global issues, and language learning could drive learners to feel that their language learning is contributing to a global multilingual identity, rather than just acquiring isolated language skills.

Note

1 <https://www.etis.ee>.

References

- Boo, Z., Dörnyei, Z., & Ryan, S. (2015). L2 motivation research 2005–2014: Understanding a publication surge and a changing landscape. *System*, 55, 145–157. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2015.10.006>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Busse, V. (2017). Plurilingualism in Europe: Exploring attitudes toward English and other European languages among adolescents in Bulgaria, Germany, the Netherlands, and Spain. *The Modern Language Journal*, 101(3), 566–582. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12415>

- Csizér, K. (2020). *Second language learning motivation in a European context: The case of Hungary*. Springer International Publishing.
- Csizér, K., & Lukács, G. (2010). The comparative analysis of motivation, attitudes and selves: The case of English and German in Hungary. *System*, 38(1), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2009.12.001>
- Dörnyei, Z. (2009). The L2 motivational self system. In Z. Dörnyei & E. Ushioda (Eds.), *Motivation, language identity and the L2 self* (pp. 9–42). Multilingual Matters.
- Dörnyei, Z., & Al-Hoorie, A. H. (2017). The motivational foundation of learning languages other than Global English: Theoretical issues and research directions. *The Modern Language Journal*, 101(3), 455–468. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12408>
- Dörnyei, Z., & Ryan, S. (2015). *The Psychology of the language learner revisited*. Routledge.
- Dörnyei, Z., & Ushioda, E. (2021). *Teaching and researching motivation* (3rd ed.). Routledge.
- The Douglas Fir Group. (2016). A transdisciplinary framework for SLA in a multilingual world. *The Modern Language Journal*, 100(S1), 19–47. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12301>
- Ehala, M., & Koreinik, K. (2021). Patterns of individual multilingualism in Estonia. *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 52(1), 85–102. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01629778.2020.1858125>
- Hajar, A. (2024). Understanding challenges, strategy use and the ideal multilingual self of internally displaced Syrians on the Syria–Turkey Border. In A. Hajar & S. A. Manan (Eds.), *Multilingual selves and motivations for learning languages other than English in Asian contexts* (pp. 192–208). Multilingual Matters. <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781800417236-016>
- Hajar, A., & Manan, S. A. (Eds.). (2024). *Multilingual selves and motivations for learning languages other than English in Asian contexts*. Multilingual Matters. <https://doi.org/10.21832/HAJAR7229>
- Haukås, Å., Storto, A., & Tiurikova, I. (2021). The Ungspråk project: Researching multilingualism and multilingual identity in lower secondary schools. *Globe: A Journal of Language, Culture, and Communication*, 12(12), 83–98.
- Haukås, Å., & Tishakov, T. (2024). Sharing interview questions in advance: Methodological considerations in applied linguistics research. *European Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 12(1), 54–68. <https://doi.org/10.1515/eujal-2023-0045>
- Henry, A. (2017). L2 motivation and multilingual identities. *The Modern Language Journal*, 101(3), 548–565. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12412>
- Higgins, E. T. (1987). Self-discrepancy: A theory relating self and affect. *Psychological Review*, 94(3), 319–340. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.94.3.319>
- Howard, M., & Oakes, L. (2024). Motivation for LOTE learning: A cross-country comparison of university learners of French. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 45(2), 427–443. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2021.1897129>
- Huhtala, A., Kursiša, A., & Vesalainen, M. (2019). “This language still motivates me!” Advanced language students and their L2 motivation. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 9(2), 287–311. <https://doi.org/10.14746/ssllt.2019.9.2.3>

- Huhtala, A., Kursiša, A., & Vesalainen, M. (2021). "I'm in contact with foreign languages every day": University language students and their multilingualism. *European Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 9(2), 365–390. <https://doi.org/10.1515/eujal-2019-0034>
- Kouraiichi, B., & Lesznyák, M. (2022). Teachers' use of motivational strategies in the EFL classroom: A study of Hungarian High Schools. *Anglica. An International Journal of English Studies*, 31/2, 147–168. <https://doi.org/10.7311/0860-5734.31.2.08>
- Lanvers, U. (2024). *Language learning beyond English: Learner motivation in the twenty-first century* (1st ed.). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009388795>
- Li, Z., & Liu, Y. (2023). Theorising language learning experience in LOTE motivation with PERMA: A positive psychology perspective. *System*, 112, 102975. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2022.102975>
- Liu, M. (2022). *Multilingual future self-guides: A mixed-methods study of learners of multiple foreign languages in China*. [PhD Thesis, University of Cambridge].
- Liu, M. (2024). Mapping the landscape of research on the L2 motivational self system theory (2005–2021): A bibliometric and text network analysis. *System*, 120, 103180. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2023.103180>
- Lovakov, A., Chankseiani, M., & Panova, A. (2022). Universities vs. research institutes? Overcoming the Soviet legacy of higher education and research. *Scientometrics*, 127(11), 6293–6313. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-022-04527-y>
- Mahmoodi, M. H., & Yousefi, M. (2022). Second language motivation research 2010–2019: A synthetic exploration. *The Language Learning Journal*, 50(3), 273–296. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2020.1869809>
- May, S. (Ed.). (2014). *The multilingual turn: Implications for SLA, TESOL and bilingual education*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.
- Markus, H., & Nurius, P. (1986). Possible selves. *American Psychologist*, 41(9), 954–969. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.41.9.954>
- Meristo, M. (2020). La satisfaction des besoins psychologiques fondamentaux et la motivation pour apprendre le français langue étrangère chez des étudiants estoniens universitaires. *Synergies Pays Riverains de La Baltique*, 14, 27–39.
- Meristo, M. (2022). University students' motivation to study the French language: A time trend study. *Journal for the Psychology of Language Learning*, 4(1), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.52598/jpll/4/1/4>
- Sulis, G. (2023). Exploring learner engagement with languages (LX) within and beyond the English classroom. *Language Teaching Research*, 13621688231216868. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688231216869>
- Thompson, A. S. (2020). My many selves are still me: Motivation and multilingualism. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 10(1), 159–176. <https://doi.org/10.14746/ssllt.2020.10.1.8>
- Ushioda, E. (2017). The impact of global English on motivation to learn other languages: Toward an ideal multilingual self. *The Modern Language Journal*, 101(3), 469–482. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12413>
- Wang, T. (2024). 4 The construction of ought-To multilingual selves and their roles in shaping Chinese language learners' LOTE motivation. In A. Hajar & S. A. Manan (Eds.), *Multilingual selves and motivations for learning languages*

other than English in Asian contexts (pp. 53–70). Multilingual Matters. <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781800417236-009>

Wang, T., & Fisher, L. (2023). Using a dynamic Motivational Self System to investigate Chinese undergraduate learners' motivation towards the learning of a LOTE: The role of the multilingual self. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 20(2), 130–152. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2020.1863412>

8 Motivation and attitudes of Modern Greek FL learners in the multilingual context of Catalonia, Spain

Maria Andria

Introduction

While there has been growing attention to learners' motivation to learn Languages Other Than English (LOTEs) (e.g. Busse, 2013, 2017; Csizér & Lukács, 2010; Dörnyei & Chan, 2013; Howard & Oaks, 2024; Lanvers, 2017; Wang & Fisher, 2021), research in this area remains relatively limited compared to the extensive array of studies focusing on L2 English (Mendoza & Phung, 2019). Examining and interpreting the motivation for learning LOTEs across different settings could not only expand but also potentially reshape researchers' and teachers' understandings of why students are motivated to study a particular language (Boo et al., 2015; Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2017). Such research could determine whether existing theoretical frameworks, typically used for L2 English, are applicable to the study of LOTEs. Aside from the particular language being examined, the demographics of participants in motivational studies have generally been quite uniform, with research largely dominated by samples of secondary and university students (Boo et al., 2015). This prompts us to consider how motivation functions later in life and what drives learners of different age groups to study a particular LOTE, as well as what inspires them to begin and sustain such a learning journey.

To address these questions, the present study aims to explore motivation for learning Modern Greek, a less commonly spoken language in the European context. Specifically, it focuses on motivation to learn Modern Greek as a Foreign Language (FL) in the unique setting of Catalonia, Spain. Catalonia's multilingual landscape presents an intriguing context for FL learning research, as the population is typically bilingual in Spanish and Catalan—its two official languages—and many residents have also studied English or other FLs in school. Additionally, over 300 languages are currently spoken in Catalonia (Institut d'Estadística de Catalunya, 2018), reflecting the region's rich linguistic diversity. Within this context, learning Modern Greek often represents at least a third language, which shows

the need to consider how multilingual individuals construct and negotiate motivation across their broader linguistic experiences. This study, therefore, adopts a holistic perspective on multilingualism, viewing learners as multilingual speakers whose motivation, ideologies, beliefs, and attitudes are embedded in a fluid and evolving linguistic landscape (Lasagabaster, 2017; Ushioda, 2017). This perspective also recognizes that multilingual speakers develop unique linguistic repertoires and identities over time (Cenoz & Gorter, 2019; Douglas Fir Group, 2016). As such, their motivation to learn Modern Greek is not viewed as an isolated phenomenon but integrally shaped by their personal trajectories, linguistic biographies, and the multilingual context in which they are situated.

Given the limited empirical research on motivation to learn Modern Greek as an FL (Andria, 2024; Rodríguez Lifante & Andria, 2020), this study seeks to fill this gap by focusing on the following key objectives: first, to investigate the reasons and motivation for learning Modern Greek as an FL in Catalonia, as well as learners' attitudes toward the language; second, to examine whether there are perceived connections between learning Modern Greek and learners' experiences of speaking Catalan as a minority, and also minoritized language. The study is part of a larger project, titled 'Learning, teaching, and learning to teach in Greek as an L2: Evidence from different learning contexts' (henceforth LETEGR2).

This research approaches motivation from a Positive Psychology (PP) perspective. PP emphasizes the positive aspects of individuals' experiences that can enhance, facilitate, and support motivated language learning. Inspired by the recent PP application in Applied Linguistics studies (MacIntyre & Mercer, 2014; MacIntyre et al., 2019), Seligman's (2011) PERMA model has been shown to be a particularly valuable framework for understanding learners' motivational development (Gregersen, 2019; Li, 2023; Li & Liu, 2023). Among recent studies, Li and Liu (2022) used the PERMA model, originally developed to explore individuals' well-being, to investigate the L2 learning experience, a key component of language learning motivation. They showed that the L2 learning experience is multi-dimensional, encompassing the five elements of the PERMA model: emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment. Although designed for well-being research, these elements were found to effectively account for how learners experience and sustain language learning motivation. Building on this conceptualization, the present study adopts the PERMA framework to analyze the learning experience dimension of Dörnyei's (2005, 2009) L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS). This approach aims to offer a more detailed and comprehensive understanding of this component in less explored LOTE contexts, such as the one examined here. The study also incorporates the anti-ought-to self, as introduced by Thompson and Vásquez (2015) and further developed by Thompson (2017a, 2017b).

Lastly, the study integrates the concept of the ideal multilingual self, suggested by Henry (2017) as an extension of the L2MSS tailored to multilingual contexts.

In order to explore motivation for learning Modern Greek in Catalonia, this study adopts an emic perspective drawing on narrative data of multilingual learners. Language learning narratives can “offer insights into people’s private worlds, inaccessible to experimental methodologies and thus provide the insider’s view of the processes of language learning, attrition and use” (Pavlenko, 2007, p. 165).

Literature review

Language learning motivation: theoretical underpinnings

The present study draws on Dörnyei’s (2005, 2009) L2MSS framework, which is based on the concept of possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986). The L2MSS posits that language learning motivation is driven by perceptions of the ideal self, the ought-to self, and the learning experience. The ideal self represents who the learner aspires to become in terms of language ability, while the ought-to self reflects who the learner feels obliged to become due to external pressures, such as those from society, family, and friends. Research has shown that a strong ideal self is crucial for language learning motivation and success (Kormos & Czizer, 2014; Taguchi et al., 2009).

Although the L2MSS has significantly enhanced our understanding of language learning motivation, it has also faced both conceptual (Papi & Teimouri 2012; Teimouri, 2017) and methodological (Al-Hoorie et al., 2024) criticisms. Empirical studies have highlighted several issues, including asymmetry between the ideal and ought-to self, lack of inclusion of learner profiles described as “rebellious” (Lanvers, 2016) or resistance-oriented, and ambiguity in defining the role of non-language-specific motivation.

Thompson and Vásquez (2015) and Thompson (2017a, 2017b) proposed adding another dimension to the L2MSS: the anti-ought-to self. This concept aligns with the idea of “rebellious self” or “rebellious motivation” (Lanvers, 2016, 2017), often observed among learners of LOTEs. This concept, inspired by Reactance Theory (Brehm, 1966), describes motivation driven by resistance to external pressures. As Thompson (2017a, p. 40) explains, the anti-ought-to self combines the internal vision of the ideal self, while also incorporating the contextual importance of the ought-to self. Thompson’s (2017b) study revealed that students of Less Commonly Taught Languages (LCTLs), often viewed as more challenging for first language (L1) English speakers, exhibited stronger anti-ought-to

selves compared to learners of more commonly studied language. The anti-ought-to self has emerged as a key motivating factor, and further exploration of this concept in different contexts and with LOTEs could provide valuable insights into L2 motivation (Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017; Thompson & Liu, 2018; Thompson, 2021).

The L2 learning experience, the third component of the L2MSS, pertains to “situation-specific motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience” (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 29). While its significant role in motivated behavior has been empirically supported, it has not received the same level of attention as the other two components (for a comprehensive discussion, see Dörnyei, 2019; Li, 2023; Li & Liu, 2022).

As has been increasingly recognized, research in language learning motivation has long exhibited an entrenched monolingual bias, with individual variability in learning success being prioritized over the exploration of multilingual development (Henry, 2017; Henry & Thorsen, 2018a; Ushioda, 2017). This monolingual mindset has often overlooked the complex, dynamic realities of learners operating in multilingual environments, where language learning is not simply about learning the language, but also about negotiating and enriching evolving multilingual identities. In response to this gap, Henry (2017) proposed the concept of the ideal multilingual self as an extension of the L2MSS, highlighting how learners may hold an ideal image of themselves not just as speakers of a specific additional language, but as speakers of multiple languages. This shift underscores the need for motivation research that more accurately reflects the lived experiences and identity trajectories of multilingual learners. In this regard, adopting a holistic approach to motivational research becomes essential, as it enables a deeper understanding of the multilingual individuals’ practices, motivations and experiences within the complex and dynamic realities of contemporary multilingual societies (Ushioda, 2017).

The present study draws on three key theoretical constructs to guide its analysis and interpretation of the data. Firstly, it focuses on the L2 learning experience component of Dörnyei’s (2005, 2009) L2MSS, one of the most widely used and influential models in language learning motivation research. Secondly, it incorporates the concept of the anti-ought-to self, which is particularly relevant in the context under analysis, as it pertains to learners of LOTE. Lastly, the study integrates the concept of ideal multilingual self, suggested by Henry (2017) as an extension of the L2MSS for multilingual settings. This addition is particularly relevant for the current study, as it explores how multilingual speakers in Catalonia envision the role of Modern Greek within their broader linguistic repertoires and personal trajectories and how external expectations influence their motivation.

Recent studies have highlighted the potential of PP in SLA research (MacIntyre & Mercer, 2014), particularly in the area of motivation. Unlike prevalent approaches that focus on the challenges of language

learning, such as experiencing anxiety, PP emphasizes the positive aspects of individual experiences that enrich learners and help them thrive and flourish (MacIntyre et al., 2019). Gregersen (2019) has demonstrated how the principles of PP, especially Seligman's (2011) PERMA model, align with established motivational theories and provide valuable insights into language learning motivation. Seligman's PERMA model consists of five components: Positive emotions (P), encompassing happiness and life satisfaction; Engagement (E), which refers to deep involvement and investment in an activity; Relationships (R), involving social rapport; Meaning (M), referring to a profound personal purpose that adds significance to people's actions; and Accomplishment (A), associated with personal advancement, success, and achievement. Although these elements were initially intended to examine individuals' well-being, recent studies have shown that they can be also highly effective in explaining learners' motivation, as each component aligns with key motivational drivers, and their dynamic interplay significantly enhances and sustains learners' interest in language learning (Li & Liu, 2022; Oxford & Cuéllar, 2014).

Over the past years, there has been a significant rise in Applied Linguistics studies that adopt the principles of PP perspective (for an extensive review, see Dewaele et al., 2019). Lake (2013, 2016), for instance, conducted some of the first empirical studies exploring the relationship between PP and L2 motivation within the Japanese context. His research demonstrated links between the positive self, the positive L2 self, and various motivational factors. The positive self refers to an individual's overarching self-concept encompassing traits that foster well-being and personal growth. Its key components include flourishing, curiosity, and hope. These elements collectively enhance a person's overall well-being and serve as a foundation for domain-specific self-concepts, such as the positive L2 self, which focuses on L2 learning. The L2 positive self can be defined by interest, passion and mastery goals in language learning. Similarly, Ibrahim (2016) employed a phenomenological approach to explore positive emotionality and long-term motivational engagement of L2 learners. Participants reported that feelings of enjoyment and happiness during dynamic motivational changes stemmed primarily from personal growth and transformation. Dewaele et al. (2022) conducted a longitudinal study and demonstrated that FL Enjoyment can act as a buoy, helping to sustain learners' decreasing motivation. Pavelescu (2019) investigated the L2 motivation of two teenage EFL students in Romania, focusing on the connection between motivation and the emotional aspects of their learning experiences. Her study revealed that emotions play a crucial role in shaping motivation, showing that strong positive emotions can enhance and sustain it, while their absence can impede motivation. Oxford and Cuéllar (2014) utilized the PERMA model to investigate the motivation of Mexican students learning L2 Chinese. Their analysis revealed clear instances of the PERMA

components in the learners' retrospective narratives, suggesting that the model serves as a valuable framework for a holistic understanding of language learning motivation. In a more recent study, Li and Liu (2022) applied the PERMA model to theorize the language learning experience of international students studying Chinese. Their findings demonstrated that the L2 learning experience is a complex construct encompassing all five dimensions of the PERMA model, each of which emerged as a significant factor influencing students' motivation. Drawing on these recent applications of PERMA in LOTE motivation research, the current study draws on this model not only to describe the qualitative dimensions of learners' L2 learning experience, but also to explore how these dimensions may function as motivational drivers. Specifically, PERMA is employed as an interpretative lens to deepen the understanding of the L2 learning experience component of the L2MSS. By integrating the two frameworks, this study focuses on how the affective and experiential dimensions emphasized in PERMA align with and enrich the conceptualization of the L2 learning experience dimension. This integration is examined within the under-researched context of L2 Modern Greek in Catalonia.

Motivation for L2Modern Greek

Research on motivation to learn Modern Greek, especially in Spain, is limited. Tsamadou-Jacobberger and Zerva (2017) examined motivation to learn Modern Greek at the University of Strasbourg, France, and found that learners' ideal L2 self and the symbolic capital of the Greek language were key motivators for learners. Indeed, participants in the study assigned considerable value to learning Modern Greek due to its deep historical roots and its association with ancient Greek culture, civilization, and literature. These connections were perceived as conferring prestige and symbolic capital upon those who study the language. Notably, this symbolic value may be especially pronounced for learners of LOTEs, where motivation is often shaped less by instrumental goals and more by cultural, intellectual, or identity-related investments. Similarly, Sykara (2017) investigated motivation in Greece, revealing that attitudes toward language learning, the L2 community, the ideal L2 self, and instrumental factors were the primary motivators for 280 adult learners.

Rodríguez Lifante and Andria (2020) conducted qualitative research within the LETEGR2 project to explore the meanings that 101 L2 Modern Greek learners in Greece associated with the language and how these meanings interacted with their motivation. Participants were asked to complete the prompt, "For me, Modern Greek is...." The analysis identified four main aspects associated with the language: as an instrument, an attitude, a personal bond, and culture. The findings highlighted generally positive attitudes toward the language and revealed how learning Modern Greek is

influenced by extralinguistic factors, such as intergenerational connections and the language's cultural and historical significance. These dimensions are particularly significant in the context of LOTEs, where learners often engage with the language not for immediate instrumental gain but for symbolic, emotional, or heritage-related reasons. The findings therefore highlight how the decision to learn a LOTE such as Modern Greek is frequently rooted in deeper cultural connections and identity-related commitments, which may be less prominent motivational factors in the learning of more globally dominant languages.

As part of the LETEGR2 project, Andria's (2024) mixed-methods study also examined the motivation of 156 adult learners of Modern Greek as FL in Barcelona. The research identified four key motivational factors: interest in the L2 community, country, and culture; general interest in other cultures and in cross-cultural connections; interest in cultural products associated with the L2; and direct interaction with Greek people and travels to Greece. In the qualitative part of the study, participants expressed positive attitudes toward the language, often linking it to personal growth and their multilingual identity, as well as connections to both ancient and Modern Greek culture. Similarly to previous studies, participants attributed symbolic capital to the learning of Modern Greek. Interestingly, several participants viewed learning Greek as a means of enriching their multilingual repertoire and as an investment in identity construction. Those participants appeared to embody an ideal multilingual self (Henry, 2017); for them, learning Modern Greek represented a meaningful step toward realizing a cosmopolitan future self grounded in intercultural openness and linguistic diversity. The study also highlighted the influence of the Catalan context in shaping learners' motivation and called for further research in this area. In particular, Catalonia's multilingual landscape and the coexistence of diverse language ideologies seemed to influence how these multilingual learners perceived the value and purpose of learning LOTEs such as Modern Greek.

Building on these findings, the current research seeks to investigate more deeply the dynamic relationship between motivation to learn Modern Greek and the Catalan context. The next section will discuss the unique characteristics that make this setting particularly worthy of further investigation.

The multilingual context of Catalonia, Spain

As a multilingual country where over 40% of its population lives in regions with official bilingual status, Spain offers an interesting context for researching FL learning, particularly in the area of language learning motivation (Lasagabaster, 2017). Located in the northeastern part of Spain, Catalonia is an autonomous community that is officially bilingual, using both Spanish, the language of the state as a whole, and Catalan,

the language historically spoken by the region's native population. Similarly to other regional minority languages such as Basque and Galician, Catalan has experienced a history of repression during the Franco dictatorship (1939–1975). Franco's authoritarian regime sought a homogeneous Spain by rejecting ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic diversity, banning public use of minority languages until his death in 1975 and Spain's transition to democracy (Hernández-Campoy & Villena-Ponsoda, 2009). Despite the repression, Catalan was spoken privately as an act of resistance, reinforcing the connection between the Catalan language and the Catalan identity. This deep connection between language and identity has remained strong even after the restoration of democracy. Recent studies reveal that although local political discourses promoting ethnolinguistic divisions persist, young Catalan speakers highly value bilingualism and embrace a “linguistic cosmopolitanism” (Newman & Trenchs-Parera, 2015). This cosmopolitan outlook, may lessen competition between minority and majority languages, fostering a more cohesive social environment where diverse languages and identities coexist harmoniously (for a more extensive discussion, see Lasagabaster, 2017). Research has shown that language learners' motivation, ideologies, beliefs, and attitudes are significantly influenced by the sociocultural dynamics of their environment (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009). Importantly, in multilingual context such as Catalonia, motivation to learn additional languages is often shaped not only by practical or instrumental factors, but also by a recognition of linguistic diversity as a valuable social asset (Andria, 2024). Learners' motivation is intertwined with their identities as multilingual, interculturally aware individuals who navigate complex language ideologies and sociopolitical dynamics (Cenoz & Gorter, 2019). This interplay makes motivation in multilingual settings such as Catalonia distinct, as it involves balancing personal, cultural, and community-oriented goals within a dynamic linguistic landscape. Understanding why individuals in the Catalan context might opt to learn a lesser-spoken language such as Modern Greek can shed light on how language learning choices can be influenced by ideological, identity-based, and intercultural factors. This perspective can deepen our insight into the complex and multifaceted nature of language learning motivation in multilingual contexts.

Methods

Methodological underpinnings

The present study is framed within Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), whose aim is to examine individuals' meaning-making of significant lived experiences (Smith et al., 2009). Grounded in the principles of

phenomenology and hermeneutics, IPA considers individuals as self-aware beings who actively reflect on and interpret their experiences. Another key feature of IPA is its idiographic approach, which emphasizes giving equal attention to each individual case and participant.

To explore the experiences of FL learners of Modern Greek, narrative data were collected. Narratives allow learners to articulate their personal experiences, feelings, and thoughts, providing rich, in-depth insights into their motivation. They capture the complexities of individual experiences, including emotional and psychological aspects (Pavlenko, 2007). By narrating their stories, learners engage in a reflective process that can uncover underlying motivational factors which may be inaccessible through more direct, structured methods such as surveys or questionnaires. Furthermore, narrative data “allow us to see the dynamic interactions between the context and the learner” (Thompson, 2017a, p. 42), as learners’ stories illuminate how cultural background, social interactions, and community shape their motivation. Grasping these sociocultural dimensions is essential for a comprehensive understanding of language learning motivation, especially in linguistically and socially complex settings such as Catalonia.

Participants

The participants in this study were 20 adult FL learners of Modern Greek, seven males and 13 females, attending a language school in Barcelona, Spain. The language school belongs to a non-profit association whose members are either Greeks living in the area or local philhellenes. The school provides courses for adult learners at several proficiency levels. Beyond the language classes, the association arranges a variety of activities for students, such as festivals, conferences, dance lessons, cooking workshops, and other cultural events. Participants belonged to two proficiency levels: intermediate ($n = 13$) and advanced ($n = 7$), with ages ranging from 22 to 72 years (Mean: 46.9, SD: 16.96). All participants were multilingual, with a reported knowledge of six languages (mean). Catalan and Spanish were the L1s for all participants, except for one participant who also had German as her L1 and another participant who also had Italian as his L1. In terms of their perceptions of bilingualism, nine participants considered themselves Catalan-dominant, four identified as Spanish-dominant, and seven viewed themselves as balanced Spanish/Catalan bilinguals. All of the participants held a university degree. Many of them had degrees and/or worked in professions related to the humanities or linguistics, in fields such as philosophy, history, language, Classics, translating and interpreting, or education. All the participants reported having been to Greece at least once, and many of them mentioned that they visited the country on a regular basis.

It is important to note that participants who were heritage learners of Modern Greek or those learning the language due to familial connections, such as having Greek spouses, were intentionally excluded from this study. While these learners could offer valuable insights into motivation, they were not the focus of the study. Instead, this research aimed to examine the motivation of Catalan learners who chose to study Modern Greek independently, without such external influences. Therefore, this exploration offers a deeper understanding of the factors driving learners' interest in the language within this specific context. The language school was selected as the research site because it is one of only two institutions in Catalonia that provide formal instruction in FL Modern Greek. Its selection was also informed by logistical considerations, as the researcher held a dual role there as both coordinator and instructor, facilitating access and familiarity with the educational context. The participants included in the study were those who met the selection criteria outlined previously.

Instruments and data collection

Data for this study were collected through face-to-face, in-depth, semi-structured interviews, during which participants responded to a series of questions regarding their language learning motivation, experiences, practices, and language preferences (Polat, 2013). These interviews yielded valuable data on participants' language learning histories (Mercer, 2013), offering insights into how FL learners conceptualize their experiences and the language learning process. The interviews were conducted individually by the researcher, who was in most cases also the participants' FL instructor. Participants were free to choose the language of the interview (Spanish, Catalan, or Modern Greek) and could switch between languages as needed. The interviews were between 20 and 45 minutes long. The total length of the compiled recordings was 553 minutes. All participants provided written informed consent for their participation in the study before the data collection began.

Data coding and analysis

The interviews were recorded, transcribed verbatim, and imported into ATLAS.ti 24 for analysis. The narratives of the learners were then analyzed using IPA. The analysis began inductively, allowing themes to emerge directly from participants' narratives without predefined categories. Although the study was informed by the PERMA model and the L2MSS these frameworks were introduced later in a deductive phase to guide and deepen interpretation. While using theoretical frameworks is not a common practice in IPA, the incorporation of theoretical foundations was both valuable and

necessary in this study. These theoretical underpinnings did not constrain the analysis but served as tools to enhance the interpretative process.

The data coding and analysis process adhered to six steps based on IPA methodology (Smith et al., 2009). Initially, the researcher became familiar with the data through repeated readings of each transcript. This was followed by initial annotation, where key fragments were highlighted, and exploratory comments on semantic content and language were made. Further readings led to detailed annotations including descriptive, linguistic, and higher-level interpretive comments. Next, the researcher developed emergent themes. After analyzing one case, the researcher would move to the next, maintaining the idiographic focus by treating each case individually. Once all cases had been analyzed, step six involved identifying patterns across all cases, looking for shared themes as well as similarities and differences. Following this process, the analysis was deepened through formally connecting the data to the PERMA model and the L2MSS, which served as the theoretical foundations for interpreting the findings.

Results and discussion

The aim of the study was to explore the motivation and attitudes of L2 learners of Modern Greek in Catalonia, Spain. Two central themes emerged from the analysis of the interviews: (1) The L2 experience of learning Greek is a powerful motivating force for FL Modern Greek learners, and (2) Learning Modern Greek strengthens L2 anti-ought-to-selves. The first theme, in particular, revealed five sub-themes that align closely with the elements of the PERMA model: (a) emotions, (b) engagement, (c) relationships, (d) meaning, and (e) accomplishment. These sub-themes were central to participants' accounts of their L2 learning experience. Regarding the second theme, three sub-themes were identified: (a) learning Modern Greek challenges the utilitarian approach to language learning, (b) connections between choosing to learn Modern Greek and coming from a minority and minoritized L1 background, and (c) learning LOTEs as an act of reactance to language hierarchies and the hegemony of 'strong' languages. Lastly, a third, less central yet meaningful theme emerged from the data: (3) The ideal multilingual self as a motivational driver for learning FL Modern Greek.

L2 experience is a powerful motivating force in Modern Greek

Emotions

All participants reported that their experience learning Modern Greek as an FL was characterized by positive emotions, which significantly boosted

their motivation. Common words used by participants to describe these positive experiences included “interesting,” “fun,” “amazing,” “pleasurable,” “exciting,” and “motivating.” These emotions appeared to enhance their motivation during the course. A particularly strong and recurring feeling among learners was the joy they experienced as they delved deeper into the study of Modern Greek. For instance, Carla¹ shares her enthusiasm for the Greek classes and highlights how this experience stood out from other FL classes she had previously attended:

I study Greek because I love it, I'm drawn to it, and I enjoy it. The Greek classes have been the most motivating of all the language classes, like English for instance. In English classes I was never motivated. I went because I needed them. But with Modern Greek, from the very beginning, I was excited to attend. First, when I was not working, and later, even when I was working and I was tired, I still looked forward to the classes.

These findings align with previous research on LOTE learner motivation (Li & Liu, 2022; Oxford & Cuéllar, 2014), as well as broader studies on language learning motivation, where positive feelings sustained learners' motivation over the years. They are also consistent with studies indicating that positive learning experiences often become learners' main source of motivation (Papi & Hiver, 2020).

It is worth noting that although positive emotions dominated the learners' interviews, some negative feelings were also expressed. These were primarily related to the challenges of the language, such as its complex grammar, writing system, vocabulary and different alphabet, as well as the difficulty in reaching a threshold level where fluent speaking and writing became possible. Interestingly, while these feelings, such as frustration and difficulty, could be seen as negative, learners did not perceive them as demotivating. Instead, they viewed them as challenges that further motivated the learners to work harder in order to overcome them. For example, Vincent expresses certain feelings of struggle and frustration due to the complexity of the Greek language. However, he has managed to turn these challenges into motivation, deepening his engagement with the language—a process that now brings him joy:

I think it is a difficult language. In every language there comes a point in learning when you start talking and writing in an automatic way, but in Modern Greek reaching that point is hard. I hope I'll get there one day. In the language school where I used to go, when we were studying B1 level, after every class my classmates and I would always say “We will never learn.” But now I feel even more motivated; my sole motivation is to learn Greek, I have entered this “grammar game,” and I love it!

Similarly to previous studies, these negative emotions coming from the difficulty of the language under study did not undermine motivation; instead, they encouraged learners to work harder and persist (Li & Liu, 2022). This supports the idea that positive and negative emotions interact and that negative emotions do not necessarily lead to demotivation or discouragement (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2019).

Engagement

The analysis of the interviews revealed that learners engaged with multiple aspects of the language learning process. Participants not only demonstrated active involvement in classroom tasks but also took part in extracurricular activities connected to Greek culture. In the excerpt below, Lidia conveys her deep immersion in the learning process and the joy and personal satisfaction that arise from this journey.

When I study Greek at home, I feel good and at ease. In my office, I have all my books, and I keep a page with all the verbs handy in case I forget one. Studying is a pleasant experience. I feel calm and happy, without any pressure.

Engagement with culture was found to play a significant role in motivating participants, and it was closely linked to the meaning that they attributed to the target language (see Section 4.1.4 below). This connection that has been also documented in previous studies (Oxford & Cuéllar, 2014). All of the participants emphasized the importance of having access to Greek cultural products, including music, literature, theater, and cinema, as a key factor in their learning experience. Cultural interest was important both as an initial motivation to begin studying the language and as a powerful force in sustaining learners' long-term commitment. This result aligns with previous research on motivation for learning Modern Greek (Andria, 2024; Rodríguez Lifante & Andria, 2020) and LOTEs (Li & Liu, 2022; Oxford & Cuéllar, 2014). Although culture plays a crucial role in deepening our understanding of language learning motivation, it has not been included into either Dörnyei's (2019) conceptualization of L2 learning experience or the PERMA model, a limitation noted in previous studies (Li & Liu, 2022; Oxford & Cuéllar, 2014; Oxford, 2016).

Relationships

Another recurring theme that emerged from the data is the powerful influence of interpersonal relationships on learners' motivation. These relationships fell into three main categories: connections with Greek people, teacher-student interactions, and peer dynamics. Many students

connected their initial desire to learn Modern Greek with a willingness to communicate with locals during visits to Greece or with their Greek friends. Their interviews revealed an integrative orientation (Gardner, 2001), as they emphasized the importance of building relationships with Modern Greek speakers. This finding aligns with previous research, which highlights interactions and personal connections with Greek individuals as a key motivation for beginning the study of Modern Greek in Spain (Andria, 2014, 2024; Rodríguez Lifante & Andria, 2020). Some participants also expressed that learning Modern Greek for use during their travels and stays in Greece is, for them, an “act of respect” toward the local community and its culture. They linked this motivation to a sense of gratitude, noting that they feel similarly appreciative when foreigners make the effort to learn their own language, Catalan. This perspective is particularly meaningful in the Catalan context, especially in Barcelona, where newcomers and visitors more commonly learn or use Spanish, the more globally dominant language. In contrast, Catalan tends to receive less attention, even though it holds official status and cultural importance. As a result, when foreigners make the effort to learn Catalan, it is often appreciated by locals as a gesture of respect and cultural awareness. For many locals, this effort seems to carry deeper symbolic weight, reflecting both a subtle challenge to prevailing language hierarchies and an acknowledgment of the region’s linguistic diversity.

Relationships with Greek individuals, in many cases, served as the initial impetus for studying the language. However, as learners progress, their interactions with teachers and peers played an increasingly influential role in shaping their motivation. The rapport established with teachers, along with the supportive and harmonious learning environment among classmates, was highlighted as a crucial factor in maintaining learners’ motivation and their eagerness to continue learning. Raquel explains: “I think that it was important that I have always felt so comfortable with the teacher and with the classmates.” Moreover, Carla underscores the significance of the tight-knit community she found within her Greek classes, highlighting the strong sense of belonging they gave her:

The Greek classes have been for me a parallel world, because it was a day of the week in which you were connecting with a very special group, with people who were also going above and beyond in order to attend the classes.

This finding is consistent with previous research emphasizing the importance of a positive classroom environment, particularly the pivotal role of the teacher, in influencing and sustaining L2 learners’ motivation (Henry & Thorsen, 2018b; Papi & Hiver, 2020).

In summary, the significance that participants placed on personal relationships supports Mercer's (2014, 2015) view that language learning is fundamentally relational. This suggests that learners' language learning selves are shaped by "a network of relationships"—including past, present, and future—that they establish not only with people but also with objects (such as cultural products) and places around their language learning experience (Mercer, 2015, p. 80).

Meaning

A central theme in the learners' interviews is their belief that learning Modern Greek is a meaningful and worthwhile activity. All of them emphasized that their initial motivation came from a love of learning rather than any external factors. Participants perceived it as meaningful due to different reasons. Firstly, most of them viewed Modern Greek as an important language, primarily due to its deep historical legacy and the rich culture associated with it. Bernardo, for instance, states:

It is a wonderful language, and it has a very glorious and splendid past. For that reason alone, it would be worthwhile for everyone to learn Greek. I think that just to know your origins, it is important to know Greek.

Learners also revealed a strong intrinsic motivation, connected to their perceived humanistic, linguistic, and cultural value of learning Modern Greek. This aligns with previous studies that emphasize the perceived symbolic capital of this language for FL learners (Andria, 2024; Tsamadou-Jacobberger & Zerva, 2017). Participants saw the learning process as a means of personal growth and enrichment (Chen et al., 2021). Rosa, for instance, underscores the role of language learning in fostering intercultural awareness, seeing it as cultural capital rather than just an instrumental skill. She also emphasizes the humanistic value of language learning and challenges neoliberal views on language learning motivation:

I would recommend everyone learn Modern Greek, first because it's an important language and it's the foundation of our [Spanish and Catalan] culture and of our languages. And secondly, because, in general, I would always recommend studying a language not according to its usefulness, which is what we are doing now. (...) But I think we should all study a language that is not for a utilitarian purpose. First, because language is thoughts, it is a way of thinking, a way of living that is incorporated into language, and second, because this is helping languages not to die.

For other learners, the experience extended beyond simply learning an FL; it became a deeply personal endeavor. Laura, for example, associates learning with a profound personal journey, describing it as an empowering process that boosts her self-confidence:

But Greek gives me power, because I can do things for myself. I want to do it, and I'm doing it. For me, learning Greek is one of the best things I have done.

Accomplishment

Accomplishment emerged as an important theme for participants, often framed in relation to the perceived difficulty of the language. While they were motivated to succeed in learning Modern Greek and to make progress toward their goals, accomplishment for these learners was not always tied to external markers such as passing exams or earning certificates (Li & Liu, 2022). Instead, they viewed it as an internal sense of satisfaction and fulfillment when reaching more personal milestones. Carla's experience in Greece, described below, exemplifies this sense of personal accomplishment:

It was incredible to think that I rented a car, thanked the lady at the hotel for preparing an excellent breakfast, went to a restaurant, and spoke with the cook, telling him how much I loved everything. I met an old man at the beach, and we would greet each other on the street. And all of this was happening in Greek! It was like, wow, I've reached the point where, yes, I can believe it—good or bad, but I actually speak this language!

Accomplishment was reflected in learners' growing confidence in their abilities. As students felt more capable of mastering the language, they became more motivated to stay engaged in their classes. For most of them, this sense of accomplishment was closely tied to positive experiences in Greece. Whether their progress was modest or substantial, the ability to communicate while in Greece provided them with a deep sense of achievement. Lidia illustrates this feeling, as she describes a pivotal moment when she recognized her significant progress in Modern Greek:

It was in the past few years when I went to Greece and realized that I could talk with the local people. I think it was very interesting, it gave me another...power!

In summary, the participants' L2 experience with learning Modern Greek emerged as a central motivational factor. The findings revealed the multi-dimensional nature of L2 learning experience, which aligns with the

five elements of the PERMA model: emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment. Although the PERMA model was initially developed for well-being research, its components proved highly effective in capturing how learners experience and sustain motivation throughout their FL learning journey.

Learning Modern Greek strengthens the anti-ought-to-self

The anti-ought-to-self seems to serve as a powerful motivating force for FL Modern Greek learners in Catalonia. Related to this, three sub-themes have been identified as follows.

Learning Modern Greek challenges the utilitarian approach to language learning

In their interviews, many students mentioned that they chose to learn Modern Greek as a way of resisting societal pressures that promote a utilitarian approach to language learning. These learners appear to embody an anti-ought-to-self, driven by a desire to defy societal expectations in opting to study a less commonly spoken language. Some participants revealed that their decision to study Modern Greek was often questioned by their social circles, with a few even facing disapproval. Ada, for example, recounted instances where her choice to learn Modern Greek was met with criticism:

I have received disapproving reactions in the sense that ‘ah, why do you study Greek? Why don’t you take up French, which would be more useful to you?’ Because I just really don’t feel like it. It’s my time and I want to learn Greek!

In her interview, Ada reacts to external pressures that dictate which languages are deemed “useful” or “valuable.” She rejects the dominant utilitarian discourse around language learning and asserts her autonomy by choosing a language that does not conform to these external expectations. However, the social criticism often faced by learners of Modern Greek does not appear to diminish their motivation. On the contrary, participants reported that such reactions often strengthen their motivation, as they feel driven to defend their choice of language. Carla’s experience illustrates the depth and intentionality of her personal connection with the language—a connection that remains unaffected by external criticism:

People question why you do it (studying Modern Greek). Romantics versus pragmatists, right? To me the romanticism associated with

studying this language is much more fulfilling than the pragmatism of learning an extremely useful language. Its usefulness will vary depending on the learner. And Modern Greek, and everything that learning it entails, is much more fulfilling than studying a language that is super practical and that is spoken by a lot of people.

Connections between choosing to learn Modern Greek and coming from a minority and minoritized L1 background

Interestingly, many participants ($n = 17$) drew connections between their decision to learn Modern Greek and their experiences as native speakers of a minority language. They noted that coming from a Catalan-speaking background, which is itself a minority language, heightened their sensitivity to other lesser-spoken or minority languages. This linguistic context fostered in them a sense of empathy and interest in minority languages, as well as a positive attitude toward promoting the learning of such languages. Xavier's statement below offers insights into how his L1 background and the context in which he lives has shaped his mentality toward languages and language learning:

I think that if I were not a Catalan speaker, if I were not a native speaker of a minority language, I would not have felt this attraction. I am convinced that if I had not come from a minority reality, I would not have paid attention to these things, because from the reality of a strong language you are inevitably less aware of the situation of these languages, you are less linguistically aware.

Some students also saw their choice to learn a minority language as a way to protect and preserve both the language and its associated culture, as it is explained in Clàudia's statement:

But I like to speak languages that are 'small'... I like that. And I think that you protect a small language by speaking it. And with Catalan I think the same thing.

Learning LOTE as an act of reactance to language hierarchies and the hegemony of "strong" languages

In line with what it was described before, some learners in their interviews expressed a strong disposition against language hierarchies and challenged distinctions between "big" and "small" languages. This opposition was expressed sometimes by adverse attitudes toward English, due to its hegemonic position. For these learners, the pervasive presence of Global English is perceived as a threat for minority languages, including their

own (Catalan), which can foster a deeper sense of identification with other languages, such as Modern Greek in this case. In Bernando's words:

I openly admit—knowing that it might be politically incorrect—that I don't have a fondness for English. I find it to be a rather imposing language, and I'm not a fan of impositions. I support minority languages and have always been dedicated to preserving Romance minority languages. This cultural wealth and beauty are at risk of being lost, and I feel deeply committed to safeguarding them.

Pau also expresses certain concerns about the hegemonic position of English and the impact on minority languages:

The primary difference between Modern Greek and English is that Modern Greek is a language that I have deep within me, I feel this language. It's not the same with English, which I don't like at all. I don't blame the language itself. What I don't like is this notion that if you don't know English you are... an idiot! I don't like the status around this language, that everyone must learn it. I think that this is a problem, English "eats" Modern Greek, Catalan, all the languages. (...) It dominates all the other languages.

All the learners expressed that they embrace and enjoy the multilingual and multicultural reality that characterizes Barcelona, the city they live in. However, as illustrated in the examples above, some also voiced concerns about the potential negative impact of "big" languages, such as English, on minority languages—a concern echoed in other studies conducted in the Spanish context (Busse, 2017; Lasagabaster, 2017).

The ideal multilingual self as a motivational driver for learning FL Modern Greek

In their interviews, participants also highlighted the influence of broader multilingual aspirations on their decisions to learn FLs, particularly Modern Greek. As noted earlier, all participants expressed appreciation for the multilingual and multicultural nature of their sociolinguistic context, and they demonstrated a genuine interest in other languages and cultures. Many attributed their ease with language learning to their bilingual upbringing and life in a bilingual society, describing their ability to navigate between languages as a "natural" process. As a result, they tended to hold a positive self-image as multilingual individuals.

Beyond the desire to acquire another language, participants expressed an aspiration to construct a multilingual identity, which reflects openness

to linguistic diversity and a commitment to intercultural engagement. This orientation aligns with Henry's (2017) concept of the ideal multilingual self, in which learners envision themselves as capable and confident users of multiple languages. In this sense, the motivation to learn Modern Greek is not solely rooted in interest in the language itself, but also in a broader vision of the self as a cosmopolitan and linguistically versatile individual. The ideal multilingual self functions as a future-oriented motivational image, encouraging learners to invest in languages that may lack immediate instrumental value but carry personal or symbolic meaning within their broader linguistic repertoire. Thus, the pursuit of Modern Greek becomes part of a larger process of multilingual self-development and identity formation, in line with previous research in the same context (Andria, 2024). In the excerpt below, Ada expresses her opinion on her multilingual reality and her positive and empowering experience as a multilingual speaker:

I love that several languages are spoken here. I think it brings so many ways of thinking—the more options, the better. (...) It's something I adore, being able to speak in multiple languages. When I forget a word in one, I turn to another, and it's never the same to say a word in just one language—being able to add all these nuances when speaking. I grew up in an environment where three or four languages were spoken constantly. It was a mix of all the languages we learned, and it was fantastic because you could add subtle shades to the conversation, and we understood each other very well. Multilingualism in any society seems to me something worth preserving and promoting, and I think it's a treasure that is deeply undervalued.

Conclusion

Drawing on narrative data from multilingual adult learners in Catalonia, this study explored their motivation for studying Modern Greek as an FL. As one of the few empirical studies on Modern Greek as an FL, this research sought to fill a gap in the literature by providing insights into an underexplored language within a sociolinguistically intriguing context. The study approached FL motivation from a PP perspective, using Seligman's (2011) PERMA model as an insightful framework for understanding the learner L2 learning experience (Li & Liu, 2022). Data analysis revealed that both the L2 learning experience and the anti-ought-to self significantly influenced learners' motivation. The L2 experience emerged as a multi-dimensional construct, consisting of the five interconnected dimensions reflected in the PERMA model—emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment—whose interrelationship shaped learners' motivation. The initial motivation to study Modern Greek

stemmed from learners' relationships with Greek individuals, the meaning they attributed to the target language, and their strong cultural interest. Positive emotions, engagement, accomplishment, and the development of new relationships (such as those with teachers and peers) served as vital factors in maintaining learners' motivation. Although the PERMA model offers valuable insights into learners' motivation, the findings of this study indicated it may require certain additions to fully capture the complexity of learners' experiences, as it has been also suggested previously (Li & Liu, 2022; Oxford & Cuéllar, 2014). For instance, the role of culture is not fully addressed, despite its fundamental importance for the study of LOTEs such as Chinese and, as reported here, Modern Greek. These observations highlight the need to further elaborate the PERMA model when applying it to FL learning contexts, particularly those involving LOTEs. In addition, while emotions during the FL learning process were predominantly positive, some negative ones occasionally surfaced. Notably, these negative feelings did not diminish learners' motivation. On the contrary, they fueled a stronger determination to persevere and work harder (Li & Liu, 2022). Future research should further explore how seemingly negative emotions could, in fact, foster motivated behaviors.

The study offered new empirical insights into the concept of the anti-ought-to self, identifying it as a key motivational force for FL Modern Greek learners in Catalonia. This construct emerged in response to the unique characteristics and historical background of the learners' socio-cultural context. Their narratives revealed psychological reactance, i.e., a desire to resist societal pressures and expectations. As speakers of a minority and minoritized language, the learners showed a sensitivity and affinity for LOTEs, rejecting a purely utilitarian view of language learning. Instead, they advocated for a humanistic approach that sees language learning as a path to intercultural enrichment and personal growth. While all participants valued the multilingual and multicultural environment they lived in, some expressed concerns about the hegemonic dominance of Global English, which they viewed as a potential threat to minority languages. For them, studying a LOTE was an act of resistance to external pressures—a form of “rebellious” motivation (Lanvers, 2016). The findings suggest a need to revisit and expand the L2MSS framework to better account for LOTE learners with “rebellious” or “resistance-oriented profiles,” particularly by including the anti-ought-to self (Thompson & Vásquez, 2015; Thompson, 2017a; Thompson & Liu, 2018).

In addition to the anti-ought-to self, the study identified the ideal multilingual self as an important source of motivation. This ideal multilingual self reflected learners' aspirational self-images as cosmopolitan speakers of multiple languages. It was closely tied to their lived experience in the multilingual Catalan environment which fosters openness, cultural curiosity,

and an appreciation of linguistic diversity. The pursuit of Modern Greek, in this case, was not only driven by the goal of learning a new language but also a part of a broader effort to cultivate and affirm a multilingual identity.

Further research should explore the emergence of both the anti-ought-to self and ideal multilingual self in the Catalan context and similar multilingual settings, where learners navigate multiple languages alongside complex and often conflicting identity dynamics. This line of inquiry is essential to addressing monolingual bias in motivational studies. By focusing on LOTEs, researchers can better capture how learners resist external pressures and expectations tied to dominant language ideologies. Such research would shed light on how multilingual learners construct their motivation in ways that challenge normative language hierarchies, negotiate cultural identities, and respond to the unique sociopolitical and linguistic landscapes of their multilingual communities.

As this study indicated, LOTE learners often possess deeply personal motivation for language learning, and understanding their experiences can significantly enhance our knowledge of language learning motivation and its dynamic nature (Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017). Future studies should examine motives to learn an FL not in isolation, but by investigating their dynamic interactions and their relationship with the opportunities and challenges, along with the learners' personal histories and ecologies present in the specific learning context (Papi & Hiver, 2020).

Exploring language learning motivation through narrative data offered valuable insights into the L2 learning experience, and future motivational research can greatly benefit from this approach. Learner narratives provide researchers and educators with a deeper understanding of learners' thoughts and emotions, offering firsthand accounts of what FL learning truly means to them. This qualitative method captures nuances that quantitative instruments may overlook, ultimately enhancing our awareness of what drives learners to begin and persist in their FL journey.

Acknowledgments

This research was financially supported by the Greek Government's General Secretariat for Research and Innovation (GSRI) and the Hellenic Foundation for Research and Innovation (HFRI) (Code: 1656). The author would like to express her gratitude to the Greek Community of Catalonia and its students for their valuable collaboration.

Note

- 1 All names mentioned herein are pseudonyms.

References

- Andria, M. (2014). *Crosslinguistic influence in the acquisition of Greek as a foreign language by Spanish/ Catalan L1 learners: The role of proficiency and stays abroad*. [Doctoral dissertation, University of Barcelona].
- Andria, M. (2024). Learning Modern Greek as foreign language in Barcelona, Spain. In M. Mattheoudakis, & C. Maligkoudi (Eds.), *Exploring Modern Greek as a second, foreign, and heritage language: In Greece and beyond* (pp. 145–161). Routledge.
- Al-Hoorie, A. H., Hiver, P., & In'nami, Y. (2024). The validation crisis in the L2 motivational self system tradition. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 26(2), 307–329. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263123000487>
- Boo, Z., Dörnyei, Z., & Ryan, S. (2015). L2 motivation research 2005–2014: Understanding a publication surge and a changing landscape. *System*, 55, 145–157. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2015.10.006>
- Brehm, J. W. (1966). *A theory of psychological reactance*. Academic Press.
- Busse, V. (2013). An exploration of motivation and self-beliefs of first year students of German. *System*, 41(2), 379–398. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2013.03.007>
- Busse, V. (2017). Plurilingualism in Europe. Exploring attitudes towards English and other European languages among adolescents in Bulgaria, Germany, the Netherlands and Spain. *The Modern Language Journal*, 101(3), 566–582. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12415>
- Cenoz, J., & Gorter, D. (2019). Multilingualism, translanguaging, and minority languages in SLA. *The Modern Language Journal*, 103 (Supplement 2019), 130–135. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12529>
- Chen, Y., Zhao, D., & Qi, S. (2021). Chinese students' motivation for learning German and French in an intensive non-degree programme. *Círculo de Lingüística Aplicada a La Comunicación*, 86, 81–93. <https://doi.org/10.5209/clac.75497>
- Csizer, K., & Lukács, G. (2010). The comparative analysis of motivation, attitudes and selves: The case of English and German in Hungary. *System*, 38(1), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2009.12.001>
- Dewaele, J.-M., Chen, X., Padilla, A.M., & Lake, J. (2019). The flowering of positive psychology in foreign language teaching and acquisition research. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10, 2128. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02128>
- Dewaele, J.-M., & MacIntyre, P. D. (2019). The predictive power of multicultural personality traits, learner and teacher variables on foreign language enjoyment and anxiety. In M. Sato, & S. Loewen (Eds.), *Evidence-based second language pedagogy* (pp. 263–286). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351190558-12>
- Dewaele, J.-M., Saito, K., & Halimi, F. (2022). How foreign language enjoyment acts as a buoy for sagging motivation: A longitudinal investigation. *Applied Linguistics*, 44(1), 22–45. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amac033>
- Dörnyei, Z. (2005). *The psychology of the language learner*. Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2009). The L2 motivational self system. In Z. Dörnyei, & E. Ushioda (Eds.), *Motivation, language identity and the L2 self* (pp. 9–42). Multilingual Matters. <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781847691293-003>
- Dörnyei, Z. (2019). Towards a better understanding of the L2 learning experience, the Cinderella of the L2 motivational self system. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 9(1), 19–30. <https://doi.org/10.14746/ssl.2019.9.1.2>

- Dörnyei, Z., & Al-Hoorie, A. H. (2017). The motivational foundation of learning languages other than global English: Theoretical issues and research directions. *The Modern Language Journal*, 101(3), 455–468. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12408>
- Dörnyei, Z., & Chan, L. (2013). Motivation and vision: An analysis of future L2 self images, sensory styles, and imagery capacity across two target languages. *Language Learning*, 63(3), 437–462. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lang.12005>
- Dörnyei, Z., & Ushioda, E. (2009). Motivation, language identities and the L2 self: Future research directions. In Z. Dörnyei, & E. Ushioda (Eds.) *Motivation, language identity and the L2 Self* (pp. 350–356). Multilingual Matters.
- Douglas Fir Group (2016). A transdisciplinary framework for SLA in a multilingual world. *The Modern Language Journal*, 100 (Supplement 2016), 19–47. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12301>
- Gardner, R. C. (2001). Integrative motivation and second language acquisition. In Z. Dörnyei, & R. Schmidt (Eds.), *Motivation and second language acquisition* (pp. 1–19). University of Hawaii Press.
- Gregersen, T. (2019). Aligning positive psychology with language learning motivation. In M. Lamb, K. Csizér, A. Henry, & S. Ryan (Eds.), *The palgrave handbook of motivation for language learning* (pp. 621–640). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-28380-3_30
- Henry, A. (2017). L2 motivation and multilingual identities. *The Modern Language Journal*, 101(3), 548–565. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12412>
- Henry, A., & Thorsen, C. (2018a). The ideal multilingual self: Validity, influences on motivation, and the role in a multilingual education. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 15(4), 349–364. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2017.1411916>
- Henry, A., & Thorsen, C. (2018b). Teacher–student relationships and L2 motivation. *The Modern Language Journal*, 102(1), 218–241. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12446>
- Hernández-Campoy, J. M., & Villena-Ponsoda, J. A. (2009) Standardness and non-standardness in Spain: Dialect attrition and revitalization of regional dialects of Spanish. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 196/197, 181–214. <https://doi.org/10.1515/IJSL.2009.021>
- Howard, M., & Oakes, L. (2024.) Motivation for LOTE learning: A crosscountry comparison of university learners of French. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 45(2), 427–443. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2021.1897129>
- Ibrahim, Z. (2016). Affect in directed motivational currents: Positive emotionality in long-term L2 engagement. In P. D., MacIntyre, T. Gregersen, & S. Mercer (Eds.), *Positive Psychology in SLA* (pp. 258–281). Multilingual Matters. <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781783095360-012>
- Institut d'Estadística de Catalunya (2018). *Usos lingüístics de la població. Llengua inicial, d'identificació i habitual*. <https://www.idescat.cat/indicadors/?id=anuals&n=10364>
- Kormos, J., & Csizér, K. (2014). The interaction of motivation, self-regulatory strategies, and autonomous learning behavior in different learner groups. *TESOL Quarterly*, 48, 275–299. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.129>

- Lake, J. (2013). Positive L2 self: Linking positive psychology with L2 motivation. In M. T. Apple, D. Da Silva, & T. Fellner (Eds.), *Language Learning Motivation in Japan* (pp. 225–244). Multilingual Matters.
- Lake, J. (2016). Accentuate the positive: Conceptual and empirical development of the positive L2 self and its relationship to L2 proficiency. In K. Budzińska & O. Majchrzak (Eds.), *Positive psychology in second and foreign language education* (pp. 79–94). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-64444-4_5
- Lanvers, U. (2016). Lots of selves, some rebellious: Developing the self-discrepancy model for language learners. *System*, 60, 79–92. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2016.05.012>
- Lanvers, U. (2017). Contradictory others and the habitus of languages: Surveying the L2 motivation landscape in the United Kingdom. *The Modern Language Journal*, 101(3), 517–532. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12410>
- Lasagabaster, D. (2017). Language learning motivation and language attitudes in multilingual Spain from an international perspective. *The Modern Language Journal*, 101(3), 583–596. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12414>
- Li, Z. (2023). The development and validation of a scale for measuring L2 experience: The underappreciated element of the L2 motivational self system. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2023.2241854>
- Li, Z., & Liu, Z. (2022). Theorising language learning experience in LOTE motivation with PERMA: A positive psychology perspective. *System*, 112, 102975. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2022.102975>
- MacIntyre, P. D., Gregersen, T., & Mercer, S. (2019). Setting an agenda for positive psychology in SLA: Theory, practice, and research. *The Modern Language Journal*, 103(1), 262–274. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12544>
- MacIntyre, P. D., & Mercer, S. (2014). Introducing positive psychology to SLA. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 4, 153–172. <https://doi.org/10.14746/ssl.2014.4.2.2>
- Markus, H., & Nurius, P. (1986). Possible selves. *American Psychologist*, 41(9), 954–969. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.41.9.954>
- Mendoza, A., & Phung, H. (2019). Motivation to learn languages other than English: A critical research synthesis. *Foreign Language Annals*, 52(1), 121–140. <https://doi.org/10.1111/flan.12380>
- Mercer, S. (2013). Working with language learner histories from three perspectives: Teachers, learners and researchers. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 3(2), 171–185. <https://doi.org/10.14746/ssl.2013.3.2.2>
- Mercer, S. (2014). Re-imagining the self as a network of relationships. In K. Csizér & M. Magid (Eds.), *The Impact of Self-concept on Language Learning* (pp. 51–69). Multilingual Matters.
- Mercer, S. (2015). Social network analysis and complex dynamic systems. In Z. Dörnyei, P. D. MacIntyre, & A. Henry (Eds.), *Motivational dynamics in language learning* (pp. 95–105). Multilingual Matters.
- Newman, M., & Trenchs-Parera, M. (2015). Language policies, ideologies and attitudes in Catalonia. Part I: Reversing languages shift in the twentieth century. *Language and Linguistics Compass*, 9(7), 285–294. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lnc3.12141>

- Oxford, R. L. (2016). Powerfully positive: Searching for a model of language learner well-being. In D. Gabry's-Barker, & D. Galajda (Eds.), *Positive psychology perspectives on foreign language learning and teaching* (pp. 21–37). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-32954-3_2.
- Oxford, R. L., & Cuéllar, L. (2014). Positive psychology in cross-cultural learner Narratives: Mexican students discover themselves while learning Chinese. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 4(2), 173–203. <https://doi.org/10.14746/ssl.t.2014.4.2.3>
- Papi, M., & Hiver, P. (2020). Language learning motivation as a complex dynamic system: A global perspective of truth, control, and value. *The Modern Language Journal*, 104(1), 209e232. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12624>
- Papi, M., & Teimouri, Y. (2012). Dynamics of selves and motivation: A cross-sectional study in the EFL context of Iran. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 22(3), 287–309. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1473-4192.2012.00312.x>
- Pavelescu, L. M. (2019). Motivation and emotion in the EFL learning experience of Romanian adolescent students: Two contrasting cases. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 9(1), 55–82. <https://doi.org/10.14746/ssl.t.2019.9.1.4>
- Pavlenko, A. (2007). Autobiographical narratives as data in applied linguistics. *Applied Linguistics*, 28(2), 163–188. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amm008>
- Polat, B. (2013). Language experience interviews: What can they tell us about individual differences? *System*, 41, 70–83.
- Rodríguez-Lifante, A., & Andria, M. (2020). Mi futuro, mi pasión favorita o un camino a la cultura antigua... El significado de las motivaciones en aprendientes de griego moderno como segunda lengua. *CLIL Journal of Innovation and Research in Plurilingual and Pluricultural Education*, 3(2), 71–86. <https://doi.org/10.5565/rev/clil.47>
- Seligman, M. E. P. (2011). *Flourish: A visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being*. Free Press.
- Sykara, G. (2017). *Κίνητρα και στρατηγικές εκμάθησης των μαθητών της Ελληνικής ως δεύτερης γλώσσας* [Motivation and learning strategies of students of Greek as a second language], [Doctoral dissertation, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens].
- Smith, J. A., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2009). *Interpretative phenomenological analysis: Theory, method and research*. Sage.
- Taguchi, T., Magid, M., & Papi, M. (2009). The L2 motivational self system among Japanese, Chinese, and Iranian learners of English: A comparative study. In Dörnyei, Z. & Ushioda, E., (Eds.) *Motivation, language identity and the L2 self* (pp. 66–97). Multilingual Matters.
- Teimouri, Y. (2017). L2 selves, emotions, and motivated behaviors. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 39(4), 681–709. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263116000243>
- Thompson, A. S. (2017a). Don't tell me what to do! The anti-ought-to self and language learning motivation. *System*, 67, 38–49. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2017.04.004>
- Thompson, A. S. (2017b). Language learning motivation in the United States: An examination of language choice and multilingualism. *The Modern Language Journal*, 101(3), 483–500. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12409>

- Thompson, A. S. (2021). Conceptualizing the anti-ought-to self: Background and new directions. *Revue TDFLE*, 78, 1–21. https://doi.org/10.34745/numerev_1699
- Thompson, A. S., & Liu, Y. (2018). Multilingualism and emergent selves: Context, languages, and the anti-ought-to self. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 24(2), 173–190. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2018.1452892>
- Thompson, A. S., & Vásquez, C. (2015). Exploring motivational profiles through language learning narratives. *The Modern Language Journal*, 99(1), 158–174. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12187>
- Tsamadou-Jacobberger, I., & Zerva, M. (2017). Εκμάθηση ελληνικών στο Πανεπιστήμιο Στρασβούργου: Κίνητρα και αναπαραστάσεις [Learning Greek at the University of Strasbourg: Motivation and representations]. In T. Georgakopoulos, T.S. Pavlidou, M. Pechlivanos, A. Alexiadou, J. Androutopoulos, A. Kalokairinos, S. Skopeteas, & K. Stathi (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 12th International Conference on Greek Linguistics*, Vol. 2 (pp. 1051–1064). Romiosini/CeMoG.
- Ushioda, E. (2017). The impact of global English on motivation to learn other languages: Toward an ideal multilingual self. *The Modern Language Journal*, 101(3), 469–482. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12413>
- Ushioda, E., & Dörnyei, Z. (2017). Beyond global English: Motivation to learn languages in a multicultural world (Introduction to the Special Issue). *The Modern Language Journal*, 101(3), 451–454. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12407>
- Wang, T., & Fisher, L. (2021). Using a dynamic Motivational Self System to investigate Chinese undergraduate learners' motivation towards the learning of a LOTE: the role of the multilingual self. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 20(2), 130–152. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2020.1863412>

9 Exploring Finnish high school students' multilingual repertoires

Self-efficacy in reading in L1 and various L2s

*Mareen Patzelt, Leena Maria Heikkola,
and Judi Rose*

Introduction

Reading is an essential skill to acquire knowledge and participate effectively in society (Castles et al., 2018). The goal of reading is to understand what is written, that is, reading comprehension, an immensely complex task building on various linguistic and cognitive processes (Castles et al., 2018). From a cognitive perspective, reading comprehension includes “three operations as the critical core (...): decoding, text-meaning construction, and assimilation with prior knowledge” (Koda, 2005, p. 6).

According to Snow (2002), developing sufficient reading comprehension requires explicit instruction and thorough, repeated practice. Reading competence is usually defined as the ability to understand and use different kinds of written texts. It extends beyond processing written language and is essential for communication, knowledge sharing, and participation in a literate society (Becker-Mrotzek et al., 2019).

The majority of the world's population is multilingual (Crystal, 2006). Multilingual people possess “repertoires and agency in several languages, in different contexts, in which the individual is the locus and actor of contact” (Marshall & Moore, 2018, p. 19). Thus, reading competence is not only important in one's first language (L1), but also in one's second languages (L2s). In this study, we understand L2 to refer to all languages acquired after the L1, regardless of the order of acquisition, as is common in L2 research (Hammarberg, 2010).

Both L1 and L2 reading depend on lower-level processes, such as word recognition and phonological decoding (Graham et al., 2020). Readers also need higher-level processes, including self-regulatory strategies. These strategies assist readers in engaging with text despite possible challenges. They support persistence and help readers develop their reading

proficiency, including their reading comprehension, reading rate, and vocabulary (Graham et al., 2020; Jeon & Day, 2016).

Self-regulatory strategies are partly linked to readers' underlying beliefs of their capability to succeed in an activity, such as reading. In previous studies, these underlying beliefs have been referred to as self-efficacy beliefs (e.g., Pajares, 2002). Self-efficacy refers to individuals' judgments of their ability to achieve performance goals (Bandura, 1997). Self-efficacy has been linked to motivation (Toste et al., 2020), acknowledging the link between actions, goals, and beliefs, as well as the link between psychosocial processes and achievements. Closely related to self-efficacy is the term self-concept, which has also been researched in L2 reading (e.g., Walker, 2015). Self-concept refers to the broader perception of one's abilities in a certain domain. This is different to self-efficacy in that self-efficacy refers to one's confidence in one's ability to perform a specific task (Bandura, 1997). However, self-efficacy contributes to shaping self-concept, and thus the two concepts overlap. Those interested in self-efficacy may wish to further explore the related work in self-concept. However, in this chapter, we will not discuss self-concept in detail, as the focus of this study is on self-efficacy.

Both high school students' reading competence and its development in their L1 (see, e.g., Kozminsky & Kozminsky, 2002), as well as their L1 reading self-efficacy, have been widely studied (for a review on intervention studies, see, e.g., Unrau et al., 2018). However, previous research focuses mostly on young and/or beginner-level language learners (see, e.g., Coddington & Guthrie, 2009 on first-grade students reading in English; Graham et al., 2020 on young beginner learners of French as an L2). To date, less attention has been paid to more advanced language learners' self-efficacy and its impact on reading. In addition, research has typically focused on one L2 at a time, rarely in comparison with an L1 or other L2s. Considering the link between L1 and L2 reading, and the relevance of similar skills needed in both, the current understanding of reading self-efficacy needs further development. Our approach of comparing students' reading self-efficacy in different languages offers a more holistic layer of complexity to existing research. The aim of the present study is thus to investigate multilingual high school students' self-efficacy in their L1 reading (Finnish or Swedish) and three L2s (Swedish or Finnish, English, and German). Investigating reading performance and reading self-efficacy in four languages is a new perspective, combining research on reading, multilingualism, and psychology.

Literature review

L1 and L2 reading comprehension

Reading comprehension, as defined by Snow (2002, p. xiii), can be seen as the interaction between the reader and the text, that is, "the process

of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language". This process is influenced, for instance, by readers' previous linguistic and world knowledge, the text itself, and the purpose for reading (Castles et al., 2018). L2 reading comprehension is closely linked to L1 literacy. According to Bernhardt's (2011) compensatory reading theory, various factors influence L2 reading comprehension, primarily one's language knowledge but also one's L1 literacy, that is, "the ability to navigate semiotically through the world" (Bernhardt, 2011, p. 4). A third factor influencing reading comprehension, which Bernhardt names "other" (2011, p. 63), consists of, for example, background knowledge, comprehension strategies, and motivation. Brevik and colleagues (2016) also support the view that L1 and L2 reading share various features. Their study found a strong positive relationship between L1 and L2 reading proficiency among high school students in Norway. Koda (2005, p. 4) considers reading competence to include "linguistic knowledge, processing skills, and cognitive abilities". For this study, in which we investigate reading competence in four languages (Finnish, Swedish, English, and German), we consider the following three aspects of reading comprehension in L1 and L2 as vital: linguistic, psychological, and experiential variables.

The most important factors contributing to L2 reading comprehension are grammar and vocabulary knowledge (Jeon & Yamashita, 2014), which we understand as linguistic variables. Moreover, reading in an L2 is primarily a language-related challenge, rather than a mere reading-related issue (Jeon & Yamashita, 2014). Nevertheless, L2 reading also has a psychological component or is, as Jeon and Yamashita (2014) stress, reading-related. This is evidenced by the consistent and meaningful correlations between L2 reading comprehension and factors such as L1 reading ability, working memory, and metacognition. The knowledge about and use of adequate strategies (or the lack thereof) can be understood as an experiential variable. In their longitudinal study, Malmberg et al. (2000) found that comprehension of a text as a whole was difficult for L2 learners, because for a long time they translate foreign language texts word for word. Instead, the researchers argued, L2 learners should learn to use their prior knowledge and understanding of the world to support their reading comprehension. Malmberg et al. (2000) therefore concluded that text-related tasks should require a deeper understanding of text rather than simply guiding L2 learners to find certain key words.

Researchers have studied different L2 readers, focusing on different developmental and contextual aspects (Koda, 2005). In addition to the three aforementioned variables, when trying to understand L2 reading, one must acknowledge the complexity of the experience for different types of learners. Moreover, researchers should, for instance, consider "L1 literacy,

cognitive maturity, and conceptual sophistication” and “contextual variations relating to where, how, and why L2 literacy is being pursued” (Koda, 2005, p. 7). L2 reading research has shown that general literacy level can significantly impact performance. On the one hand, this means that struggling to read in one language may mean struggling to read in another. On the other hand, the variety of strategies a competent reader has acquired in one language can be useful when reading in another (Bernhardt, 2011). In the present study on L1 and L2 reading self-efficacy, the psychological variable of motivation and reading strategies as experiential factors are of importance, as we will discuss in the next subsection.

Self-efficacy in language learning and reading

Following Conradi et al.'s (2014) consensus definition, reading self-efficacy is defined as “[t]he judgment of one's ability to accomplish a specific reading task” (p. 154). Self-efficacy, which belongs to (self) beliefs, is a component of motivation. The concept highlights one's beliefs in one's ability to succeed in a particular situation or task and how these beliefs shape one's motivation and persistence in said situation or task (Bandura, 1997).

One source of self-efficacy beliefs can, as Bandura (1997) explains, be mastery experiences in previous tasks, serving as concrete evidence of learning outcomes and possibly linking those to students' own strategies. Thus, through this feeling of control, students may potentially develop greater self-efficacy and persistence (Graham & Macaro, 2008).

Raoofi et al. (2012) found a positive relationship between self-efficacy and the use and/or teaching of strategies. Mills et al. (2007) reported similar results in their study among 30 learners of French in higher education. They concluded that effective and appropriate self-regulatory practices can increase self-efficacy and L2 achievement. Their results showed that students' self-efficacy for self-regulation proved to be the strongest predictor of all motivation variables for the participants' final grades in intermediate-level French (Mills et al., 2007).

Several lines of evidence also suggest a positive relationship between students' self-efficacy beliefs and reading performance across different ages and proficiency levels (for a review, see Unrau et al., 2018). For young L1 readers aged 8–11, Carrol and Fox (2017) showed a clear relationship between reading self-efficacy and word level reading skill. However, there was no significant relationship between reading self-efficacy and reading comprehension.

Positive effects of self-efficacy have also been found on L2 learners' reading motivation (for a review, see McBreen & Savage, 2020). Experiencing successful learning outcomes, potentially leading to greater self-efficacy, seems to positively impact students' active engagement with texts through strategies, thus supporting proficiency (Unrau et al., 2018). A recent

intervention study by Graham et al. (2020) among beginner learners of L2 French aged 11–12 supports these findings also. They found that reading self-efficacy in certain learner profiles increased significantly after receiving strategy-based instruction during the intervention.

Although the studies presented so far give insights into self-efficacy and its sources and explore links between reading proficiency and/or comprehension and self-efficacy, they usually focus either solely on L1 reading or on one L2 at a time and/or on beginner or very young learners. Furthermore, research on L2 reading self-efficacy usually focuses on English (Raoofi et al., 2012). A study by Hsieh and Schallert (2008) investigated students' L2 self-efficacy in Spanish, German, and French. However, in their study, the participants were only tested in one language each. To our knowledge, there are no studies on reading self-efficacy for Finnish and/or Swedish as an L2 nor for comparisons between reading self-efficacy across and between various languages.

There are thus several important areas where this study makes an original contribution to the field of reading, multilingualism, and psychology. First, it contributes to the general knowledge about reading self-efficacy in advanced language learners in high school. It also sheds new light on students' L1 and L2 reading self-efficacy, while, at the same time, relating it to students' actual reading comprehension. Finally, this study compares four different languages for each individual participant, helping to better understand the role of self-efficacy in and between various L2s, as well as compared to the L1.

The Finnish context

Finland has two official languages: Finnish and Swedish (From, 2023). Depending on their L1, students study in either a Finnish- or Swedish-medium school. In basic education (grades 1–9), students study at least two languages in addition to their L1 (i.e., Finnish or Swedish). Depending on the municipality and the variety of languages offered at the students' school and on the students' interests, they can study up to four languages, including their L1 (Alisaari et al., 2024).

In addition to their L1, students in Finland start studying so-called A-languages in primary school and B-languages in grade 6 or later. An obligatory A1 language is introduced at the latest in the second half of grade 1. The A1 is most often English in the Finnish-medium schools and Finnish or English in the Swedish-medium schools. Students may study an optional A2 language starting in grade 4 or 5. This language is usually English or Finnish in the Swedish-medium schools, depending on the A1 language. The A2 in the Finnish-medium schools may be Swedish or other European languages, such as Spanish, German, or French. At the

latest in grade 6, students start an obligatory B1 language. This is most often Swedish in Finnish-medium schools and other European languages in Swedish-medium schools. Students may also choose an optional B2 language in middle school (grades 7–9), which is most often a different European language. After basic education, other languages may be studied as B3 languages in high school. In addition to European languages, Mandarin Chinese, Japanese, and Arabic are also taught, depending on the schools' or municipalities' resources (Alisaari et al., 2024).

Methods

Aim and research questions

The overall aim of this study is to examine the possible relations between reading performance and self-efficacy in high school learners' L1 and L2s. The study is guided by the following research questions:

- RQ1. How do high school students perform in reading in their L1 and three L2s?
- RQ2. What level of reading self-efficacy do the high school students report for their L1 and three L2s?
- RQ3. Are the high school students' reading performance and reading self-efficacy in their L1 and L2s linked? If so, in what ways?

Participants

The participants ($N = 29$) for this study were recruited by contacting high school teachers of German as a foreign language within our local networks via e-mail, briefly explaining the purpose and scope of the research. Half the participants attended School 1 in Swedish ($n = 15$) and the other half School 2 in Finnish ($n = 14$). In this study, the school language is considered the participants' L1. Both schools were located in small towns in Southern Finland and both were highly ranked high schools in Finland. As Finland has a national curriculum for schools as well as for teacher training, we can assume that students were instructed in similar ways and similar content areas in all languages regardless of which school they went to.

In addition to their L1, all participants studied the second national language (Swedish or Finnish) as their A2 or B1 language and German as their A1/A2 or B2/B3 language. Depending on the participants' other language choices, they studied English as an A1/A2 or B1 language. Table 9.1 shows the participants' background information.

To ensure the comparability of the two groups, we calculated Chi Square tests, Cramér V , and z -tests. There were no significant differences between

Table 9.1 Information on participants in School 1 (Swedish medium) and School 2 (Finnish medium)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>School 1 (SWE)</i> (n = 15)	<i>School 2 (FIN)</i> (n = 14)	<i>Group differences</i> (z-tests)
Age	M = 17.2; SD = 0.41	M = 16.7; SD = 0.83	
Home language			
Only FIN	0	13	
Only SWE	12	0	
SWE + FIN	2	0	
SWE + other	1	0	
FIN + other	0	1	
Languages studied			
<i>Finnish</i>			
Starting from 1 to 3	15	14	
Starting from 4 to 6	0	0	
Starting from 7 to 9	0	0	
Starting from high school	0	0	
<i>Swedish</i>			
Starting from 1 to 3	15	0	* FIN < SWE
Starting from 4 to 6	0	13	* SWE < FIN
Starting from 7 to 9	0	1	
Starting from high school	0	0	
<i>English</i>			
Starting from 1 to 3	1	14	* SWE < FIN
Starting from 4 to 6	14	0	* FIN < SWE
Starting from 7 to 9	0	0	
Starting from high school	0	0	
<i>German</i>			
Starting from 1 to 3	0	0	
Starting from 4 to 6	0	7	* SWE < FIN
Starting from 7 to 9	15	2	* FIN < SWE
Starting from high school	0	5	* SWE < FIN
<i>French</i>			
Starting from 1 to 3	0	0	
Starting from 4 to 6	0	0	
Starting from 7 to 9	0	0	
Starting from high school	1	1	
Caregivers' educational level			
Basic education	1	0	
Upper secondary education	10	10	
Higher education	19	17	

* Indicates a statistically significant difference between groups at level $p < 0.05$.

the groups regarding age or caregivers' education levels. However, as expected, there was a statistically significant difference between the groups regarding the starting time for studies in Swedish ($X^2(2, 29) = 29$; $p < 0.001$; Cramér's $V = 1.0$), with participants in the Finnish-medium school starting their Swedish studies in 4th–6th grade, whereas the participants in the Swedish-medium school started their Swedish studies in first grade. Also expectedly, the participants in the Swedish-medium school started their English studies later (in 4th–6th grade) compared to the participants in the Finnish-medium school who usually started their English studies in grade 3 ($X^2(1, 29) = 25.3$, $p < 0.001$, Cramér's $V = 0.93$). There were also significant differences between the groups' starting times for German studies: most participants in the Swedish-medium school started in grades 7–9, whereas the starting time was more varied for the participants in the Finnish-medium school (grades 4–9 or high school) ($X^2(2, 29) = 21.93$, $p < 0.001$, Cramér's $V = 0.87$).

Data collection

The data were collected through quasi-experimental testing, which was conducted twice in each group. We compared two groups of students and their reading self-efficacy in four languages. Due to scheduling issues, the Finnish-speaking participants (School 2) participated in the study as an extracurricular activity, while the Swedish speakers (School 1) participated in the study as a part of their regular German lesson. For this reason, the sessions in School 1 were two weeks apart, while in School 2, they were only some hours apart from each other. In each of the two sessions, the participants were tested in two languages. Altogether, the participants were tested in their L1 and three L2s. Either Finnish or Swedish was tested first, followed by English or German (see Table 9.2). The first author conducted the testing in person in a regular language lesson (School 1) and in an extracurricular afternoon activity (School 2) with the language teacher present throughout the testing sessions for both schools.

Table 9.2 Order of languages tested in School 1 (Swedish medium) and School 2 (Finnish medium)

<i>School</i>	<i>School language</i>	<i>Participants</i>	<i>Testing session</i>	<i>Tested language 1</i>	<i>Tested language 2</i>
School 1	Swedish	($n = 15$)	1	Swedish	German
			2	Finnish	English
School 2	Finnish	($n = 14$)	1	Finnish	German
			2	Swedish	English

Each testing session consisted of two parts: (1) a reading comprehension task and (2) a self-efficacy questionnaire adapted from Carroll and Fox (2017). Both parts were completed on paper. The participants read the text (1,000–1,200 words) and answered questions targeting their reading comprehension in the given language. The content, grammar, and vocabulary in the text were consistent with the curriculum for the year in which the participants were studying and matched for providing participants with similar and comparable reading experiences in all the four languages. The reading task was similar to tasks previously used in research (see, e.g., Patzelt, 2023), and it was administered and answered in the school language (Finnish or Swedish) to stress comprehension instead of production and to promote motivation.

Immediately after completing the reading task, the participants were given the self-efficacy questionnaire. We shortened the original questionnaire (Carroll and Fox, 2017) by leaving out four items directed more at beginner readers. The survey included questions on different types of reading activities which the students complete on a regular basis in all of the languages tested. Instead of the numerical scale used in Carroll and Fox's survey, we asked participants to evaluate their self-confidence in reading competence on a Visual Analogue Scale (VAS) in one language at a time. Self-report abstracted scales for measuring reading self-efficacy have been criticized: They state that participants in studies on self-efficacy are often asked to generally assess their abilities in an activity, for which they have to use their memory (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2009). In this study, instead of assessing self-efficacy dependent on general memory, we were focusing on a task-based perspective. As we could not be sure that students had read in all four languages, we assessed the participants' self-efficacy after the reading performance task. However, the self-efficacy items targeted a variety of reading activities, not only what students did in the reading performance task.

During the first testing session, the participants filled in a background questionnaire along with the self-efficacy questionnaire. It included, among others, information on their age, home language, caregivers' educational level, and language learning history (see Table 9.1). The participants were not asked for their names or other personal information. Instead, they completed all tasks and questionnaires using a personal code known only to the participant themselves and their teacher.

Data analysis

The data consist of both reading task and self-efficacy scores for each participant's L1 and their three L2s, that is, four languages per participant.

Table 9.3 Scoring scheme for reading performance task

<i>Task number</i>	<i>Task</i>	<i>Maximum score</i>
1	Topic of the text	1 point
2	Key words in the text	3 points
3	Rephrase what the text was about in at the most three sentences	3 points
4	Three questions the text gives answers to	3 points
5	Multiple-choice (true/false)	6 points

To analyze the reading tasks in each of the four languages, we devised a scoring scheme with a maximum score of 16 divided over five parts of the reading task (see Table 9.3).

The scores were then entered into an Excel spreadsheet. To explore the answers in the self-efficacy questionnaire regarding participants' self-efficacy in the four languages tested, the responses to the 15 VAS items, that is the marks the participants set on the 10 cm scale for each of the questions were measured manually with a ruler (in cm, out of 10 cm in total) and entered into an Excel spreadsheet.

Table 9.4 (Section 4.1) contains the mean and standard deviations for the total reading performance scores (maximum 16 points) and the average self-efficacy scores (0–1). We performed a repeated measures ANOVA to examine possible differences between the two groups (L1 Swedish and L1 Finnish), between reading performance and self-efficacy in the four languages, and the possible interactions between groups and reading performance or self-efficacy. In addition, we calculated Pearson correlations to investigate possible correlations between the four languages within reading performance and within self-efficacy. We also examined possible correlations between reading performance and self-efficacy within each of the four languages.

Ethical considerations

Our study received approval from the Ethical Review Board at Åbo Akademi University (15.02.2024). Before recruiting participants, we provided principals and teachers with our research plan and the approval from the Ethical Review Board. Prior to the testing, the prospective participants were informed of the overall purpose of the study. Being above the age of 15, they were able to give their consent without needing their caregivers' consent as well. They were also informed that participation in the study was voluntary and in no way linked to their involvement or assessment in the language class. All but one person gave their informed written consent

to participate in the study. Additionally, the participants who did not participate in both testing sessions, that is, testing in all four languages, were excluded from the analysis. We report our findings in a way that ensures that no data can be linked to any individual person.

Results

Reading performance in L1 and L2s

The reading performance score in both the L1 Swedish group (School 1) and the L1 Finnish group (School 2) was the highest in the L1. The second-highest score in reading performance was in L2 English in both groups, although for the L1 Swedish speakers, the score in L2 German was close to or identical with L2 English. In both groups, the reading performance in L2 Swedish/Finnish was the lowest. Table 9.4 presents the reading performance scores.

We used a repeated measures ANOVA to investigate the possible differences in reading performance between the two groups and the four languages. A significant difference was found in reading performance between the four languages ($F(3, 29) = 245.45, p < 0.01$). No statistically significant difference was found between the two groups (L1 Finnish vs. L1 Swedish), nor was there a significant interaction between group and reading performance, meaning that the groups did not differ in their reading performance.

Self-efficacy in L1 and L2s

In the L1 Finnish group, self-efficacy was highest in their L1. However, the L1 Swedish group had the highest self-efficacy in L2 English, and the second-highest in the L1. Both groups had the lowest self-efficacy values in L2 German. The average self-efficacy performance scores based on all 15 items (0–1; 1 = 10 cm) are shown in Table 9.5.

When testing for possible differences between groups and languages using repeated measures ANOVA, a significant difference was found for

Table 9.4 Reading performance total scores (maximum score 16 points)

<i>Languages</i>	<i>School 1</i> <i>(L1 Swedish) (n = 15)</i> <i>M (SD)</i>	<i>School 2</i> <i>(L1 Finnish) (n = 14)</i> <i>M (SD)</i>
English	12.2 (1.5)	12.9 (2.0)
German	12.1 (2.5)	12.3 (1.8)
L2 Finnish/Swedish	9.3 (2.2)	10.1 (2.9)
L1 (Finnish/Swedish)	12.9 (1.5)	13.9 (1.5)

Table 9.5 Self-efficacy total scores (0–1)

<i>Languages</i>	<i>School 1</i> <i>(L1 Swedish) (n = 15)</i> <i>M (SD)</i>	<i>School 2</i> <i>(L1 Finnish) (n = 14)</i> <i>M (SD)</i>
English	.82 (.16)	.80 (.13)
German	.56 (.11)	.56 (.10)
L2 Finnish/Swedish	.63 (.20)	.60 (.14)
L1 (Finnish/Swedish)	.77 (.13)	.82 (.14)

the four languages ($F(3, 28) = 35.69, p < 0.01$). However, no significant difference was found between groups, nor was there a significant interaction between the groups and languages, that is, reported self-efficacy did not differ in the two groups.

Correlations between self-efficacy and reading performance

In this section, we will first look at the possible correlations between the four languages in reading performance. There were no significant correlations in reading performance within the four languages for the L1 Swedish group. In the L1 Finnish group, however, significant strong positive correlations ($p > 0.05$) were evident between L1 Finnish and L2 English ($r = .70$), as well as between L2 Swedish and L2 German ($r = .70$), meaning a higher score in one language was correlated to a higher score in the other language. This indicates that high reading performance in L1 Finnish was indication of high reading performance in L2 English, and low reading performance in L2 Swedish was indication of low reading performance in L2 German.

In the L1 Swedish group, there were also no significant differences between the self-efficacy scores in the four languages. However, significant, strong positive correlations were found in the L1 Finnish group. Self-efficacy scores for L2 Swedish were positively correlated with all the other languages (L2 Swedish and L1: $r = .63$; L2 Swedish and EN: $r = .59$; L2 Swedish and GE: $r = .60$). Positive correlations were also found between L1 and L2 English ($r = .54$), as well as L2 German and L2 English ($r = .60$). These results indicate that higher self-efficacy scores in one language correlated with higher scores in the other language. Thus, it seems that high self-efficacy in L2 Swedish correlated with high self-efficacy in all the other investigated languages, as well.

Finally, we investigated possible correlations between reading performance and self-efficacy within the four languages. However, no significant correlations were found, meaning that in this study, no evidence was found for higher self-efficacy being linked to higher reading performance, as expected.

Discussion

Reading performance and self-efficacy in reading

Our aim in this study was to investigate Finnish high school students' reading performance and self-efficacy in their L1 and three L2s and the possible links across them. As expected, both reading performance and self-efficacy were high in the participants' L1 (Finnish or Swedish). Interestingly, the L1 Swedish group's self-efficacy in L2 English was even higher than that of their L1, although their actual reading performance was higher in their L1.

English is used widely in Finland (Laitinen et al., 2023) which may explain the participants' high L2 English reading performance and self-efficacy. Previous research has shown that being surrounded by the target language increases motivation to learn that language. In their study, Graham and colleagues (2020) suggest that because French was not found in students' immediate surroundings, it may have impacted their motivation to learn the language. However, our findings do not confirm this suggestion: reading performance in the L2 Finnish/Swedish was the lowest of the four languages investigated even though Finnish and Swedish are both prevalent in Finnish media and government, and a command of both languages is required to be eligible for state and municipality job positions, which could thus be considered a motivating factor for learning them. In contrast, the youth in Finland are surrounded by English through online media, social media, and gaming (see, e.g., Räsänen, 2021). In their free-time, many high school students read more in their L2s, especially English, than their L1s (see, e.g. Härkönen, 2024). For example, the dominance of the English language in students' everyday life and the amount of time they spend engaging with it, could have had an impact on the results in this study.

As expected, reading performance in L2 German was higher than in L2 Finnish/Swedish, although most participants had started their studies in L2 German later than their studies in L2 Finnish/Swedish. For the L1 Finnish group, this high performance may reflect the fact that German is an optional language for all participants. However, for the L1 Swedish group, German is taken both as an obligatory and optional language in grades 7–9. Interestingly, the L1 Swedish participants' self-efficacy in reading L2 German was lower than in their L1 Swedish and L2 English. Although most L1 Swedish participants had studied L2 Finnish longer than L2 German, their reading performance was higher in L2 German. However, self-efficacy was higher for the L2 Finnish compared to self-efficacy in L2 German. This may be partly explained by the fact that German is less prevalent in the participants' everyday lives, and Finnish is a language they need to live, study, and work in Finland. Yet, the attitudes toward the second national languages in Finland can be quite negative.

Negative attitudes toward a specific language in society as well as limited exposure may reduce motivation to learn a language (Graham et al., 2020), reducing reading performance and reading self-efficacy in that particular language. Our findings also show that the attitudes of the surrounding society may negatively affect self-efficacy and reading performance, as seems to be the case for the national languages in Finland. As has been suggested elsewhere (Alisaari et al., 2024), schools, teachers, and the media have an important role in creating a positive atmosphere and supporting positive attitudes toward the languages prevalent in society. In addition, the prevalence of the target language in the language learners' immediate surroundings seems to motivate language learning.

Interestingly, the L1 Swedish speakers' reading performance in Finnish was slightly lower than the L1 Finnish speakers' reading performance in Swedish; usually Swedish-speaking students (40%) are more often bilingual compared to Finnish speakers (2%) (Hansell et al., 2023). However, the results for self-efficacy in reading in L2 Finnish/Swedish are the other way around—as expected: the L1 Finnish speakers' self-efficacy in reading L2 Swedish is lower compared to the L1 Swedish speakers' self-efficacy in reading L2 Finnish. The attitudes toward Swedish as the second national language, especially, have been somewhat negative for a long time. Discussions in the media and among right-wing politicians on the requirement to learn Swedish as an L2 have had a negative tone, which reduces students' motivation to study Swedish (Alisaari et al., 2024). Many Finnish speakers do not gain sufficient skills in Swedish (Åkerlund et al., 2022). Likewise, many Swedish speakers are not fluent in L2 Finnish (Härmälä & Marjanen, 2023). However, in practice, many Swedish speakers are bilingual and often need to know Finnish for employment, as the majority language in Finland is Finnish (see, e.g. Hansell et al., 2023).

Links between reading performance and reading self-efficacy

Interestingly, no significant correlations were found between reading performance and self-efficacy within a specific language. Thus, it seems like in this study, assessing self-efficacy after the actual reading performance does not affect self-efficacy scores. Also, previous studies have reported a lack of correlation (Carroll & Fox, 2017).

Regarding possible links between reading performance or self-efficacy in the four languages, surprisingly, there were no correlations between them in the L1 Swedish group. Understanding the reasons for this is beyond the scope of this study and warrants further investigation. In the L1 Finnish group, however, strong positive correlations in reading performance were found between L1 Finnish and L2 English. These findings support previous research (Wilson & Bai, 2010), stating that strong reading competence in one's L1 can also transfer to one's L2s. It can also be assumed that the

L1 Finnish group reads the most in their L1 Finnish and in L2 English. Moreover, in the L1 Finnish group, low reading performance in the second national language, L2 Swedish, was linked to low performance in L2 German. One explanation for this may be that Swedish and German are typologically similar languages and share much of their vocabulary. Thus, knowing one of these languages can promote a higher reading performance in the other. For self-efficacy in the four languages, many correlations surfaced in the L1 Finnish group. Interestingly, a higher self-efficacy in the second national language, Swedish, was also linked to a higher self-efficacy in all the other three languages investigated. Thus, it seems that being confident in the second national language, which is often viewed negatively in the wider society, is testament to the students' trust in themselves as language learners and readers.

Based on previous research (Unrau et al., 2018), it may be helpful for teachers to support their students' reading self-efficacy to enhance their reading performance. This can be done, for example, by creating opportunities to experience success and mastery (see Bandura, 1997) and by using or teaching strategies (Mills et al., 2007; Raoofi et al., 2012). Previous studies (Graham et al., 2020; Graham & Macaro, 2008) have shown that self-efficacy can result from learners' attributing learning outcomes to the strategies they use and the feeling of control. Merely giving positive feedback is not enough, as students are very good at recognizing insincere positive feedback. Thus, to be effective, feedback should be based on the students' actual performance (Mežek et al., 2022). Teachers can also explicitly teach their students reading strategies to improve competence (see, e.g., Patzelt, 2023) and engage them in meaningful and motivating reading materials in different languages and their L1, in and outside the classroom.

Limitations

The data for the study was gathered from one Finnish-medium and one Swedish-medium high school in one area of Finland. However, we tried to match the schools based on the size of the town and the school's national ranking. The fact that the Finnish-speaking participants participated in the study as an extracurricular activity being tested in four languages in one session, while the Swedish speakers participated in the study as a part of their regular German lesson in two separate sessions being tested in one language in each of them, may have influenced our findings. A possible risk with testing in only one session is a fatigue effect. However, in the Finnish-speaking group, the language tested last had one of the highest scores in reading performance, which we take to indicate that there was no fatigue effect.

Future research

As our data is limited, the findings of the study should also be confirmed with a larger sample of participants from different schools throughout Finland, possibly also larger municipalities and lower-ranking high schools. A longitudinal approach to reading and self-efficacy would provide us with important knowledge regarding the development of reading. An intervention investigating the possible effects of teaching reading strategies and its effects on reading performance and self-efficacy would also be interesting. This study has analyzed the data at hand quantitatively. To gain a deeper understanding of the participants' reading performance, a qualitative analysis of the open-ended responses to the reading task would provide new information on how they react to specific types of tasks. It would be of interest to study these qualitatively in the future, for example by looking at the kind of questions the participants asked about the text. Many participants wrote so-called textbook questions (see, e.g., Maijala & Patzelt, 2023), which reflect the types of questions their language teachers may have asked their students in the classroom, for example, questions that guide students to finding certain key words instead of promoting holistic reading comprehension of the text at hand (Malmberg et al., 2000).

This study focuses on high school students' reading performance and reading self-efficacy. However, it would also be useful to investigate language teachers' understandings of the importance of L1 and L2 reading self-efficacy, as well as their pedagogical practices supporting reading self-efficacy and reading strategy instruction that may improve both L1 and L2 reading (see, e.g., Patzelt, 2023). These topics could be studied, for example, through questionnaires and/or interviews with language teachers and language classroom observations to examine teachers' point of view.

Conclusion and implications

This study provides valuable new knowledge regarding both reading performance and reading self-efficacy, as only very few studies compare these variables in participants' L1 and L2s. Investigating four languages instead of one also adds strength, as most often studies on reading have focused only on English as either an L1 or L2 (see, however, Hsieh & Schallert, 2008). Moreover, comparative reading studies involving less frequently studied languages, such as Swedish and Finnish, are scarce. Finally, the inclusion of Finnish, a Finno-Ugric language, produces important information on reading in languages other than Indo-European languages.

The main implication of the study is that high reading performance in one language is linked to high reading performance in another language. Thus, we propose that for example reading strategies can benefit reading in other languages as well.

References

- Åkerlund, C., Marjanen, J., & Peltola, E. (2022). A-finska kunskapsutveckling från åk 6 till åk 9. Publikationer 24:2022. Nationella centret för utbildningsutvärdering.
- Alisaari, J., Björklund, M., Harju-Autti, R., & Heikkola, L. M. (2024). Kieltenopetuksen nykytila ja tulevaisuuden visiot – Språkundervisningens nuläge och framtidsvisioner. *Magma*, 1, 2024.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. Freeman.
- Becker-Mrotzek, M., Lindauer, T., Pfost, M., Weis, M., Strohmeier, A., & Reiss, K. (2019). Lesekompetenz heute – eine Schlüsselqualifikation im Wandel. In K. Reiss, M. Weis, E. Klieme, & O. Köller (Eds.), *PISA 2018. Grundbildung im internationalen Vergleich* (pp. 21–46). Waxmann.
- Bernhardt, E. (2011). *Understanding advanced second-language reading*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203852408>
- Brevik, L. M., Olsen, R. V., & Hellekjær, G. O. (2016). The complexity of second language reading: Investigating the L1-L2 relationship. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 28(2), 161–182. <https://doi.org/10125/66899>
- Carroll, J. M., & Fox, A. (2017). Reading self-efficacy predicts word reading but not comprehension in both girls and boys. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 7, 2056. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2016.02056>
- Castles, A., Rastle, K., & Nation, K. (2018). Ending the reading wars: Reading acquisition from novice to expert. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 19(1), 5–51. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1529100618772271>
- Coddington, C. S., & Guthrie, J. T. (2009). Teacher and student perceptions of boys' and girls' reading motivation. *Reading Psychology*, 30(3), 225–249. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02702710802275371>
- Conradi, K., Jang, B. G., & McKenna, M. C. (2014). Motivation terminology in reading research: A conceptual review. *Educational Psychology Review*, 26(1), 127–164. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-013-9245-z>
- Crystal, D. (2006). *How language works*. The Overlook Press.
- From, T. (2023). Rethinking Finland's official Bilingualism in education. In M. Thrupp, P. Seppänen, J. Kauko, & S. Kosunen (Eds.), *Finland's famous education system* (pp. 369–384). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-8241-5_23
- Graham, S., & Macaro, E. (2008). Strategy instruction in listening for lower-intermediate learners of French. *Language Learning: A Journal of Research in Language Studies*, 58(4), 747–783. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9922.2008.00478.x>
- Graham, S., Woore, R., Porter, A., Courtney, L., & Savory, C. (2020). Navigating the challenges of L2 reading: Self-efficacy, self-regulatory reading strategies, and learner profiles. *The Modern Language Journal*, 104(4), 693–714. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12670>
- Hammarberg, B. (2010). The languages of the multilingual: Some conceptual and terminological issues. *IRAL - International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, 48(2–3). <https://doi.org/10.1515/iral.2010.005>
- Hansell, K., Pörn, M., & Rebers, I. (2023). Hur stärka tvåspråkiga elevers finska i svenskspråkig skola?: En studie av modersmålsinriktad finska ur elevperspektiv. *Nordand*, 18(2), 140–156. <https://doi.org/10.18261/nordand.18.2.5>

- Härkönen, J. (2024). Pleasure reading in English and in Finnish: The experiences of English language university students in Finland [Bachelor's Thesis, The University of Jyväskylä].
- Härmälä, M., & Marjanen, J. (2023). A-ruotsin oppimistulokset perusopetuksen päättövaiheessa 2022 (No. 24:2023; Julkaisu). Kansallinen koulutuksen arviointikeskus.
- Hsieh, P.-H. P., & Schallert, D. L. (2008). Implications from self-efficacy and attribution theories for an understanding of undergraduates' motivation in a foreign language course. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 33(4), 513–532. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2008.01.003>
- Jeon, E. H., & Yamashita, J. (2014). L2 Reading comprehension and its correlates: A meta-analysis. *Language Learning*, 64(1), 160–212. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lang.12034>
- Jeon, E.-Y., & Day, R. R. (2016). The effectiveness of ER on reading proficiency: A meta-analysis. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 28(2), 246–265.
- Koda, K. (2005). *Insights into second language reading: A cross-linguistic approach* (1st ed.). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139524841>
- Kozminsky, E., & Kozminsky, L. (2002). How do general knowledge and reading strategies ability relate to reading comprehension of high school students at different educational levels? *Journal of Research in Reading*, 24(2), 187–204. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9817.00141>
- Laitinen, M., Leppänen, S., Rautionaho, P., & Backman, S. (2023). Englanti Suomen kansalliskielten rinnalla: Kohti joustavaa monikielisyyttä (No. 2023:59; Valtioneuvoston Selvitys- ja Tutkimustoiminnan Julkaisusarja). Valtioneuvoston kanslia.
- Maijala, M., & Patzelt, M. (2023). Lernen, Lesen und Lehrwerke - Betrachtungen zu Deutsch als Fremdsprache aus finnischer Perspektive. In M. Kienberger & K. Schramm (Eds.), *Lesedidaktik Deutsch als Fremdsprache. Aktuelle Entwicklungen und Ansätze* (pp. 149–171). Peter Lang.
- Malmberg, P., Öman, M., Tornberg, U., Bergström, I., & Håkanson, U. (2000). *I huvudet på en elev: Projektet STRIMS: Strategier vid inläring av moderna språk*. Bonnier Utbildning.
- Marshall, S., & Moore, D. (2018). Plurilingualism amid the panoply of linguisticisms: Addressing critiques and misconceptions in education. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 15(1), 19–34. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2016.1253699>
- McBreen, M., & Savage, R. (2020). The impact of motivational reading instruction on the reading achievement and motivation of students: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Educational Psychology Review*, 33(3), 1–39. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-020-09584-4>
- Mežek, Š., McGrath, L., Negretti, R., & Berggren, J. (2022). Scaffolding L2 academic reading and self-regulation through task and feedback. *TESOL Quarterly*, 56(1), 41–67. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.3018>
- Mills, N., Pajares, F., & Herron, C. (2007). Self-efficacy of college intermediate French students: Relation to achievement and motivation. *Language Learning*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9922.2007.00421.x>

- Pajares, F. (2002). Gender and perceived self-efficacy in self-regulated learning. *Theory into Practice*, 41(2), 116–125. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip4102_8
- Patzelt, M. (2023). Ruotsinkielisten lukiolaisten lukustrategiat ruotsiksi ja sak-saksi. In P. Hiidenmaa, I. Lindh, S. Sintonen, & R. Suomalainen (Eds.), *Luke-misen kulttuurit* (pp. 150–163). Gaudeamus.
- Raoofi, S., Hoon Tan, B., & Heng Chan, S. (2012). Self-efficacy in second/foreign language learning contexts. *English Language Teaching*, 5(11), 60–73. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v5n11p60>
- Räsänen, O. (2021). *Informal learning of English through social media among higher education students in Finland* [Bachelor's Thesis, University of Oulu].
- Schunk, D. H., & DiBenedetto, M. K. (2009). Self-efficacy theory in education. In K. R. Wentzel & A. Wigfield (Eds.), *Handbook of motivation at school* (pp. 34–54). Routledge.
- Snow, C. (2002). *Reading for understanding: Toward an R&D program in reading comprehension*. The RAND Corporation.
- Toste, J. R., Didion, L., Peng, P., Filderman, M. J., & McClelland, A. M. (2020). A meta-analytic review of the relations between motivation and reading achievement for K–12 students. *Review of Educational Research*, 90(3), 420–456. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654320919352>
- Unrau, N. J., Rueda, R., Son, E., Polanin, J. R., Lundeen, R. J., & Muraszewski, A. K. (2018). Can reading self-efficacy be modified? A meta-analysis of the impact of interventions on reading self-efficacy. *Review of Educational Research*, 88(2), 167–204. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654317743199>
- Walker, C. (2015). A study of self-concept in reading in a second or foreign language in an academic context. *System*, 49, 73–85. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2015.01.001>
- Wilson, N. S., & Bai, H. (2010). The relationships and impact of teachers' meta-cognitive knowledge and pedagogical understandings of metacognition. *Meta-cognition Learning*, 5, 269–288. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11409-010-9062-4>

10 Multilingual identity, metalinguistic abilities and their complex interaction in education

Jacopo Torregrossa, Valentina Carbonara, and Sílvia Melo-Pfeifer

Introduction

Numerous studies have examined the impact of schooling on children's learning outcomes and the development of their multilingual identities. For example, research on multilingual pedagogies has examined their benefits in terms of enhancing students' academic outcomes (e.g., Carbonara et al., 2023) or fostering their language awareness and multilingual identities (Fisher et al., 2018; Gayton & Fisher, 2022). However, these dimensions are often studied in isolation, limiting our understanding of their interplay. This chapter aims to bridge this gap by adopting a more holistic approach, exploring the intrinsic connection between multilingual identities and learning outcomes, with a particular focus on metalinguistic abilities (MAs, henceforth). Our analysis is based on two studies conducted in superdiverse schools in Germany: one primary and the other secondary.

To adopt this holistic approach, we examined both aspects related to learners' psychology and learning outcomes. From the psychological point of view, we considered children's multilingual identities as a complex construct concerning the awareness of their language resources, attitudes towards multilingualism and well-being related to the multilingualism in their lives across various contexts, including family and classrooms (De Houwer, 2020). To assess learning outcomes, we tested their MAs. We then draw connections between multilingual identity and MAs, proposing that students' awareness of their multilingual identity positively influences the development of their MAs.

The discussion of the findings will highlight the complexity of correlating multilingual identity with MAs at school, contributing to a deeper understanding of the psychological foundations of learning (Mercer & MacIntyre, 2014; Mercer & Ryan, 2016).

Students' linguistic and multilingual identities*On alignments and misalignments between individuals' languages and their multilingual identity*

Fisher et al. (2018), in their comprehensive analysis of the intricate construct of identity, delineate three principal domains that intersect across diverse conceptualisations of identity: psychological, sociocultural, and post-structural. They argue that identity constitutes both an individual and a social phenomenon, emerging through a dynamic process rather than existing as a static condition, and encompassing mutable facets, thus allowing individuals a degree of agency in actively shaping their identities. Within this broader framework, we focus on an individual's linguistic identity, which Fisher et al. (2018, pp. 448–449) define as “the way one identifies (or is identified by others) in each of the languages in one's linguistic repertoire.” Building on this, we consider the notion of multilingual identity. Following Forbes et al. (2021), we define it as the awareness of oneself as a user of multiple languages within an intertwined repertoire, which includes national languages, dialects, language varieties, registers, and non-verbal semiotic resources. This broad conceptualisation thus encompasses not only proficient bi/multilinguals but also monolingual speakers engaging with diverse intralinguistic practices.

The most essentialist way to conceptualise linguistic identity is to assume that each language of an individual is inherently tied to a specific identity. Studies have problematised and reconceptualised this relationship between language and identity. For example, a language may be part of an individual's repertoire, but still not be constitutive of identity. Henry (2023) reports the results of an ethnographic study concerning the motivation to learn English by students attending an agricultural college in a rural area in Sweden. Henry noticed that although English was a school subject in college, many students were reluctant to see English as part of their identity.

Another interesting (and more complex) example of possible misalignment between language and identity is offered by some heritage language (HL) speakers, i.e., speakers of a family language that is different from the societal language, usually having a migration history. Some of them may hesitate to consider themselves as speakers of their family language because they feel that their proficiency is lower than the one of their family members or the speakers from the family's country of origin. HL speakers might identify (or not) with a language depending on whether the broader community considers them as ‘legitimate’ speakers of that language—a legitimacy often defined by proficiency (Melo-Pfeifer & Tavares, 2024). This legitimacy can vary across different contexts, underscoring the importance of considering the contextual dimension. Other heritage speakers may not want to identify themselves with their family language (or certain aspects

of it) to distance themselves from cultural values they see as embedded in the language (Leeman, 2015). In other cases, the absence of identification with the HL may be related to the family's negative attitudes towards it, mainly if the host society does not support its maintenance (Caloi & Torregrossa, 2021).

It is also possible to observe the opposite pattern, namely that speakers identify themselves with languages they are not comfortable with or do not speak yet (Beaudrie et al., 2009), which suggests that a low level of proficiency in a language does not necessarily correspond to a lacking sense of identification with that language. A more extreme case is when individuals identify with a language they do not speak at all (yet). Busch (2012, 2021) employed the method of language portraits, where participants colour a body silhouette to represent and describe their linguistic identity, with each colour symbolising a different semiotic resource. Busch (2017) reports a teenager's description of his language portrait, which featured white parts. He said: "Alles, was weiß ist, ist halt noch offen" (Everything that is white is still open), meaning he included languages he did not yet speak as part of his linguistic identity. Using a similar methodology, Carbonara (2023) found that Italian-speaking primary and secondary school students, who had been exposed to multilingual pedagogies for at least two years, also included the languages spoken by their bilingual and multilingual peers in their language portraits as part of their own repertoire. Interestingly, this expanded repertoire often extended to languages not spoken in class associated with the students' curiosity, especially those linked to youth pop culture, such as Korean or Japanese.

These examples not only offer a complex picture of the relationship between language and identity but also demonstrate that linguistic identity emerges from the interaction of multiple dimensions. Fisher et al. (2018) identify three key dimensions: psychological/instrumental, contextual and relational. An individual's linguistic identity evolves over time based on their experiences with different languages: each associated with *various contexts* such as family, education, leisure, work and society (Caloi & Torregrossa, 2021). The relational dimension highlights how linguistic identities are "constructed through engagement in different semiotic practices and interactions" (Fisher et al., 2018, p. 9), including external factors that inevitably shape one's linguistic identity.

On the representation of the multilingual self

The perspective on languages has shifted from considering them as isolated entities that directly represent the ethnic, cultural and national identities of specific groups to recognising them as components of a repertoire that includes linguistic and other multimodal resources for communication and identity construction (Joseph, 2016). However, both perspectives

can coexist in how individuals conceptualise their multilingual identity. Melo-Pfeifer (2015) asked approximately 1,000 children speaking Portuguese as HL and living in Germany to represent their multilingual selves through visual narratives. Some children depicted themselves as surrounded by flags or language designations in speech bubbles which were separated from one another. However, other children portrayed all of their languages as part of an integrated system, likely reflecting a sense that languages interact with each other in a dynamic, interconnected way.

Individuals may have varying perceptions of how their languages interact. Henry (2017) distinguishes between a contentedly bilingual self and an ideal multilingual self. Contentedly, bilingual selves may perceive their languages, such as a second and a third language, as being in conflict. For instance, a person might believe that learning English as a second language is sufficient for their career and no additional languages are necessary. In contrast, ideal multilingual selves view their languages as mutually supportive, where the knowledge and strategies used to learn one language can be 'transferred' to another. Such individuals not only value the languages they speak but also take pride in being multilingual, envisioning their future selves as continuing to embody this multilingualism. In this perspective, multilingual identity arises from the dynamic interaction of different linguistic identities, where the distinct contribution of each language-specific identity becomes inseparable (see Henry, 2017 for an emergentist approach to multilingual identity).

The multifaceted nature of multilingual identity was explored by Haukås et al. (2021), who examined several factors influencing the multilingual identity of school-aged children. One key factor is their beliefs about being multilingual, which include the perception that knowing multiple languages provides cognitive advantages, enhances the ability to learn additional languages, and contributes to academic success. Another important factor is children's representation of their future multilingual self, specifically the extent to which they reject the 'English-is-enough' mindset and envision themselves as speakers of multiple languages in the future. Lastly, this contribution considers children's open-mindedness, which is framed in terms of intercultural competence.

Multilingual identity and metalinguistic abilities

Through the development of a multilingual identity, individuals become increasingly aware of their linguistic resources and how these resources interact. Multilingual identity thus serves as a lens through which individuals make sense of their language experiences. For instance, students' past and present language learning experiences may equip them with valuable linguistic and cognitive tools that aid in learning additional languages

at school (Eisenbeiß et al., 2026). Additionally, having a multilingual background may inspire the construction of a future multilingual self (Wu & Forbes, 2023).

The hypothesis we aim to explore in this contribution is that the more developed students' multilingual identity is (and consequently, the more aware they are of their language resources), the better their MAs will be. We will focus on MAs, defined as the capacity to consciously reflect on and analyse the structure of a language (Tunmer et al., 1984). Several studies have shown that students' MAs are among the strongest indicators of their proficiency in reading, writing, and learning languages, extending beyond language-focused subjects (Homer, 2009; Roehr-Brackin, 2018; Spellerberg, 2015). Therefore, in this contribution, we will consider them as a proxy for students' overall learning outcomes. Our hypothesis is that children who exhibit greater awareness of their linguistic repertoires are better equipped to leverage these repertoires effectively during learning activities (Cenoz & Gorter, 2022 for a similar idea).

Children develop some MAs relatively early. From age four, they begin to identify and comment on errors made while speaking (Karmiloff-Smith, 1992). The ability to construct abstract representations of language relies on language knowledge—intended here as the ability to understand and produce sentences—but extends beyond it. As individuals develop, the process of building these language representations becomes increasingly conscious, resulting in more abstract representations. For instance, older children may not only identify errors and correct them but also explain why a linguistic structure is correct or incorrect, which involves verbalisation (Melogno et al., 2022; Torregrossa et al., 2023).

The literature has identified several factors that influence students' MAs, including age and the level of proficiency in the target language (Altman et al., 2018). Children's language experience plays a crucial role, too. For instance, literacy exposure at home—particularly in multilingual contexts—has been shown to positively affect the development of MAs (Chaney, 1994). However, to our knowledge, no study has examined whether students' awareness of their multilingual identity positively influences the development of their MAs.

Preliminary indirect evidence supporting the relationship between MAs and multilingual identity can be drawn from two studies that inform this research. The first study, conducted by Rutgers et al. (2024), involved 818 Year 11 students who spoke either only English or an additional language at home. The researchers examined the extent to which students' scores on a multilingual identity questionnaire, their identification by the school and self-identification as multilinguals predicted their academic achievements. Notably, the questionnaire scores emerged as the strongest predictors of students' academic outcomes. The second study by Carbonara et al. (2023)

compared the narrative competence of children exposed to translanguaging pedagogies with those who were not. Importantly, narrative competence is recognised as a key indicator of academic achievements (Bongartz & Torregrossa, 2020). The findings revealed that children engaged in translanguaging pedagogies demonstrated superior performance in the narrative task. Given that these pedagogies likely foster a more developed sense of multilingual identity, it is plausible that this enhanced identity positively affected their academic outcomes.

Before introducing our study, it is important to note that the research design outlined in the next section assumes a direct relationship between multilingual identity and MAs, suggesting that higher levels of multilingual identity are associated with enhanced MAs. However, the reality may be more complex than this straightforward assumption: The effect of multilingual identity on MAs could be mediated by various other factors, such as students' overall well-being (Bücker et al., 2018; De Houwer, 2020; Kaya & Erdem, 2021).

The relationship between multilingual awareness and metalinguistic abilities: two case studies

Our comparative case study employed a mixed-method approach, focusing on two classrooms from distinct schools (a primary and a secondary) in Hesse, Germany. To ensure robust triangulation and comparison of results in this multi-site study, we collected quantitative data through a questionnaire on multilingual identity and a task tapping into students' MAs. This task was administered in German to the younger students. For older students, we assessed their MAs in Spanish to explore whether the relationship between MAs and multilingual identity was also evident in a foreign language in the curriculum (specifically, a third language for these students). This design allowed us to validate our findings across two age groups and two subjects in the curriculum. For the qualitative aspect, we used language portraits.

Study 1: multilingual identity and metalinguistic abilities in a primary school in Germany

Participants

Seventeen children (nine females) participated in the study, all of whom were recruited from a public primary school in Germany. The participants, all third-graders, ranged in age from eight to nine years. In the multilingual identity questionnaire, the majority ($n = 13$) indicated that German was not their home language. The native languages reported included Bulgarian,

Croatian, English, Farsi, Greek, Moroccan Arabic, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Spanish, and Turkish. Thirteen children indicated that they had been speaking German for more than four years, while the remaining four had spoken it for two to three years.

Materials and data analysis

Questionnaire on multilingual identity. The questionnaire was adapted from Haukås et al. (2021) (see Section 1.2), translated into German and shortened to better suit the younger participants in Study 1. It comprised three main sections. The first section focused on the languages spoken by the children in various contexts. The second section addressed the children's beliefs about multilingualism, including perceptions of its advantages for learning additional languages, fostering creativity, and its relevance for future employment. We also explored their vision of a future multilingual self (e.g., whether they aspired to speak more than two languages or felt that English alone would suffice), and their open-mindedness (to diverse opinions and new encounters). Based on Haukås et al. (2021), the questions in this section employed a 5-point Likert scale, enabling children to express their level of agreement with each statement, ranging from 'I totally agree' (5 points) to 'I do not agree at all' (1 point). From this section, we extracted three scores as averages of the responses: a 'Multilingualism Beliefs Score', a 'Future Multilingual Self Score' and an 'Open-mindedness Score', respectively. As mentioned in Section 1.2., these three scores correspond to different components of multilingual identity.

Test for metalinguistic abilities in German. We administered a subset of the test for MAs in German by Jessner et al. (2015) in written form, focusing on two key sections. The first section assesses the children's ability to detect ambiguities in sentence meanings. The children were asked to explain the different meanings of each expression given, which assesses their MAs, as it involves the ability to manipulate and rephrase meanings. The second section tests children's ability to identify the grammatical function of sentence constituents. We assigned 0 points for incorrect answers and 1 point for correct ones (slightly modifying the coding scheme proposed by Jessner et al., 2015; see Study 2 for further details).

Language portrait. The children were asked to colour a language portrait, with each colour representing a different language they know. We adopted a body outline developed by the Research Group Sprecherleben (Experiencing Language) at the Institute of Linguistics, University of Vienna, which has been validated and applied in multiple studies. This template was selected for its gender-neutrality and the varied arm positions, including one raised in greeting, which enables participants to ascribe a broader range of symbolic associations (Busch, 2018, 2021). Children

could include languages they speak, languages spoken in their environment, or languages they wish to speak in the future. We explained that they could associate these languages with different body parts and that the colours could overlap or be kept separate. It was emphasised that there were no right or wrong answers, and they were encouraged to be as creative as they liked. We triangulated the portraits with the data collected from the initial section of the questionnaire and analysed them qualitatively, adhering to a defined set of categories. These categories included: (i) the correspondence between language portraits and the linguistic backgrounds indicated in the questionnaire; (ii) the number of languages represented in the portraits; (iii) the positioning of languages, interpreted through previously examined metaphors in the literature (Busch, 2018); (iv) the presence or absence of HLs (either personal or spoken by peers); (v) the extent of body space assigned to a language; and (vi) the depiction of languages as distinct identities or in a more fluid manner. The drawings included in this chapter were chosen for their informative and illustrative potential.

Findings

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE ON MULTILINGUAL IDENTITY AND THE TEST FOR METALINGUISTIC ABILITIES

Table 10.1 reports the mean and standard deviation for each score extracted from the multilingual identity questionnaire. The ‘Multilingualism Beliefs Score’ and the ‘Future Multilingual Self Score’ correlated highly with each other ($r(14) = .62, p = .01$), whereas the ‘Open-mindedness Score’ did not correlate with any other variable ($r(14) = -.09, p = .73$ with the ‘Multilingualism Beliefs Score’ and $r(14) = .02, p = .94$ with the ‘Future Multilingual Self Score’, respectively). We created a new variable averaging for each child the ‘Multilingualism Beliefs Score’ and the ‘Future Multilingual Self Score’, in order to avoid multicollinearity problems in later analyses. We called this new variable ‘Beliefs and Future Self Score’ (Table 10.1).

The main analysis focused on the effect of the variables related to multilingual identity on children’s accuracy in answering the metalinguistic

Table 10.1 Descriptive statistics for the scores extracted from the questionnaire on multilingual identity

	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Multilingualism beliefs score	3.39	0.84
Future multilingual self score	3.94	0.87
Open-mindedness score	4.45	0.63
Beliefs and future self score	3.67	0.77

Table 10.2 Parameters of the generalised linear mixed-effects analysis with response accuracy with metalinguistic questions as a function of the 'beliefs and future self score' and the 'open-mindedness score'

	<i>Estimate</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>p</i>
Intercept	-4.13	1.49	-2.77	.006
Beliefs and future self score	0.39	0.20	1.89	.059
Open-mindedness score	0.55	0.26	2.15	.03

questions. In particular, Table 10.2 shows the results of the generalised linear mixed-effect model, with response accuracy in the test for MAs (scored 0 or 1) as the dependent variable and the 'Beliefs and Future Self Score' and the 'Open-mindedness Score' as main effects. We found a nearly significant effect for the 'Beliefs and Future Self Score' and a significant effect for the 'Open-mindedness Score'. In both cases, higher scores were associated with greater accuracy in the test for MAs, as illustrated in Figure 10.1.

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE LINGUISTIC PORTRAITS

A qualitative analysis of the language portraits reveals the intricate relationship between perceptions of multilingual identity, multilingual awareness and MAs. In this section, we focus on four children, two with high MA scores and two with low scores, to explore potential differences. Figures 10.2 and 10.3 present drawings from two children who scored highly on the test for MAs, offering a visual representation of this complexity. In all these drawings, handwritten details were removed to preserve anonymity. The text is reported exactly as originally written by the children.

Both children visually expressed a multilingual identity, illustrating linguistic repertoires including 4 and 3 languages, despite reporting a more limited number of spoken or encountered languages in the questionnaire. CH003, whose home language was German, scored above average in all three measures of the multilingual identity questionnaire. In their portrait, they also included Italian and Croatian in a mirrored and equally distributed way between the legs and head, thereby assigning equal importance to the languages spoken by classmates. Notably, although they did not speak these languages, as indicated by the captions ('kann ich nicht'/'I can't'), they still acknowledged them as part of her/his multilingual environment. It is noteworthy that the child did not mention Italian and Croatian in response to the questionnaire prompt, "What languages do your friends speak?". However, the language portrait provided more space for reflection, allowing greater awareness of their individual linguistic repertoire, which in this case was intertwined with the collective linguistic resources of the class. All the languages in their repertoire converged in

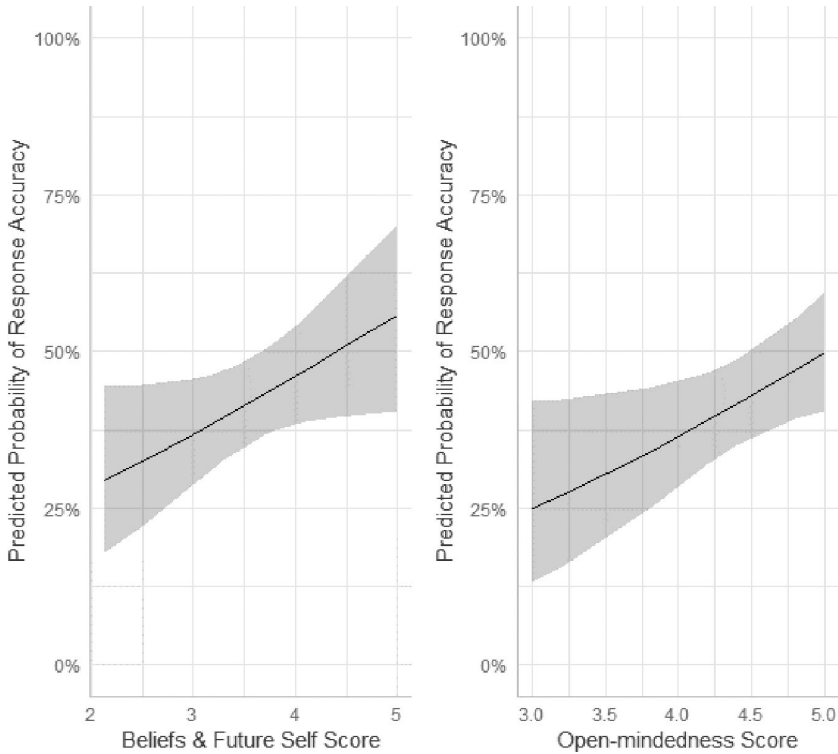


Figure 10.1 Predicted probability of an accurate response in the metalinguistic task as a function of the ‘beliefs and future self scores’ (left) and the ‘open-mindedness score’ (right).

Note. For both variables ‘beliefs and future self scores’ and ‘open-mindedness score’, higher scores are shown toward the right. The shaded areas represent the 95% confidence intervals.

the chest, depicted in a particularly creative representation. In contrast, the language portrait of CH004, whose HL were Arabic and Moroccan Arabic, did not include the languages of classmates and instead left a large blank space. This aligned with their above-average scores in the multilingual identity questionnaire on the “Future Multilingual Self” and “Open-mindedness”, suggesting that the child might have left room in the portrait to represent languages they could learn in the future. Interestingly, the classmates’ languages were mentioned in detail in the questionnaire.

Figures 10.4 and 10.5 present drawings by two children with low scores in the test for MAs.

CH006, whose family language is Serbian, scored below average on both the measures ‘Multilingualism Beliefs’ and ‘Future Multilingual Self’.

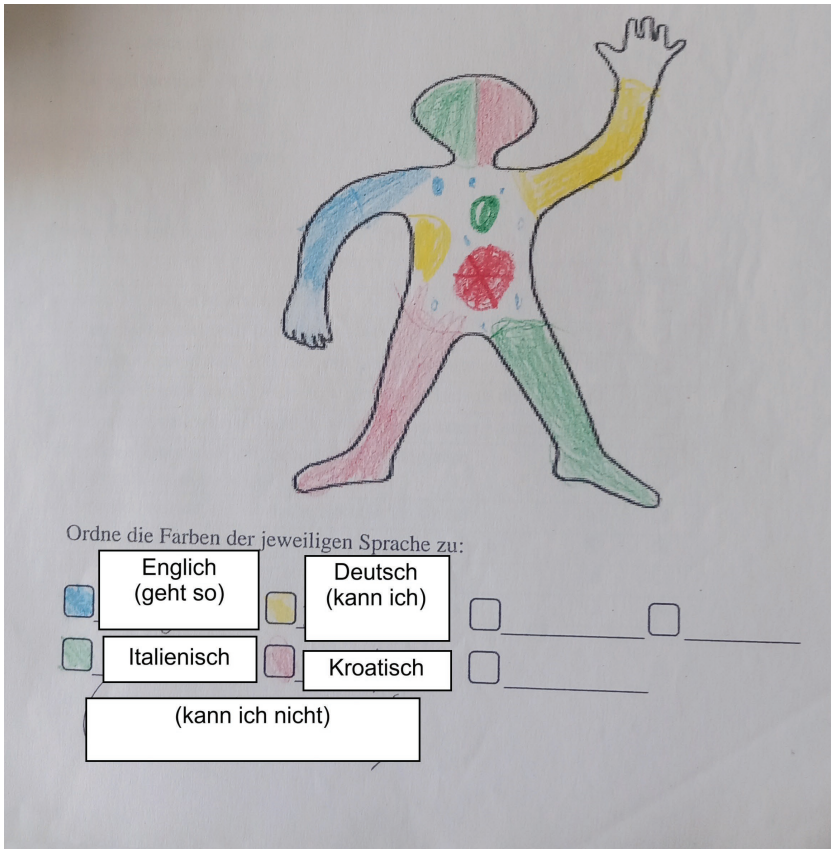


Figure 10.2 Drawing by CH003.

This was reflected in their language portrait: the school language, German, dominated most of the body and head, while Serbian, represented with an indistinct colour, is placed in the lower part of the body. The child also did not mention their classmates in either the language biography or the questionnaire, which may indicate a lack of interest in their languages. CH008, whose HL was Persian, scored below average on the ‘Open-mindedness Score’. However, in their language portrait, they included languages spoken by peers, indicating that the number of languages depicted was not always an indicator of higher awareness of one’s multilingual identity. What made this portrait particularly striking was the absence of any language in the head. Both the HL and school language were instead depicted in the arms, perhaps suggesting that the child viewed these languages primarily as tools, used for practical, instrumental purposes.

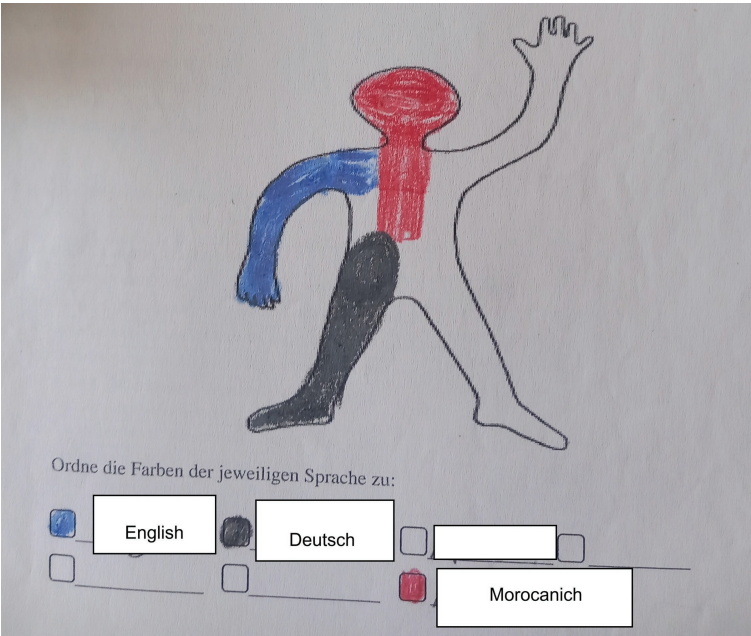


Figure 10.3 Drawing by CH004.

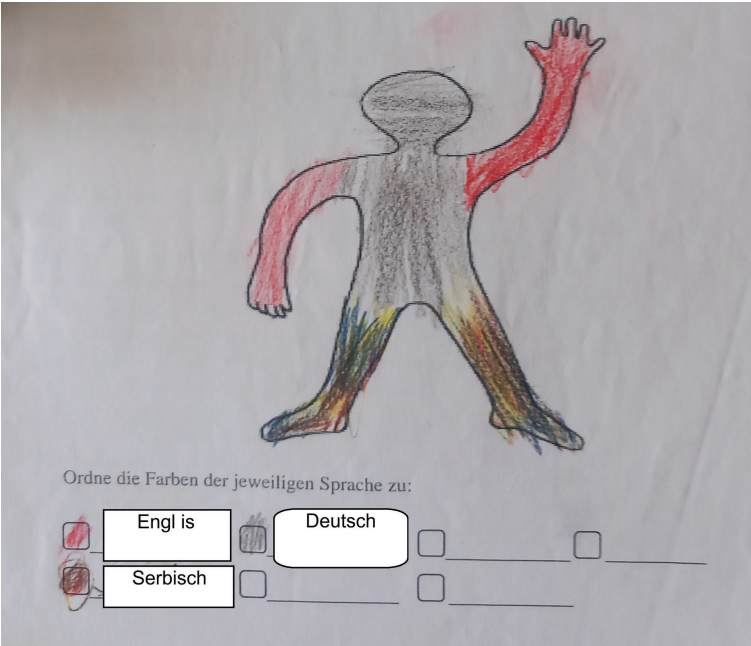


Figure 10.4 Drawing by CH005.

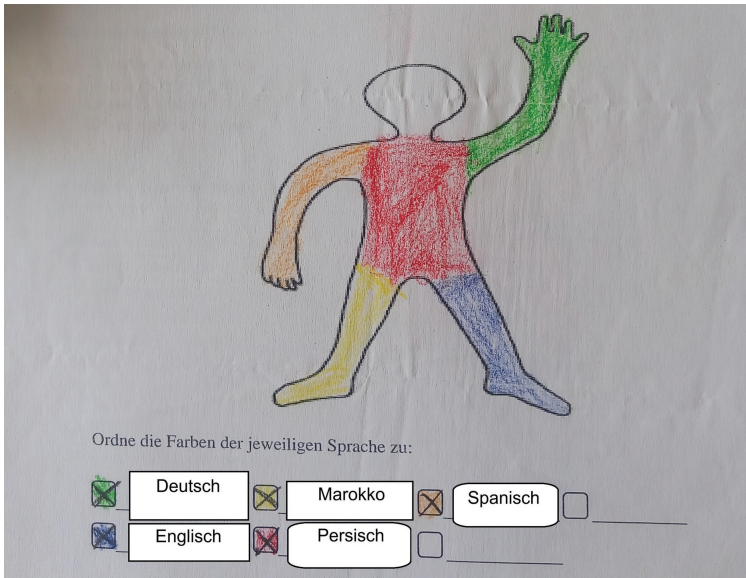


Figure 10.5 Drawing by CH006.

A preliminary reflection on the similarities and differences between the four portraits revealed that, in all the drawings, languages tended to be portrayed as discrete identities, kept separate from one another. Additionally, a commonality across the portraits was that children were generally aware of their multilingual identity, with each depicting a range of languages spoken in the family or in their environment. Furthermore, representing the school language as a resource for ‘thinking’ did not seem to be a requirement for the development of multilingual identity awareness. The triangulation of the portraits with data from the multilingual identity questionnaire revealed important correspondences. These alignments (or misalignments), in turn, reflected varying degrees of multilingual identity awareness.

Study 2: multilingual identity and metalinguistic abilities in a secondary school in Germany

Participants

Twenty-one students (12 females) from a public secondary school (Gymnasium) in Germany participated in the study. All students were eighth-graders, aged 13–14, and were enrolled in a curriculum that included English and Spanish as foreign languages. In the multilingual identity questionnaire, 11 students identified German as their sole native language.

Seven participants reported an additional native language, including English ($n = 1$), Kurdish ($n = 1$), Serbian ($n = 1$), Spanish ($n = 4$) and one participant identified both Spanish and English (in addition to German). One participant listed American English and another Georgian as their native languages; however, both had been speaking German for over four years. Regarding Spanish (the language of the test for MAs), 13 participants had been speaking it for more than four years, while the remaining had spoken it for two to three years.

Materials

Questionnaire on multilingual identity. The questionnaire was a German translation of the one developed by Haukås et al. (2021). We chose not to shorten it, as the participants in Study 2 were older than those in Study 1. For the quantitative analysis, we extracted the same three scores as in Study 1.

Test for metalinguistic abilities in Spanish. We administered a subset of the test for MAs in Spanish by Núñez Delgado and Pinto (2015), focusing on two sections that were also used in Study 1. For example, in the section on detecting ambiguities, similar to the German version, children were asked if the verb *hacerse* (to make oneself) carried the same meaning in the expressions *hacerse ilusiones* (to get one's hopes up), *hacerse kilómetros* (to cover many miles), and *hacerse mayor* (to grow older), and to explain the meaning of each expression. In the section assessing the grammatical function of sentence components, participants were asked, for instance, to read a sentence and explain who performed the action and how this was indicated. For this task, we adopted a different scoring from Study 1, following the guidelines of Núñez Delgado and Pinto (2015). We awarded 2 points for detailed explanations that reference relationships between sentence constituents, 1 point for simpler but correct explanations, and 0 points for incorrect answers. This tripartite coding was not used in Study 1, as the younger children were unable to provide the most detailed explanations due to their age.

Language portrait. The language portrait task was administered using the same methodology as in Study 1.

Findings

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE ON MULTILINGUAL IDENTITY AND THE TEST FOR METALINGUISTIC ABILITIES

Table 10.3 presents the mean and standard deviation for each score derived from the multilingual identity questionnaire. Unlike the findings

Table 10.3 Descriptive statistics for the scores extracted from the questionnaire on multilingual identity*

	Mean	SD
Multilingualism beliefs score	3.19	0.49
Future multilingual self score	3.78	0.27
Open-mindedness score	3.70	0.28

* The questionnaire was administered to 21 children.

Table 10.4 Parameters of the multinomial logistic regression analysis for explanation scores in response to the metalinguistic questions, focusing on the ‘multilingualism beliefs score’, the ‘future multilingual self score’ and the ‘open-mindedness score’

Predictors	Explanation Score	Log OR	SE	p
Intercept	1	1.88	2.26	.40
	2	-8.76	6.86	.20
Multilingualism beliefs score	1	-0.22	0.21	.29
	2	-1.56	1.03	.13
Future multilingual self score	1	0.24	0.38	.53
	2	3.79	1.76	.03
Open-mindedness score	1	-0.68	0.36	.061
	2	-1.18	1.21	.33

from Study 1, we did not observe any significant correlations between the three scores (‘Multilingualism Beliefs Score’ *vs.* ‘Future Multilingual Self Score’: $r(19) = .18$, $p = .43$; ‘Multilingualism Beliefs Score’ *vs.* ‘Open-mindedness Score’: $r(19) = -.15$, $p = .53$; ‘Future Multilingual Self Score’ *vs.* ‘Open-mindedness Score’: $r(19) = -.26$, $p = .26$). As a result, these variables will be analysed independently in the model presented below. Overall, both the ‘Future Multilingual Self Score’ and the ‘Open-mindedness Score’ tended to be higher than the ‘Multilingualism Beliefs Score’.

Table 10.4 presents the results of the multinomial logistic regression analysis, where the explanation score for responses to the metalinguistic questions (0, 1, or 2) served as the dependent variable, and the three variables extracted from the questionnaire acted as independent variables. The purpose of conducting a multinomial logistic regression is to model the probability of a categorical dependent variable (with three or more levels, as in this case) as a linear combination of the independent variables. We chose the score 0 as the reference level for the dependent variable (Torregrossa et al., 2023, for methodology). We found a significant increase in the log odds of providing an explanation scored as 2 (compared to an explanation scored as 0, our reference level) with a 3.79 increase for each

one-unit rise in the participants' 'Future Multilingual Self Score', meaning that higher levels of the 'Future Multilingual Self Score' were associated with an increased likelihood of producing the most complex responses to the metalinguistic questions.

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE LINGUISTIC PORTRAITS

The linguistic portraits of Study 2, with older children, also depict complex relationships between multilingual identity and MAs. As in the previous section, we focus on four children, the first two with high MA scores and the last two with low scores.

Figure 10.6 illustrates the language portrait of adolescent CH020, who achieved above-average scores in both the 'Future Multilingual Self Score' and 'Open-mindedness Score', and an average score in the 'Multilingualism Beliefs Score'. Their home language is German. While the participant primarily represents their mother tongue and the languages studied at school as distinct entities in the biography (despite Spanish being a language spoken by peers), they provide several comments to explain how they use these languages, highlighting that they feel more confident in German than in English and wish to improve their Spanish. This indicates that the

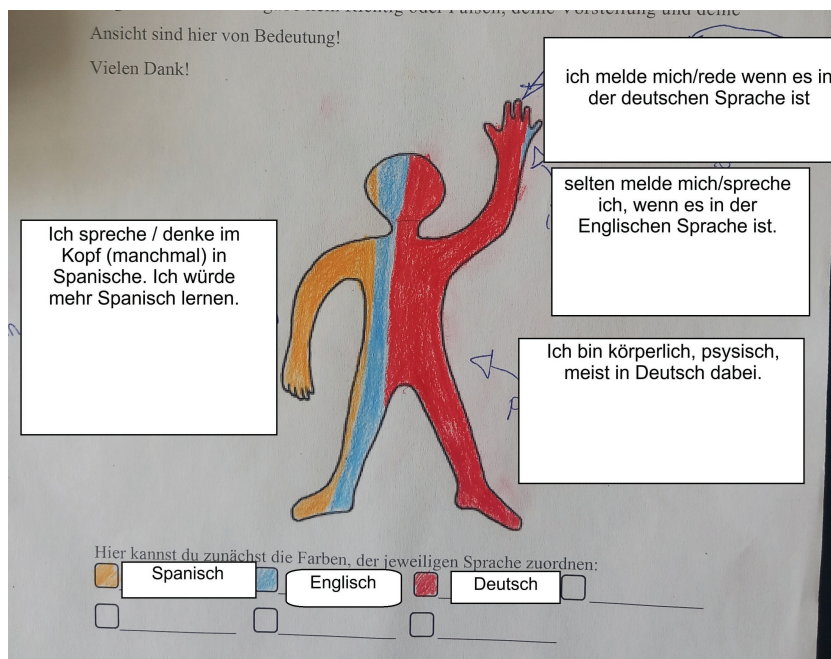


Figure 10.6 Drawing by CH020.

participant verbally overcomes a limitation in the graphical representation, expressing awareness of their linguistic repertoire as well as their attitudes associated with it. Figure 10.7 depicts the language portrait of adolescent CH025, whose HL is Kurdish. They score above average in all multilingual identity measures, except for Open-mindedness. Nevertheless, they included the languages spoken by classmates in both the biography and the questionnaire, showcasing a multilingual identity that encompasses several languages. Notably, both portraits represent the same languages inhabiting different parts of the body, suggesting that the participant struggled to assign a single language to a specific body part. Another shared feature is the depiction of school languages in the upper part of the drawing (the head), likely signifying their importance in cognitive development.

Figure 10.8 displays the linguistic portrait of adolescent CH033. Although their HL is Spanish, they fall into the category of students who scored below average in MAs in that language. In their language portrait, German emerges as the predominant language, which is also reflected in their below-average score in 'Multilingualism Beliefs'. Similar to the language portraits discussed in the previous section, CH033 represents

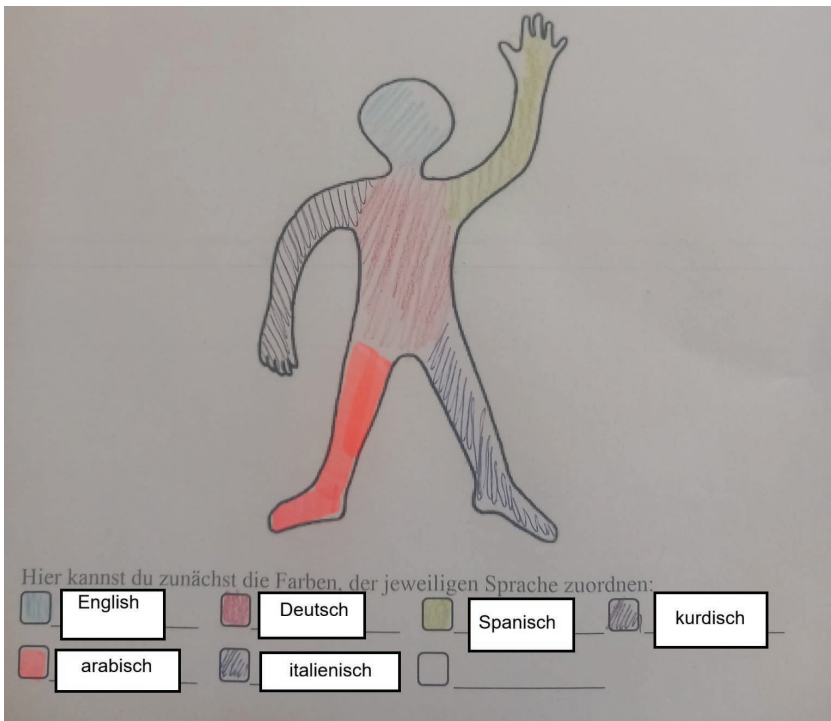


Figure 10.7 Drawing by CH025.

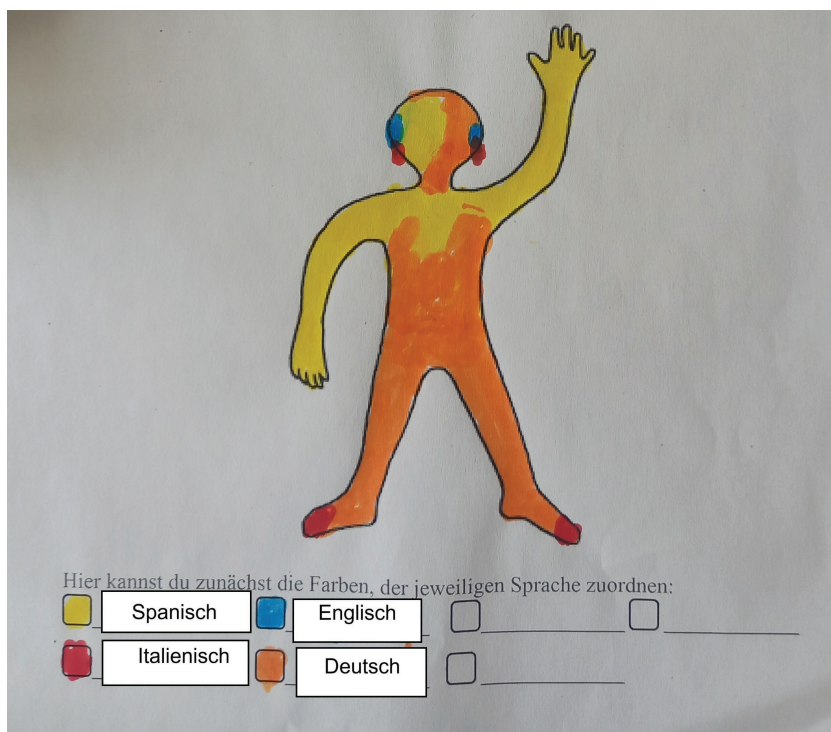


Figure 10.8 Drawing by CH033.

languages across different body parts and conveys ideas of fluidity. This characteristic is common among many participants in Study 2, regardless of their multilingual identity awareness scores. In CH033's portrait, a language spoken by classmates (Italian) is included, albeit minimally, in the hears. The limited space given to this language correlates with a below-average score in Open-mindedness. Finally, Figure 10.9 represents the language portrait of adolescent CH023, who similarly scored low in MAs in Spanish. The participant has German as the family language. Notably, this drawing resembles that of CH020, but with two significant differences: the lack of additional details on language use and the absence of Spanish in the head, a placement typically associated with a higher level of cognitive reflection.

Discussion

A simple way to conceptualise the relationship between students' multilingual identity awareness and their MAs is to assume that the richer students

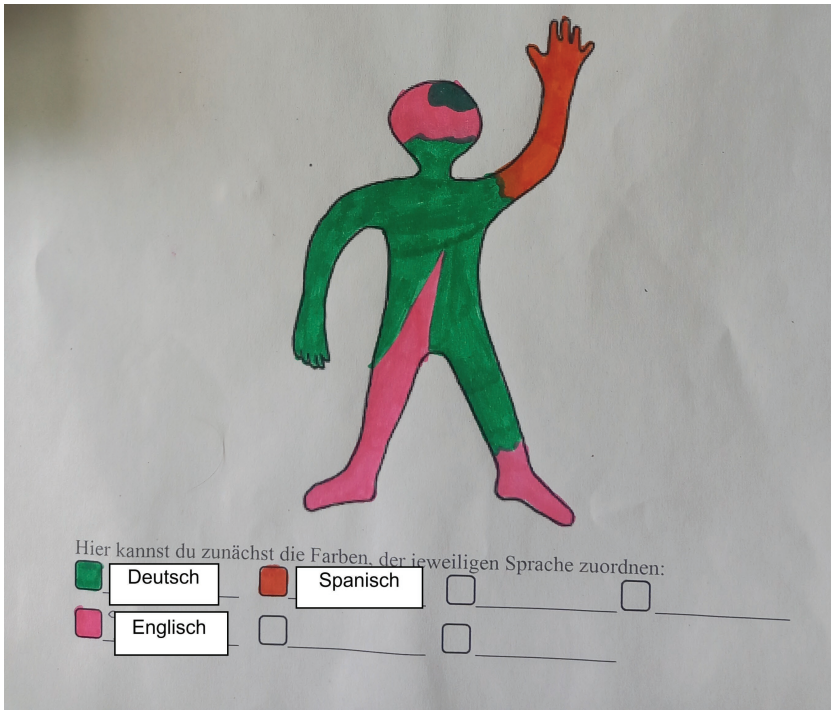


Figure 10.9 Drawing by CH023.

perceive their language repertoire (encompassing both the languages they speak and those in their environment), the higher their MAs will be. However, the triangulation of data from the tests for MAs, the multilingual identity questionnaire and the language portraits reveals no clear correlation between students' MAs and the number of languages they indicated. For instance, CH008 and CH025, who referenced the highest number of languages in their portraits, displayed contrasting MAs—one low and one high. This led us to delve deeper into how the children who achieved high and low MAs constructed their language repertoires. Through this analysis, we identified several key indicators of children's MAs within their language portraits, although not all indicators needed to appear simultaneously.

One important indicator was the children's ability to reflect explicitly on their language repertoire. Among the four children with higher MAs in Studies 1 and 2, two not only mentioned the languages they spoke or encountered in their environment but also provided details about how they used these languages, their proficiency levels and the values they attached to each language. While many students included classroom languages in

their repertoire, only those who explicitly reflected on them tended to have higher MAs. In Section 2, we emphasised that verbalisation is a crucial aspect of MAs. The observation that children with high MAs were also more “verbal” in reflecting on their multilingual identities suggests that their ability to articulate “knowledge and experience through language” (Swain, 2006, p. 98; see also Torregrossa et al., 2025) underlies advanced MAs and more nuanced reflections on multilingual identity. Notably, schools can empower children to reflect on their language repertoires explicitly through tools like language portfolios, which serve as instruments “for students to record and celebrate their language learning and cultural experiences over time” (Celic & Seltzer, 2012: 23).

Another promising indicator of students’ MAs in the language portraits is the representation of fluidity in their language repertoires. In Study 2, we observed that most children did not associate a specific language with a single part of the body, suggesting they embraced a dynamic view of their language repertoire. While this fluidity was not necessarily an indicator of advanced MAs in Study 2, this may be due to the students’ age (13–14 years), by which point they may already perceive their languages as interconnected in their learning process. Therefore, the depiction of fluid languages could be related to age effects in our study—across Study 1 and Study 2—indicating better MAs among older children. It is possible that in younger children, aged 9–13 (a group not considered in this study), whether languages are portrayed as fluid or separate might be a more significant indicator of high or low MAs within that age range.

A third feature to consider when triangulating evidence from the language portraits and the test for MAs is the placement of the school language in relation to the HL. In Study 2, the participants with higher MAs consistently represented Spanish—a language learnt in school—in the head or another upper part of the body, likely signifying the high cognitive activity associated with this language. Notably, among these children, there was no evidence of “conflict” between Spanish and their HL(s) (see, e.g., the balanced distribution of languages in Figure 10.7). In contrast, children with lower MAs either did not represent Spanish in the upper part of the body (Figure 10.9) or, when it was depicted in the head, it appeared concomitantly to German, the dominant societal language (Figure 10.8; see also Figure 10.4 in Study 1).

This association of school language(s) with the upper body suggests that schooling plays a crucial role in developing multilingual identity awareness (Chik & Melo-Pfeifer, 2024). However, the “conflict” observed in children with lower MAs indicates that the role of school might be influenced by issues of linguistic prestige and hierarchies, which are often tied to experiences of immigration and mobility. One possible explanation for this is that some children might be socialised to suppress or erase certain parts

of their linguistic repertoire, leading to reduced valorisation and use of those languages. As a result, these languages may be less activated in tasks perceived within the domain of school. There are exceptions to this pattern, as found in our study. For example, the child in Figure 10.3 (Study 1) coloured Moroccan Arabic in the head, suggesting a high value attributed to the HL, even though it is not the language of school.

The results of the quantitative analysis support the conclusions reached so far. In Study 1, the ‘Multilingualism Beliefs Score’, ‘Future Multilingual Self Score’ and ‘Open-mindedness Score’ all emerged as important predictors of children’s MAs: Children who were aware of their multilingual identity and recognised that their languages were not in conflict tended to exhibit higher MAs. These were also the children who expressed interest in ‘new’ languages, such as the classroom languages, and reflected on their desire to learn them in the future. In Study 2, the ‘Future Multilingual Self Score’ emerged as the sole significant predictor of students’ MAs. Older students appeared more conscious of the importance of learning school languages for their future multilingual selves not only because mastering these languages might be advantageous for future employment but also because it could facilitate the learning of additional languages. Among the participants in Study 2, school languages were given greater importance than in Study 1, suggesting that as students age, societal beliefs about which languages are valued might shape their attitudes. Consequently, they may lose interest in maintaining their HL, particularly if they lack social prestige. For example, the HL in Figure 10.7 is one among several languages, losing the central role that it had in Figure 10.3.

From a methodological perspective, one potential limitation of this study is the absence of narrative input from the students regarding the linguistic biographies they produced. However, consistent with previous research (Melo-Pfeifer, 2015), we considered the triangulation of data—combining students’ linguistic backgrounds and attitudes toward multilingualism from questionnaires with the independent interpretations of the three researchers conducting the study—sufficient to effectively address our research questions.

Conclusion

The primary aim of this contribution was to explore whether students’ awareness of their multilingual identities positively affects their MAs. While the overall answer to this question is affirmative, our study reveals the complexity of the relationship between multilingual identity and MAs, indicating that different components of multilingual identity play varying roles, particularly as students get older. Overall, higher MAs appear to be linked to the harmonious coexistence of all the languages within one’s

repertoire. Additionally, the ability to reflect on the significance of these languages in shaping one's identity, the perception of their interconnectedness and importance ascribed to the HL(s) by younger children or the school languages by older ones are associated with superior performance in tests for MAs. More broadly, this contribution has identified beliefs and experiences that can empower students in their learning process and can be made objects of explicit reflection in the classroom.

This study highlights the classroom's role in fostering multilingual identity development, making learner agency a central consideration in curriculum design (Miller & Kubota, 2013; Rampton, 2006). As students navigate diverse multilingual experiences, with varying beliefs (De Houwer, 2020), teachers should therefore facilitate discussions on language and identity, helping students reflect on their linguistic experiences (Carbonara, 2023; Chik & Melo-Pfeifer, 2024). These conversations can inspire interest in other languages (Candelier, 2003) and highlight linguistic inequalities (García & Hesson, 2015), empowering students to shape their multilingual selves and enhance intercultural competence.

Before concluding, it is important to address a methodological consideration. Many of the conclusions drawn in this article would not have been possible without employing a triangulation of three distinct research tools. Thus, a learner-centred approach to education—such as the one presented in this contribution—should always be supported by an integrated and holistic use of various research instruments. Recent identity research indicates that identity must be examined in the context of globalisation, hybrid linguistic practices, and the intersecting movements of people. Accordingly, research will be further enriched by incorporating an interdisciplinary and multimethod approach that includes psychological and cognitive dimensions, as demonstrated in this study.

References

- Altman, C., Goldstein, T., & Armon-Lotem, S. (2018). Vocabulary, metalinguistic awareness and language dominance among bilingual preschool children. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9, 1953. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01953>
- Beaudrie, S., Ducar, C., & Relaño-Pastor, A. M. (2009). Curricular perspectives in the heritage language context: Assessing culture and identity. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 22(2), 157–174.
- Bongartz, C., & Torregrossa, J. (2020). The effects of balanced biliteracy on Greek-German bilingual children's secondary discourse ability. *Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 23(8), 948–963.
- Bücker, S., Nuraydin, S., Simonsmeier, B. A., Schneider, M., & Luhmann, M. (2018). Subjective well-being and academic achievement: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 74, 83–94. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrp.2018.02.007>
- Busch, B. (2012). The linguistic repertoire revisited. *Applied Linguistics*, 33(5), 503–523.

- Busch, B. (2017). *Mehrsprachigkeit*. Facultas/UTB.
- Busch, B. (2018). The language portrait in multilingualism research: Theoretical and methodological considerations. *Working Papers in Urban Language & Literacies* (Ghent University), Paper 236 (pp. 1–13).
- Busch, B. (2021). The body image: Taking an evaluative stance towards semiotic resources. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 18(2), 190–205. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2021.1898618>
- Caloi, I., & Torregrossa, J. (2021). Home and school language practices and their effects on heritage language acquisition: A view from heritage Italians in Germany. *Languages*, 6(1), Article 50. <https://doi.org/10.3390/languages6010050>
- Candelier, M. (2003). *L'Éveil aux langues à l'école primaire — Evlang. Bilan d'une innovation européenne*. De Boeck-Duculot.
- Carbonara, V. (2023). The effects of multilingual pedagogies on language awareness: A longitudinal analysis of students' language portraits. *Linguistics and Education*, 78, 101244. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.linged.2023.101244>
- Carbonara, V., Scibetta, A., & Torregrossa, J. (2023). The benefits of multilingual pedagogies for multilingual children's narrative abilities. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 21(2), 645–669. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2022.2148675>
- Celic, C., & Seltzer, K. (2012). *Translanguaging: A CUNY-NYSIEB guide for educators*. CUNY-NYSIEB.
- Cenoz, J., & Gorter, D. (2022). *Pedagogical translanguaging*. Cambridge University Press.
- Chaney, C. (1994). Language development, metalinguistic awareness and emergent literacy skills of 3-year-old children in relation to social class. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 15(3), 371–394.
- Chik, A., & Melo-Pfeifer, S. (2024). Do societal and individual multilingualism lead to positive perceptions of multilingualism and language learning? A comparative study with Australian and German pre-service teachers. *Language Awareness*, 33(1), 182–200. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09658416.2023.2234288>
- De Houwer, A. (2020). Harmonious bilingualism: Well-being for families in bilingual settings. In A. C. Schalley & S. Eisenclas (Eds.), *Handbook of home language maintenance and development: Social and affective factors* (pp. 63–83). De Gruyter Mouton. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781501510175-004>
- Eisenbeiß, S., Torregrossa, J., Listanti, A., Pinton, L., & Bongartz, C. (2026). Die Einführung von mehrsprachigen Testverfahren in deutsch-italienischen bilingualen Schulen: Eine Studie mit dem MSK-Test. In V. Cristante & S. Geyer (Eds.), *Grammatikdidaktik und Mehrsprachigkeit. Sprachlich-literarisches Lernen und Deutschdidaktik* (pp. 73–86). SLLD-B. <https://omp.ub.rub.de/index.php/SLLD/catalog/view/462/379/2378>
- Fisher, L., Evans, M., Forbes, K., Gayton, A., & Liu, Y. (2018). Participative multilingual identity construction in the languages classroom: A multi-theoretical conceptualisation. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 17(4), 448–466.
- Forbes, K., Evans, M., Fisher, L., Gayton, A., Liu, Y., & Rutgers, D. (2021). Developing a multilingual identity in the languages classroom: the influence of an identity-based pedagogical intervention. *The Language Learning Journal*, 49(4), 433–451. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2021.1906733>

- García, O., & Hesson, S. (2015). Translanguaging frameworks for teachers: Macro and micro perspective. In A. Yiakoumetti (Ed.), *Multilingualism and language in education: Sociolinguistic and pedagogical perspectives from Commonwealth countries* (pp. 221–241). Cambridge University Press.
- Gayton, A., & Fisher, L. (2022). Multilingual identity construction through participative reflective practice in the language classroom. In W. Ayres-Bennett & L. Fisher (eds.), *Multilingualism and identity: interdisciplinary perspectives* (pp. 299–320). Cambridge University Press.
- Haukås, A., Storto, A., & Tiurikova, I. (2021). Developing and validating a questionnaire on young learners' multilingualism and multilingual identity. *The Language Learning Journal*, 49(4), 404–419. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2021.1915367>
- Henry, A. (2017). L2 motivation and multilingual identities. *The Modern Language Journal*, 101(3), 548–565. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44981005>
- Henry, A. (2023). Language learning motivation and the multilingual turn. In A. Ajar & S. Manan (Eds.), *Multilingual selves and motivations for learning languages other than English in Asian contexts* (pp. 13–33). Multilingual Matters.
- Homer, B. (2009). Literacy and metalinguistic development. In D. Olson & N. Torrance (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of literacy* (pp. 487–500). Cambridge University Press.
- Jessner, U., Hofer, B., & Pinto, M. A. (2015). MKT–2. *Metalinguistischer Kompetenztest Teil 2*. Studia Universitätsverlag Innsbruck.
- Joseph, J. E. (2016). Historical perspectives on language and identity. In S. Preece (Ed.), *Routledge Handbook of language and identity* (pp. 19–33). Routledge.
- Karmiloff-Smith, A. (1992). *Beyond modularity: A developmental perspective on cognitive science*. MIT Press.
- Kaya, M., & Erdem, C. (2021). Students' wellbeing and academic achievement: A meta-analysis study. *Child Indicators Research*, 14(5), 1743–1767. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12187-021-09821-4>
- Leeman, J. (2015). Heritage language education and identity in the United States. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 35, 100–119. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190514000245>
- Melo-Pfeifer, S. (2015). Multilingual awareness and heritage language education: Children's multimodal representations of their multilingualism. *Language Awareness*, 24(3), 197–215. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09658416.2015.1072208>
- Melo-Pfeifer, S., & Tavares, V. (2024). An inconvenient truth: When ideologies of multilingualism lead to auto-inflicted epistemic exclusion by multilingual students in higher education. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijal.12634>
- Melogno, S., Pinto, M. A., & Lauriola, M. (2022). Becoming the metalinguistic mind: The development of metalinguistic abilities in children from 5 to 7. *Children*, 9(550), 550. <https://doi.org/10.3390/children9040550>
- Mercer, S., & MacIntyre, P. D. (2014). Introducing positive psychology to SLA. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 4(2), 153–172. <https://doi.org/10.14746/ssl.t.2014.4.2.2>
- Mercer, S., & Ryan, S. (2016). Stretching the boundaries: Language learning psychology. *Palgrave Communications*, 2(1), 1–5. <https://doi.org/10.1057/palcomms.2016.31>

- Miller, E.R., & Kubota, R. (2013). Second language identity construction. In J. Herschensohn & M. Young-Scholten (Eds.), *The Cambridge Handbook of second language acquisition* (pp. 230–250). Cambridge University Press.
- Núñez Delgado, P., & Pinto, M. A. (2015). *THAM-2. Test de habilidades metalingüísticas n. 2 (9–14 años)*. SAPIENZA Editrice.
- Rampton, B. (2006). *Language in late modernity: Interaction in an urban school*. Cambridge University Press.
- Roehr-Brackin, K. (2018). *Metalinguistic awareness and second language acquisition*. Routledge.
- Rutgers, D., Evans, M., Fisher, L., Forbes, K., Gayton, A., & Liu, Y. (2024). Multilingualism, multilingual identity and academic attainment: Evidence from secondary schools in England. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, 23(2), 210–227. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15348458.2021.1986397>
- Spellerberg, S. M. (2015). Metalinguistic awareness and academic achievement in a linguistically diverse school setting: a study of lower secondary pupils in Denmark. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 13(1), 19–39. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2015.1053891>
- Swain, M. (2006). Language, agency and collaboration in advanced second language learning. In H. Byrnes (Ed.), *Advanced language learning: The contributions of Halliday and Vygotsky* (pp. 95–108). Continuum.
- Torregrossa, J., Bongartz, C., & Eisenbeiß, S. (2025). Does “translanguaging” equal “reasoning in multiple languages?”: Back to the basics of translanguaging as a way forward. *Linguistic Approaches to Bilingualism*. <https://doi.org/10.1075/lab.24068.tor>
- Torregrossa, J., Eisenbeiß, S., & Bongartz, C. (2023). Boosting metalinguistic awareness under dual language activation: Some implications for bilingual education. *Language Learning*, 73(3), 683–722.
- Tunmer, W. E., Pratt, C., & Herriman, M. L. (1984). *Metalinguistic awareness in children: Theory, research and implications*. Springer.
- Wu, X., & Forbes, K. (2023). Contextualising the temporal dimension in multilingual identity construction: A longitudinal Q methodological study with Chinese LOTE-learning public high school students. *System*, 116. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2023.103090>



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

Part 2

Multilingualism and teacher psychology



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

11 Language teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, agency, and students' engagement in multilingual digital storytelling

Camilla Spaliviero

Introduction

In today's increasingly interconnected world, international policy frameworks (e.g., Council of Europe, 2022) emphasise the importance of adopting innovative teaching practices that promote linguistic diversity, intercultural understanding, and inclusive digital resources. Therefore, language teacher education programmes must provide teachers with both the technical skills and the pedagogical knowledge needed to effectively foster students' multilingualism while integrating digital tools into their teaching. The success of such programmes depends not only on skill acquisition but also on psychological factors related to language teaching and learning. In particular, teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, agency, and students' engagement play a pivotal role in the effective implementation of multilingual and digital pedagogies. Teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and agency can influence their confidence and willingness to adopt innovative practices, and indirectly shape how students perceive and engage with new approaches and resources in the classroom. At the same time, students' engagement can sustain intrinsic motivation, reinforce their perception of the relevance and utility of the learning process, and in turn positively affect teachers' sense of agency by validating and supporting their pedagogical choices (Hiver et al., 2021; White, 2018; Wyatt, 2018).

Despite the recognised importance of these interrelated psychological aspects, research on the impact of language teacher education on teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, agency, and students' engagement in the context of both multilingual and digital pedagogies is limited. To address this gap, the present study is grounded in the idea that teachers' professional development and students' engagement are mutually reinforcing. Therefore, it explores the development of self-efficacy beliefs and agency among a group of in-service Italian language teachers in Argentina who participated in a training course on integrating multilingual approaches with digital tools.

It also examines students' engagement with teachers' multilingual and digital activities, offering insights into the broader implications of adopting multilingual and digital pedagogies in innovative ways.

Literature review

Multilingual digital storytelling

Multilingual digital storytelling (MDST) builds on and extends the concept of digital storytelling (DST). DST is a multimodal approach that integrates both traditional and emerging literacies by combining narrative techniques (written text) with digital media (images, audio, and video) (Lambert & Hessler, 2018). MDST goes a step further by focusing on the interplay between multilingual and digital literacies to value students' entire linguistic repertoires and enhance their multilingual competences (Anderson & Macleroy, 2017).

MDST develops various multiliteracies skills related to language learning (Anderson & Macleroy, 2016). Besides research, organisation, creativity, assessment, and presentation skills, it fosters linguistic, intercultural, and digital skills across languages. By drawing on voice-overs, subtitles, and soundtracks in multiple languages, MDST enables learners to fully express their multilingual identities. It also encourages collaborative storytelling, intercultural exchange, and self-representation while challenging stereotypes to deepen cultural understanding. Finally, it fosters responsible digital navigation and empowers students to address local and global issues.

MDST typically follows a three-stage, collaborative, process-oriented approach (Anderson & Macleroy, 2016). First, students conduct preliminary research, develop a storyline, and receive digital training. Second, they draft multilingual scripts, create storyboards, and gather multimodal resources ensuing copyright compliance. Third, they present their multilingual digital stories to diverse audiences.

Research on MDST has predominantly focused on students' perceptions (e.g., Anderson & Macleroy, 2017; Cersosimo, 2023; Nuroh et al., 2021). Overall, results confirm that MDST provides a highly beneficial, student-centred language learning experience, enhancing learners' self-confidence, multilingualism, multiliteracies, and intercultural awareness. However, to date no study has focused on MDST from the combined perspectives of both language teachers and students. Gaining insights from both groups is essential, as the success of MDST depends not only on students' engagement but also on teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and sense of agency to implement it effectively. These aspects are deeply interconnected and shape how both teachers and students experience and contribute to the learning process. This research examines how training in MDST influences teachers' professional development alongside students' perceptions, offering insights

into how language teacher education can effectively integrate multilingual and digital pedagogies, bridge theory with real-world classroom application, and enhance students' multilingual identity expression.

Teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and agency related to multilingual digital storytelling

Self-efficacy beliefs are defined as “people’s judgements of their capabilities to organise and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances” (Bandura, 1986, p. 391). These beliefs are closely linked to self-confidence and task completion, since they are specific to particular tasks, domains, and contexts, and must be understood in relation to outcome expectations. Language teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs can significantly influence their choice of activities, the effort they invest, and their persistence in overcoming challenges. These beliefs are shaped by reflective evaluations of past successes, verbal feedback, and sensory experiences, and are most meaningful when considered alongside actual teaching practices (Bandura, 1986). Moreover, they are flexible and dynamic, naturally, in the context of teachers’ professional development (Pajares, 1992).

Self-efficacy beliefs and agency are closely interconnected. When teachers feel confident in their abilities across various tasks, they are more likely to feel motivated, engage in continuous learning, and exhibit greater agency (Irie, 2022). Agency is described as “the socioculturally mediated capacity to act” (Ahearn, 2001, p. 112), which is shaped by social, cultural, and institutional factors. Language teachers’ agency involves decision-making across various aspects of their professional lives. These include building relationships, adapting to curriculum changes, embracing innovative teaching approaches, participating in professional development programmes, and responding to the diverse demands of their teaching contexts (Kalaja & Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2022; White, 2018). Language teachers’ agency can be conceptualised as a complex dynamic system, involving both observable actions and internal factors such as beliefs, emotions, values, and feelings (Mercer, 2011). It is not only a personal attribute but is also contextually enacted through interactions within social, cultural, and institutional environments, with teachers’ decisions and actions shaped by the affordances, constraints, and their awareness of social responsibilities in these contexts (van Lier, 2008).

Investigating language teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs and agency is critical, since these factors directly affect teachers’ psychological well-being, which, in turn, plays a key role in their ability to manage classroom dynamics and foster students’ personal growth and academic success (Mirmojarabian & Rezvani, 2021; Poulou et al., 2019; Sulis et al., 2023).

To date, research in this field has mainly investigated English language teachers in West Asia and the USA, using quantitative approaches

(e.g., Irie, 2022; Kalaja & Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2022). While several studies have examined self-efficacy beliefs in relation to language proficiency and emotional intelligence, there is limited research on their connections to teaching practices (Mirmojarabian & Rezvani, 2021; Poulou et al., 2019; Wyatt & Dikilitaş, 2021). Recent studies have explored language teacher agency concerning digital tools (Ashton, 2022) and multilingual approaches (Davis & Howlett, 2022; Venegas-Weber, 2019), but the influence of teacher training on both self-efficacy beliefs and agency is underexplored (Yüksel, 2014; Zonoubi et al., 2017). This research investigates the effects of training in MDST on Italian language teachers in Argentina using a mixed-methods approach, offering new insights into the role of language teacher education in fostering self-efficacy beliefs and agency in a less commonly studied context.

Students' engagement with their linguistic repertoires and digital resources

Engagement is defined as “a dynamic, multidimensional construct comprising situated notions of cognition, affect and behaviors including social interactions in which action is a requisite component” (Hiver et al., 2021, p. 3). Its dimensions encompass various aspects, including the degree and quality of students' participation (behavioural), their mental effort, attention, and focus (cognitive), their emotional responses to activities (affective), and their interactions (social) (Mercer, 2019). Exploring language students' engagement is crucial for understanding how learners participate in and benefit from language learning opportunities. Moreover, this exploration provides insights for improving teaching practices, classroom environments, and task design, fostering greater intensity and quality in students' participation and contributing to successful learning outcomes (Zhou et al., 2021).

Engagement research in applied linguistics has typically focused either on how learners engage with specific tasks, or on how they engage with language itself (e.g., Philp & Duchesne, 2016; Svalberg, 2009). In this study, the focus is on how learners engage with their linguistic repertoires, recognising these as an integral part of their multilingual identities. This perspective aligns with the evolution of the construct from “engagement with language” (Svalberg, 2009) to “engagement with languages” (Sulis, 2023). While the former focused on second language learning, conceptualising the learner as the agent and the language as the object, the latter includes students' linguistic repertoires as an integral aspect of their identities. From this perspective, behavioural engagement involves the active use of students' entire linguistic repertoires within and beyond school. Cognitive engagement entails examining, interpreting, and understanding all aspects of language form and use across multiple languages. Finally, emotional

engagement encompasses students' positive and negative attitudes towards the multiple languages they come into contact with across different contexts. All these dimensions are inherently socially embedded (Sulis, 2023). This perspective reveals the plurality of languages and language varieties multilinguals possess and actively draw upon across the different contexts of their multilingual life, framing "engagement with one's linguistic repertoire" as an integral aspect of engagement with languages.

Exploring students' engagement with their linguistic repertoires provides insights into how their prior linguistic and strategic knowledge can be used cross-linguistically and effectively transferred into the language classroom. Moreover, this exploration shows practical teaching strategies to recognise and value students' entire linguistic repertoires, along with their metalinguistic and cross-linguistic awareness.

So far, a growing body of research has explored students' engagement with digital resources in language learning, examining how these resources foster active and sustained engagement, and providing recommendations for their integration into the language classroom (e.g., Chen-Chung et al., 2016; Rafique, 2023; Vinogradova, 2017). However, research on students' engagement with languages remains limited in the digital domain (Sulis, 2023). This study examines students' engagement with both their linguistic repertoires and digital tools to understand their participation in MDST activities and the perceived benefits. It also aims to inform effective teaching practices in multilingual and hybrid learning contexts by highlighting how teachers' professional development in MDST both shapes and is shaped by students' engagement.

Methods

The study explores the development of self-efficacy beliefs and agency among a group of in-service Italian language teachers in Argentina in relation to MDST. It also investigates students' engagement with teachers' MDST activities, considering students' feedback both as an outcome of and a contributing factor to teachers' evolving beliefs and practices. The research examines how a professional development intervention (PDI), which involved designing and implementing MDST activities as part of an action research project, shaped these aspects. The three research questions (RQs) were:

- 1 What are teachers' self-efficacy beliefs regarding MDST, and how do they change during the training?
- 2 What is teachers' agency in implementing MDST, and how does it develop during the training?
- 3 What is students' engagement with MDST activities designed and implemented by teachers during the training?

While the RQs are presented separately, the discussion examines the dynamic relationship between teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, agency, and students' engagement, as these aspects are closely intertwined in the implementation of MDST.

The research context

The study was conducted as part of a PDI about multilingual education, which included the use of multilingual authentic materials and digital resources within MDST projects. The PDI, delivered online by the researcher over six months (April–October 2023), targeted in-service Italian language teachers at the Dante Alighieri Society in Argentina. Argentina is a multilingual country where Spanish coexists with various languages. Italian immigration from the late nineteenth century brought about 3 million Italians into the country, thereby establishing a long-standing tradition of Italian language teaching. Today, Italian is the second most studied language in Argentina after English. The Dante Alighieri Society, with nearly 130 centres, accounts for 27% of Italian language students, offering both in-person and online courses for all age groups and proficiency levels (Patat, 2004).

The PDI included three synchronous lessons and five asynchronous modules. The lessons, conducted at the beginning, middle, and end of the course, focused on the PDI content and objectives (Lesson 1), action research (Lesson 2), results of the interventions and future MDST activities (Lesson 3). The modules, each lasting one month, addressed multilingual theories and approaches (Module 1), multilingual comprehension through authentic materials (Module 2), multilingual production through MDST (Module 3), designing (Module 4) and implementing (Module 5) MDST activities. In particular, during Module 3, teachers learned to create multilingual digital stories using *Book Creator* (Spaliviero, 2022), analysed examples of MDST projects, and discussed strategies for adapting them to their teaching contexts. During Module 5, teachers implemented their MDST activities with a total of forty students across various proficiency levels (A1 to C1, primarily B1/B2), ages (from adolescents to adults aged 18–70), and languages (Italian, Spanish, English, French, Portuguese, Sinhalese, and Italian dialects). They observed students' reactions and collected data through learners' questionnaires and their own reflective diaries.

Participants

A total of nineteen in-service teachers from five centres of the Dante Alighieri Society across Argentina participated in the PDI, of whom ten successfully completed the course. Table 11.1 summarises teachers' main characteristics.

Table 11.1 Teachers' characteristics

Gender	Female: 89%, Male: 11%
Age distribution	20–30: 11%, 31–40: 37%, 41–50: 5%, 51–60: 26%, Over 60: 21%
Nationality	Argentinian: 47%, Italian: 26%, Argentinian-Italian: 26%
Mother tongue	Spanish: 63%, Italian: 37%, English: 5%, German: 5%
Additional languages	Italian: 84%, Spanish: 74%, English: 68%, Portuguese: 47%, French: 32%, German: 21%, Swedish: 11%, Hebrew: 11%, Chinese: 5%, Japanese: 5%, Italian dialects: 5%
Previous DST training	Yes: 74%, No: 26%
Experience in multilingual education	Yes: 16%, No: 84%

Table 11.2 Students' characteristics (as reported by teachers)

Students' age groups taught	11–13: 16%, 14–18: 32%, 19–30: 95%, 31–50: 100%, 51–70: 95%, Over 70: 53%
Proficiency levels taught	A1: 79%, A2: 89%, B1: 68%, B2: 53%, C1: 47%, C2: 42%
Students' mother tongue	Spanish: 95%, Portuguese: 26%, English: 21%, German: 16%, Italian: 11%, French: 11%, Ukrainian: 5%
Students' additional languages	English: 95%, Portuguese: 89%, Spanish: 84%, French: 74%, Italian: 68%, German: 47%, Chinese: 11%, Russian: 5%, Sinhalese: 5%, Italian dialects: 5%

As shown in Table 11.2, teachers typically taught multiple courses, working with students of various ages, proficiency levels, and multilingual backgrounds.

This background information was collected through an enrolment questionnaire administered before the start of the PDI. Participants were informed about the general purpose and procedures of the study and provided written consent for data collection. To maintain confidentiality, participants' names were anonymised using acronyms (T for teachers, S for students) followed by a number to distinguish individuals.

Procedures

The research was framed within action research and designed as a longitudinal multiple-case study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Yin, 2018). By examining the five centres as distinct cases, the study

employed a mixed-methods approach to explore participants' evolving, context-specific interpretations of MDST through primarily qualitative and limited quantitative data. These data were gathered at multiple points during the PDI to track changes in teachers' perspectives. Teachers were involved in a systematic, self-reflective process to theorise and evaluate their self-efficacy beliefs and agency related to MDST within authentic teaching contexts. They designed MDST activities, collected data from their students, reflected on their practices, and discussed the results with the researcher and other PDI participants. The aim was to guide them through a process of reflection-in and reflection-on-action (Burns, 2009).

Data were collected through the following instruments:

Teacher pre- and post-training questionnaires: Teachers completed the same questionnaire before and after the PDI. Among the items exploring teachers' beliefs, training needs, and teaching practices related to the main themes covered in the PDI, three closed-ended items (Likert scales) focused on their self-efficacy beliefs and agency in relation to MDST. All nineteen teachers completed the pre-training questionnaire, while ten completed the post-training one.

Teacher reflective diaries: Teachers reflected on changes in their knowledge, training needs, and teaching practices related to MDST after Modules 3 and 5. For Module 3, they responded to prompts such as "What knowledge and skills did you acquire?". For Module 5, examples of prompts included "What contribution did multilingual approaches and digital tools make to the interventions?". Ten teachers completed the first diary, and nine completed the second one.

Teacher focus group discussions: During the final lesson (Lesson 3), ten teachers reflected on the outcomes of their interventions, their experiences with the PDI, and their plans for future use of MDST. The discussions were prompted by questions such as "Based on the results of your interventions, what will you incorporate into your future lessons? What will you approach differently, and why?". Before the focus group discussions, teachers were given sufficient time to review their reflective diaries and student questionnaires.

Student questionnaires: The researcher designed a questionnaire, which was administered by the teachers to their students. Among the items investigating students' perceptions of teachers' activities related to the main themes covered in the PDI, two closed-ended items (Likert scales) and two open-ended questions addressed MDST. To ensure conciseness, the focus was on their motivation to use their entire linguistic repertoires and the perceived usefulness of digital tools. Aspects of students' engagement with MDST emerged inductively from the qualitative data. All forty students answered the questionnaire anonymously.

Analysis

Qualitative data from teacher reflective diaries, focus group discussions, and open-ended responses in student questionnaires were transcribed verbatim and imported into *NVivo 12*. Reflective thematic analysis was employed, with data undergoing repeated readings to ensure familiarity (Braun & Clarke, 2012). The data were then segmented into distinct codes representing meaningful descriptive units. Most codes emerged inductively, particularly those related to students' engagement in MDST activities as reflected in their responses, supporting a bottom-up approach. For example, when exploring students' agreement with the motivating potential of drawing on their linguistic backgrounds, additional aspects emerged, such as the development of metacognitive strategies and a growing interest in using all the languages they knew. In the final stage, codes were grouped into a smaller set of broader themes. Continuing the example, the codes "developing metacognitive strategies" and "interest in involving all known languages" contributed to the themes "cognitive engagement" and "emotional engagement" with one's own linguistic repertoire, respectively. Visual data representation, such as tables, supported the thematic analysis, and quotes from participants were used to deepen insights into their experiences.

Quantitative data from the closed-ended items in both teacher pre- and post-training questionnaires and student questionnaires were analysed using descriptive statistical procedures. These data were exported to an Excel spreadsheet, coded, and visually represented through graphs to illustrate trends and patterns (Dörnyei, 2007). Due to the small sample size, no inferential statistical tests were conducted. However, the data remained valuable for triangulation purposes.

To explore the relationship between teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, agency, and students' engagement, data were analysed in parallel and then brought into dialogue during interpretation. For example, changes in teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, as captured in their pre- and post-training questionnaires, diaries from Module 3, and focus group discussions, were compared with students' engagement with MDST activities, as emerged in their questionnaires. This comparison was guided by the assumption that teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and agency in implementing MDST influenced, and were influenced by, how students responded to the activities.

Results

Teacher pre- and post-training questionnaires

Data from both the first and the second closed-ended items directly address RQ1, which focuses on teachers' self-efficacy beliefs related to MDST.

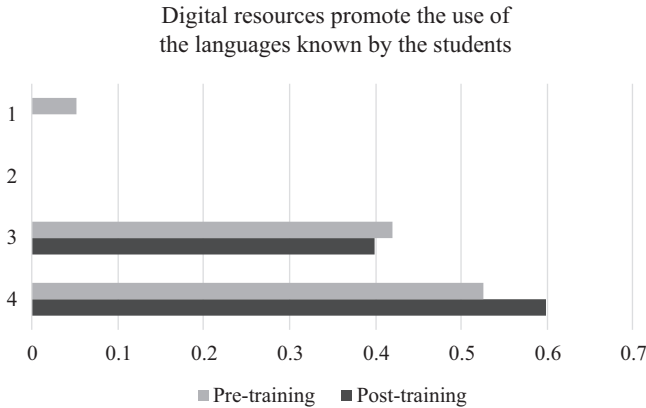


Figure 11.1 Teachers' responses to the first closed-ended item.

Figure 11.1 shows that teachers' perceptions of the benefits of using digital tools to enhance students' multilingual competences improved during the PDI. Responses were classified into four levels of agreement (from 1 = "Strongly disagree" to 4 = "Strongly agree"). Before the training, nineteen teachers responded. The majority ($n = 10$, 53%) strongly agreed that digital tools promote the use of the languages known by students, while eight teachers (42%) moderately agreed. Only one teacher expressed strong disagreement with the statement. After the training, ten teachers completed the follow-up questionnaire. Among them, six (60%) strongly agreed with the statement, and four (40%) moderately agreed. Notably, no teacher expressed strong disagreement.

Figure 11.2 illustrates that the PDI had a positive impact on teachers' self-assessment of their ability to use digital tools to recognise and value students' entire linguistic repertoires. Responses were classified in four levels of self-assessed competence (from 1 = "I cannot do this" to 4 = "I can do this very well"). Before the training, nineteen teachers responded. The majority ($n = 10$, 53%) felt they could use digital tools, but not effectively. Four teachers (21%) believed they could not use these resources at all, and another four (21%) thought they could only do so to a limited extent. Only one teacher expressed high confidence in their digital competence. After the training, ten teachers completed the follow-up questionnaire. Notably, no teacher reported lacking confidence in their abilities. The percentage of teachers who felt they could use digital tools only somewhat effectively decreased to 30% ($n = 3$). Four teachers (40%) felt moderately confident in their ability to use digital tools for multilingual purposes, while three (30%) indicated that they could use these resources very well.

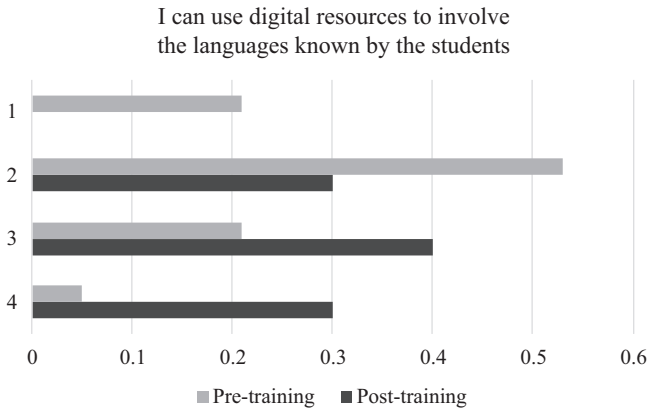


Figure 11.2 Teachers' responses to the second closed-ended item.

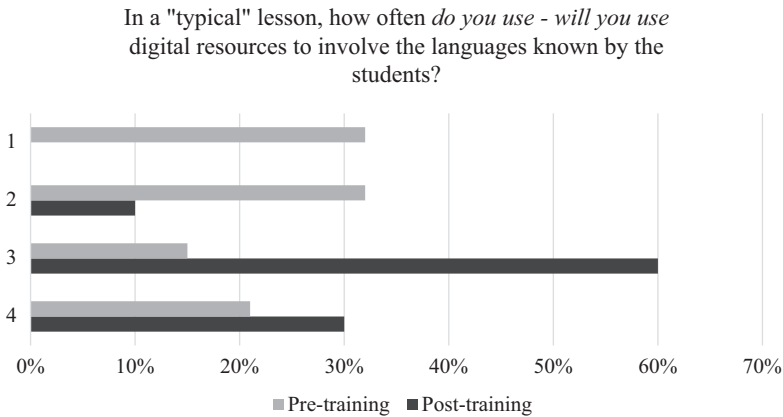


Figure 11.3 Teachers' responses to the third closed-ended item.

Data from the third closed-ended item correspond to RQ2, regarding teachers' agency in relation to MDST. Figure 11.3 presents the changes in teachers' reported practices regarding their current and intended future use of digital tools to enhance students' multilingual competences. Responses were classified in four frequency levels (from 1 = "Never or almost never" to 4 = "Always or almost always"). Before the training, nineteen teachers responded. Many teachers reported infrequent use of digital tools for multilingual purposes, stating that they never or rarely used these tools ($n = 6$, 32%), or used them only occasionally ($n = 6$, 32%). In contrast, some teachers reported frequent ($n = 3$, 15%) or consistent ($n = 4$, 21%) use. After the training, ten teachers completed the follow-up questionnaire.

The majority ($n = 6$, 60%) expressed their intention to use digital tools often, while three teachers (30%) planned to use these resources always or almost always. Only one teacher indicated occasional future use. Notably, no teacher reported plans to use digital tools rarely or never in the future.

Teacher reflective diaries

Module 3

A total of ten teachers completed the first diary, which primarily contributes to RQ1, focusing on teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs related to MDST. Table 11.3 presents the themes and codes that emerged from their reflections on Module 3.

Teachers’ responses revealed varied levels of prior knowledge regarding MDST (Theme A). While four teachers (40%) reported little familiarity with the module content, another four (40%) were already acquainted with key teaching techniques for enhancing written production skills in the target language. The remaining two teachers (20%) had prior experience with DST.

Moreover, Module 3 proved effective in introducing new concepts and skills, as teachers gained greater confidence in integrating multilingual approaches and experimenting with new digital tools (Theme B). Four teachers (40%) reported learning innovative teaching techniques for fostering written production skills in multiple languages. T6 wrote: “I learned new multilingual teaching strategies that will be very useful in my lessons”. Another four teachers (40%) emphasised the value of learning to use *Book Creator* for classroom purposes, while two (20%) stated that the entire module content was completely new to them.

Table 11.3 Themes and codes from teacher diaries on Module 3

<i>Themes</i>	<i>Codes</i>
A. Prior knowledge of MDST	Lack of prior knowledge, Monolingual writing strategies, Experience with DST
B. New knowledge of MDST	Multilingual writing strategies, Use of digital tools for personal and professional purposes, All module content
C. Alignment with training needs	Exploration of the multilingual potential of DST, Introduction to new digital tools
D. Challenges encountered	No difficulties, Difficulty using new digital tools, Time management, Integrating MDST
E. Satisfaction with learning outcomes	Innovative approaches, Proficiency with digital tools, New strategies for MDST

All teachers agreed that the module content aligned well with their training needs and reported feeling more prepared to implement MDST effectively (Theme C). Half of them ($n = 5$, 50%) appreciated exploring the educational potential of *Book Creator* within a multilingual framework. T5 affirmed: "The critical analysis of existing multilingual and digital activities, and reflecting on how to adapt them, provided practical and concrete ideas we can use in our classrooms". In addition, four teachers (40%) valued the opportunity to create their own multilingual digital stories using *Book Creator*, integrating all their languages and language varieties.

Regarding the challenges encountered, all were framed as opportunities for growth, as teachers overcame obstacles, demonstrating increased confidence in using new digital tools and multilingual approaches (Theme D). Four teachers (40%) reported no significant difficulties. Another four (40%) initially struggled with using *Book Creator* and understanding its classroom applications, but overcame these challenges by reviewing instructional videos and engaging in hands-on practice. T8 and T9 commented: "Understanding how *Book Creator* worked was not easy at first, but then I used it without any issues" and "Starting with *Book Creator* was challenging, but I listened to the instructions several times and kept going". Moreover, two teachers (20%) reported difficulties related to time management, and one indicated challenges in integrating multilingual and digital pedagogies into their language teaching.

Overall, teachers expressed high satisfaction with their progress, as they felt more empowered to design and implement MDST activities (Theme E). Four teachers (40%) reported updating their teaching methods, three (30%) discovered new digital tools, and another three (30%) learned innovative techniques to enhance students' multilingual and digital skills. T8 wrote: "I am learning new, current things. I keep expanding my knowledge on creating teaching materials, and I am getting new ideas related to technology and multilingualism".

Module 5

A total of nine teachers completed the second diary, which primarily contributes to RQ2, focusing on teachers' agency in the design and implementation of MDST activities. Table 11.4 presents the themes and codes that emerged from their reflections on Module 5.

Nearly all teachers ($n = 8$, 89%) observed that multilingual activities enhanced students' attention, motivation, and engagement by fostering cross-linguistic comparisons (Theme A). T3 explained:

The use of different languages made the lesson more dynamic and stimulating as students were constantly engaged in identifying similarities and

Table 11.4 Themes and codes from teacher diaries on Module 5

Themes	Codes
A. Contribution of multilingual education	Discovering relationships between languages, Facilitating comprehension, Understanding students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds, Drawing on students' prior knowledge
B. Contribution of digital tools	Influence of students' age and course type, Fostering intercultural awareness, Enhancing digital skills
C. Strengths of the interventions	Active class participation, Personal involvement, Inclusion of multiple languages, Novelty in using digital tools
D. Obstacles to the interventions	Limited digital literacies, Small class size, Initial resistance to peer collaboration

differences between languages. This not only maintained their attention but also facilitated a better understanding of the structure and rules of Italian and other languages.

Moreover, six teachers (67%) agreed that multilingual activities facilitated students' acquisition of Italian. T9 noted: "Students were surprised to discover how much their linguistic backgrounds helped them understand and express themselves better in Italian". Additionally, three teachers (33%) recognised the value of multilingual activities in understanding students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds, while another three (33%) appreciated the opportunity to build on learners' prior knowledge.

Moreover, two teachers (22%) highlighted the role of digital stories in enhancing students' intercultural awareness, in addition to improving their digital skills (Theme B). T3 stated: "Digital tools allowed students to delve into the languages and cultures presented in the materials through online research and discussions, broadening their linguistic and cultural horizons". The majority of teachers ($n = 5$, 55%) noted that students' age and course type influenced their engagement with digital tools, with adult learners facing more challenges. Meanwhile, three teachers (33%) observed that students attending online courses were generally more comfortable using digital tools.

Regarding the strengths of the interventions (Theme C), four teachers (44%) identified active students' participation and another four (44%) emphasised learners' personal involvement as key benefits. They noted that the use of authentic materials related to multilingual and multicultural aspects of contemporary Italian society connected with students' migration histories and multilingual identities, fostering empathy and a sense of group belonging. T5 wrote: "The topic allowed us to work on emotions.

Each student shared their family story, and the group listened in silence with genuine interest. This created a sense of trust and a different kind of relationship between them". Three teachers (33%) noted that students experimented with using multiple languages more enthusiastically than anticipated. T6 reflected: "I was pleasantly surprised because I expected more resistance to multilingual education in the context of teaching Italian to adults in Argentina. But I was wrong!". Two teachers (22%) also pointed out that the novelty of using digital tools contributed to a more dynamic lesson flow.

However, several obstacles to the interventions were reported (Theme D). Three teachers (33%) mentioned that students' limited digital literacies initially hindered participation. T6 wrote: "The only challenge was the initial need to introduce *Book Creator* as students were not familiar with it. This was easily overcome with a brief demonstration at the end of a lesson". In addition, two teachers (22%) cited small class sizes as a challenge for collaborative learning, and one teacher noted initial resistance to working collaboratively with peers.

Teacher focus group discussions

The focus group discussions directly address both RQ1 and RQ2, exploring teachers' evolving self-efficacy beliefs and agency in relation to MDST. They also offer indirect insights into RQ3, regarding students' engagement with MDST. A total of ten teachers shared their experiences in designing and implementing MDST activities. Initially, four of them (40%) reported feeling overwhelmed by the novelty of both the approaches and the resources, and expressed concern about how to present them effectively, revealing their initial lack of confidence in integrating multilingual and digital pedagogies. T2 said: "My first reaction was fear and doubt. I kept asking myself: What will students think? Will they enjoy the activities? Will they get bored?". Teachers needed some time to get used to the idea of implementing the MDST activities they had designed outside the PDI context. They identified support from colleagues, exchange with PDI participants and the researcher, and thoughtful class selection as essential factors contributing to their growing self-efficacy.

The implementation of MDST activities led to much better outcomes than expected. All teachers observed their students' enthusiasm, even though MDST activities required greater focus. T4 said: "Our role as teachers is surprising! Sometimes, you surprise yourself with how you manage certain situations and grow professionally. You think: Wow, I was so afraid at first, but in the end, it was a success!". This recognition of personal growth and adaptability marked a turning point in the development of their agency. Reflective practice further reinforced this change,

since teachers began to see themselves as facilitators of metacognitive development. Five teachers (50%) recognised the importance of encouraging students to reflect on the activities, while also engaging in their own reflective processes. T7 commented:

We all evaluated the intervention from our own point of view, and it was very helpful. Often we do not take the proper time to reflect, but in this way, we have a written record to refer back to. The same applies to students. When they write down their impressions, they can better define and understand them. Plus, it helps us get to know them better.

All teachers acknowledged a strong alignment between their own perceptions and students' feedback. T3 said: "Student questionnaires confirmed my impressions. My students appreciated the use of technology and multilingual approaches. It was a positive experiment". This awareness enabled teachers to articulate the benefits of the interventions and to recognise that they had adopted innovative teaching approaches and resources during the PDI. T10 commented: "The implementation of multilingual and digital activities helped improve my teaching practices. I learned to use new approaches and tools that were previously unknown to me, and my students agreed that these activities were both enjoyable and challenging". As a result, all teachers expressed their willingness to continue using MDST, as well as to regularly gather feedback from their students. Those who implemented MDST activities in in-person courses considered adapting them for online settings, and vice versa.

Student questionnaires

Data from both the closed-ended items and open-ended questions directly address RQ3, examining students' engagement with MDST activities. Figures 11.4 and 11.5 show students' motivation to use their entire linguistic repertoires and their perceptions of the usefulness of digital resources. Responses were categorised into four levels of agreement (from 1 = "Strongly disagree" to 4 = "Strongly agree"). A total of forty students completed the questionnaire. Figure 11.4 presents students' responses regarding the inclusion of all the languages they knew in MDST activities, showing that the majority ($n = 34$, 85%) strongly agreed that this aspect was highly motivating. An additional four students (10%) agreed, while only two students (5%) disagreed. Notably, no student strongly disagreed. Figure 11.5 shows students' responses concerning the use of digital tools, revealing that most of them ($n = 28$, 70%) strongly agreed that these resources were beneficial for their learning process. Moreover, ten students (25%) agreed, while only two students (5%) disagreed. Once again, no one strongly disagreed.

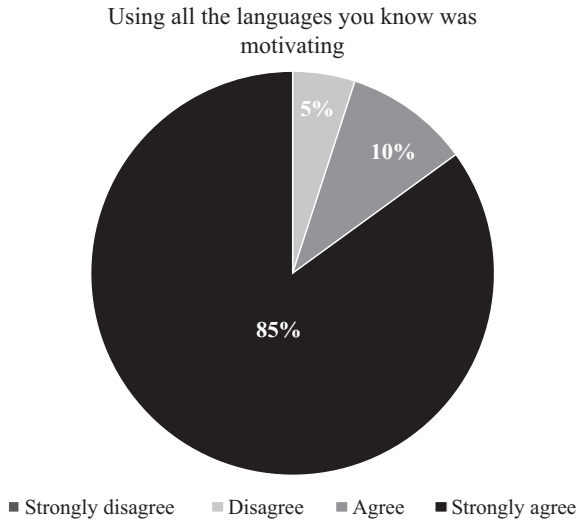


Figure 11.4 Students' responses to the first closed-ended item.

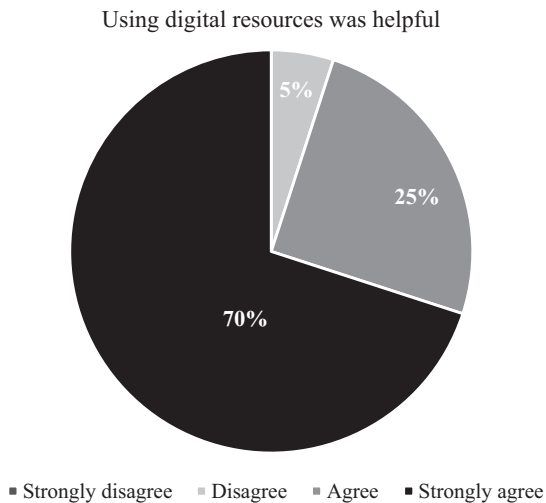


Figure 11.5 Students' responses to the second closed-ended item.

Table 11.5 presents the themes and codes that emerged from students' reflections on their experiences with multilingual activities (see Figure 11.4).

Regarding cognitive engagement with one's linguistic repertoire (Theme A), eleven students (28%) reported that using multiple languages enhanced their language learning and retention, comprehension of Italian,

Table 11.5 Themes and codes from students' reflections on multilingual activities

<i>Themes</i>	<i>Codes</i>
A. Cognitive engagement with one's linguistic repertoire	Fostering language learning and retention, Facilitating comprehension, Expanding vocabulary, Developing metacognitive strategies, Monitoring progress, Enhancing multilingual identity and personal growth
B. Emotional engagement with one's linguistic repertoire	Motivation in further language learning, Interest in involving all known languages, Curiosity about peers' known languages
C. Intercultural awareness	Interest in learning about other cultures, Development of empathy
D. Challenges associated with MDST	Feelings of being overwhelmed, Difficulty in understanding others' feelings

and multilingual vocabulary, while also helping them develop metacognitive strategies, monitor their own progress, and make cross-linguistic comparisons. S6, S23, and S29 wrote: "It is a good technique for associatively fixing what we learn and remembering it", "I have noticed that I can understand different languages, and Italian much better than two years ago", and "I was able to relate the meanings of words in different languages and find the root of many terms used in my country in the Italian language", respectively. An additional ten students (25%) appreciated the challenge of switching between languages, which enhanced their multilingual awareness and promoted their self-fulfilment. S2, S22, and S26 affirmed: "Using many languages in the same activity opens your mind", "It encourages you to step out of your comfort zone, and that is so motivating!", and "It is a challenge, and I am proud of myself for managing in so many different languages", respectively.

With respect to emotional engagement (Theme B), ten students (25%) felt emotionally engaged with their linguistic repertoires, expressing increased interest in language learning, involving their prior linguistic knowledge, and discovering their classmates' languages. S32 and S1 stated: "I really enjoy studying languages, and using words in languages I know was interesting" and "It is always enriching to hear other languages that my classmates know", respectively.

In terms of intercultural awareness (Theme C), nine students (23%) felt that engaging with multiple languages enhanced their understanding of other cultures and fostered empathy. S10, S20, and S18 wrote: "Using different languages on the same topic shows a variety of cultural perspectives", "Language is the trigger for how we think and see the world, so using many languages allows you to understand different cultures", and "Using many different languages helps you to put yourself in someone else's shoes, and that is always a good thing", respectively.

Finally, concerning the challenges of MDST (Theme D), three students (8%) found switching languages overwhelming or confusing. S27 and S3 affirmed: "I do not know many other languages, and it was a bit difficult for me" and "It does not allow me to truly understand the feelings of the speaker", respectively.

Table 11.6 presents the themes and codes that emerged from students' reflections on their experiences with digital tools (see Figure 11.5).

As concerns cognitive engagement with digital resources (Theme A), thirteen students (33%) reported that these tools supported the development of communicative competence, introduced new metacognitive strategies, and improved teaching effectiveness. S20 and S32 wrote: "In this age, digital resources cannot be overlooked. They are vital for teaching and learning" and "While using digital tools we worked with new strategies", respectively.

In terms of emotional engagement (Theme B), nine students (23%) felt more emotionally engaged with the learning process, finding that these tools contributed to more enjoyable lessons. S8 and S23 stated: "The lesson is much more motivating and interactive with digital resources" and "Using digital resources is very dynamic, and the possibilities for learning are limitless", respectively.

Regarding the development of digital literacies (Theme C), nine students (23%) expressed interest in expanding their digital skills to learn new resources for language acquisition. S25 and S33 affirmed: "I do not know much about digital resources, and I like incorporating new tools alongside traditional ones" and "At first, I struggled, but then I enjoyed it. It is a challenge to manage and learn how to use technology", respectively.

With respect to resistance to digital resources (Theme D), seven students (18%) were reluctant to use these tools, primarily due to age-related challenges and a preference for more traditional, paper-based methods. S7 and

Table 11.6 Themes and codes from students' reflections on digital tools

<i>Themes</i>	<i>Codes</i>
A. Cognitive engagement with digital resources	Developing communicative competence, Introducing new strategies for language learning, Enhancing the effectiveness of teaching
B. Emotional engagement with digital resources	Increasing dynamism in lessons, Making language learning more enjoyable
C. Development of digital literacies	Interest in learning to use further digital tools, Enhancement of digital skills
D. Resistance to digital resources	Age-related difficulties, Preference for traditional methods
E. Convenience and accessibility	Providing easy access to materials, Enabling independent study

S37 wrote: “It is important to know how to use digital resources, but I do not like to work with them because it is very difficult at my age” and “For me, learning digital tools is very difficult. I need more time to succeed, maybe another lesson”, respectively.

Finally, in relation to convenience and accessibility (Theme E), three students (8%) appreciated digital tools for facilitating access to materials and independent study. S19 explained: “The material is available wherever I go without needing to bring it, as I always have my mobile with me”.

Discussion

Changes in teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs

To address RQ1 and explore how teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs related to MDST changed during the training, data were collected before, during, and after the PDI through pre- and post-training questionnaires, diaries from Module 3, and focus group discussions. At the beginning of the PDI, teachers’ familiarity with DST stood in contrast to their limited exposure to multilingual education, revealing an initial tension between their digital competence and confidence in managing linguistic diversity. Although the multilingual profiles of their students were well recognised, most teachers expressed low confidence in their ability to integrate multilingual approaches with digital tools. Their reliance on monolingual practices reflected not a lack of interest but a perceived gap in multilingual pedagogical knowledge and skills. These early perceptions suggest that fostering teacher self-efficacy beliefs in MDST requires not only technical training but also meaningful opportunities to reconceptualise language use in the classroom.

During Module 3, teachers experimented with *Book Creator* to engage students’ entire linguistic repertoires. While some found this pedagogically demanding, all agreed that the PDI addressed key training needs. Initial concerns about students’ reactions to MDST were mitigated when outcomes exceeded expectations. Teachers reported both teaching and learning gains, alongside increased reflective awareness. These experiences contributed to strengthened self-efficacy beliefs and professional growth, as teachers began to perceive themselves as capable of integrating multilingual and digital pedagogies.

By the end of the PDI, they expressed more confident and consistent beliefs about the value of digital tools in multilingual education and felt empowered to design and implement MDST projects. These findings confirm the dynamic nature of self-efficacy beliefs, as successful hands-on experiences, combined with reflective practice and collaborative support, led to positive changes in teachers’ professional development

(Pajares, 1992). The results also highlight the role of targeted training in enhancing specific teaching competences, and reaffirm that stronger self-efficacy beliefs foster greater persistence and effort in addressing pedagogical challenges (Bandura, 1986). Moreover, the findings underscore the importance of investigating the development of teachers' self-efficacy beliefs within longitudinal, practice-based PDIs, where beliefs can evolve, emerge, and be revisited through sustained reflection on authentic classroom experiences. Finally, the results demonstrated that changes in teachers' self-efficacy beliefs were closely linked to students' engagement with MDST activities. As teachers gained confidence in integrating multilingual approaches and digital tools, they designed more innovative activities, which increased students' engagement and, in turn, reinforced teachers' self-efficacy beliefs.

Development of teachers' agency

To address RQ2 and examine how teachers' agency in implementing MDST developed during the training, data were collected before, during, and after the PDI through pre- and post-training questionnaires, diaries from Module 5, and focus group discussions. At the start of the PDI, most teachers reported limited experience with digital tools for multilingual purposes, despite expressing interest in integrating them into their teaching.

During Module 5, however, they successfully designed and implemented MDST activities that supported students' acquisition of Italian while also fostering multilingual and digital literacies. Teachers gained deeper insights into the pedagogical value of students' linguistic backgrounds and noted the influence of learners' multilingual profiles, age, and course format on the development of MDST activities. They also recognised how multilingualism and digital tools could be meaningfully integrated into their classroom practices. Although challenges emerged, particularly related to students' varying levels of digital competence, teachers reported high levels of students' engagement, which, in turn, reinforced their sense of agency.

By the end of the PDI, teachers expressed a stronger commitment to continuing MDST implementation, emphasising how students' positive responses motivated them to adopt new approaches and resources. These findings reinforce the situated and developmental nature of teachers' agency, showing that it evolved throughout the training, shaped by reflective practice, classroom interaction, and context-sensitive pedagogical choices (Kalaja & Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2022; White, 2018). This process was closely intertwined with growing self-efficacy beliefs. As teachers' confidence in their ability to implement MDST activities increased, so did their willingness to sustain innovative practices beyond the training context (Irie, 2022; van Lier, 2008). Moreover, these changes highlight the

value of longitudinal, practice-based PDIs and action research in supporting the emergence and evolution of teachers' agency. Such frameworks create iterative spaces for reflection-in and reflection-on-action, enhancing teachers' capacity to act in complex multilingual and hybrid settings, and guiding the transition from early experimentation to the confident, sustained integration of multilingual and digital pedagogies. Finally, the results confirm the reciprocal relationship between teachers' agency and students' engagement with MDST activities. Teachers' evolving practices encouraged greater students' engagement, further strengthening their sense of effectiveness and professional growth.

Students' engagement with multilingual digital storytelling

To address RQ3 and explore students' engagement with MDST activities designed and implemented by teachers during the training, data from questionnaires on their motivation to use their entire linguistic repertoires and their perceived usefulness of digital tools were analysed. Aspects of engagement, particularly cognitive and emotional, and involving both students' linguistic repertoires and digital resources, emerged inductively. Teachers' perceptions were confirmed by students, who provided nuanced feedback reflecting the multidimensional nature of engagement (Philp & Duchesne, 2016).

While some students reported initial challenges using digital tools, most described MDST activities as stimulating and meaningful, highlighting their interactive, collaborative, and creative dimensions. Students actively drew on their entire linguistic repertoires, valued opportunities to compare and connect multiple languages, and enjoyed exploring both their own and their peers' linguistic and cultural backgrounds. These elements supported deeper multilingual learning and fostered students' metalinguistic and cross-linguistic awareness, peer collaboration, and digital literacies. Students' high levels of engagement were closely intertwined with teachers' professional development, not only confirming the pedagogical changes fostered by the training but also contributing to their sustained implementation over time.

These findings confirm the potential of MDST to enhance students' engagement, supporting previous research on learners' positive perceptions of MDST (Anderson & Macleroy, 2017; Cersosimo, 2023; Nuroh et al., 2021) and engagement with digital tools (Chen-Chung et al., 2016; Rafique, 2023; Vinogradova, 2017). Moreover, they expand the focus to include students' engagement with languages (Sulis, 2023) and their linguistic repertoires, highlighting the role of multilingual and digital pedagogies in fostering multilingual identity, learner autonomy, and intercultural awareness. Engagement was not merely a reaction to the novelty of multilingual approaches and digital tools, but emerged from the meaningful

integration of students' prior linguistic knowledge into linguistically diverse and hybrid learning contexts. Finally, the findings emphasise that engagement is enhanced when teaching practices resonate with students' linguistic identities and provide space for creative self-expression (Zhou et al., 2021). This reinforces the value of examining students' engagement not only to understand learning outcomes but also to inform and sustain teachers' professional development.

Conclusion

This study explored how a PDI about multilingual education and focused on MDST contributed to the professional development of a group of in-service Italian language teachers in Argentina, enhancing their self-efficacy beliefs and agency, and promoting high levels of students' engagement.

Overall, the findings confirm the value of investigating the development of teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and agency related to MDST through longitudinal and action research-based PDIs that foster ongoing reflective practice. Moreover, the results emphasise the importance of exploring students' engagement with their linguistic repertoires and digital tools, providing deeper insights into their perceived learning outcomes and well-being. Finally, the study underscores the importance of considering the reciprocal relationship between teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, agency, and students' engagement to fully understand the dynamics of implementing multilingual and digital pedagogies. However, the study presents some limitations, including the small sample size, the absence of long-term evaluation of the PDI due to time constraints, and the lack of direct classroom observations because of geographical distance.

Future research should investigate a broader range of languages and educational settings to allow for comparisons of teachers' experiences and students' feedback related to MDST. Including additional data collection instruments, such as classroom observation checklists and follow-up interviews, could offer a more comprehensive understanding of how teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, agency, and students' engagement develop over time. Implementing these recommendations could enhance the understanding of how to develop students' multilingualism and multiliteracies while supporting teachers' professional growth.

To conclude, this study contributes to a growing body of research that bridges teachers' and learners' psychologies in multilingual approaches and digital tools, shedding light on the reciprocal relationship between teachers' professional development and students' engagement. By examining how teachers' evolving self-efficacy beliefs and agency both influenced and were influenced by students' responses to MDST, the study shows how multilingual and digital pedagogies can transform beliefs, practices, and classroom dynamics in diverse and hybrid learning environments.

References

- Ahearn, L. M. (2001). Language and agency. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 30, 109–137. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.anthro.30.1.109>
- Anderson, J., & Macleroy, V. (Eds.). (2016). *Multilingual digital storytelling. Engaging creatively and critically with literacy*. Routledge.
- Anderson, J., & Macleroy, V. (2017). Connecting worlds: Interculturality, identity and multilingual digital stories in the making. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 17(4), 494–517. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14708477.2017.1375592>
- Ashton, K. (2022). Language teacher agency in emergency online teaching. *System*, 105, 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2021.102713>
- Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Prentice-Hall.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2012). Thematic analysis. In H. Cooper et al. (Eds.), *APA handbook of research methods in psychology. Vol. 2. Research designs: Quantitative, qualitative, neuropsychological, and biological* (pp. 57–71). APA.
- Burns, A. (2009). Action research in second language teacher education. In A. Burns, & J. C. Richards (Eds.), *Second language teacher education* (pp. 289–297). Cambridge University Press.
- Cersosimo, R. (2023). Increasing inclusion and engagement in foreign language learning: A pilot study with multilingual digital storytelling and virtual reality. *Instructed Second Language Acquisition*, 7(2), 257–267. <https://doi.org/10.1558/isla.25400>
- Chen-Chung, L., Pin-Ching, W., & Shu-Ju, D. T. (2016). An analysis of student engagement patterns in language learning facilitated by Web 2.0 technologies. *ReCALL*, 28(2), 104–122. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S095834401600001X>
- Council of Europe (2022). *Recommendation of the committee of ministers to member states on the importance of plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture*. Council of Europe.
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2018). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. Sage.
- Davis, W. S., & Howlett, K. M. (2022). “It wasn’t going to happen until I made it happen”: World language teacher agency for multilingual advocacy. *System*, 109, 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2022.102893>
- Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research methods in applied linguistics*. Sage.
- Hiver, P., Mercer, S., & Al-Hoorie, A. H. (2021). Introduction. In P. Hiver, A. H. Al-Hoorie, & S. Mercer (Eds.), *Student engagement in the language classroom* (pp. 1–13). Multilingual Matters.
- Irie, K. (2022). Self-efficacy. In T. Gregersen, & S. Mercer (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of the psychology of language learning and teaching* (pp. 100–111). Routledge.
- Kalaja, P., & Ruohotie-Lyhty, M. (2022). Autonomy and agency. In T. Gregersen, & S. Mercer (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of the psychology of language learning and teaching* (pp. 245–259). Routledge.
- Lambert, J., & Hessler, B. (2018). *Digital storytelling: Capturing lives, creating community*. Routledge.
- Mercer, S. (2011). Understanding learner agency as a complex dynamic system. *System*, 39(4), 427–436. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2011.08.001>

- Mercer, S. (2019). Language learner engagement: Setting the scene. In X. Gao (Ed.), *Second handbook of English language teaching* (pp. 1–19). Springer.
- Mirmojarabian, M. S., & Rezvani, E. (2021). EFL teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and their (non)-communicative instructional practices. *TEFLIN Journal*, 32(2), 267–294. <https://doi.org/10.15639/teflinjournal.v32i2/267-294>
- Nuroh, E. Z., Retnaningdyah, P., & Munir, A. (2021). Engaging young learners of English with multilingual digital storytelling (MDST) during covid-19 school closure. *Journal of English Education Society*, 6(1), 133–138. <https://doi.org/10.21070/jees.v6i1.1145>
- Pajares, F. M. (1992). Teachers' beliefs and educational research: Cleaning up a messy construct. *Review of Educational Research*, 62(3), 307–332. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543062003307>
- Patat, A. (2004). *L'italiano in Argentina*. Guerra.
- Philp, J., & Duchesne, S. (2016). Exploring engagement in tasks in the language classroom. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 36, 50–72. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190515000094>
- Poulou, M. S., Reddy, L. A., & Dudek, C. M. (2019). Relation of teacher self-efficacy and classroom practices: A preliminary investigation. *School Psychology International*, 40(1), 25–48. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0143034318798045>
- Rafique, R. (2023). Using digital tools to enhance student engagement in online learning: An action research study. In R. Khan, A. Bashir, B. L. Basu, & M. E. Uddin (Eds.), *Local research and glocal perspectives in English language teaching* (pp. 229–248). Springer.
- Spaliviero, C. (2022). Pre-service primary teachers' beliefs, practices, and needs regarding the teaching of a second language through Book Creator. *International Journal of Linguistics*, 14(5), 34–64. <https://doi.org/10.5296/ijl.v14i5.20140>
- Sulis, G. (2023). Exploring learner engagement with languages (LX) within and beyond the English classroom. *Language Teaching Research*, 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688231216869>
- Sulis, G., Mercer, S., Babic, S., & Mairitsch, A. (2023). *Language teacher wellbeing across the career span*. Multilingual Matters.
- Svalberg, A. M. L. (2009). Engagement with language: Interrogating a construct. *Language Awareness*, 18(3–4), 242–258. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09658410903197264>
- van Lier, L. (2008). Agency in the classroom. In J. P. Lantolf, & M. E. Poehner (Eds.), *Sociocultural Theory and the Teaching of Second Languages* (pp. 163–186). Equinox.
- Venegas-Weber, P. (2019). Bi/multilingual teachers' professional holistic lives: Agency to enact inquiry-based and equity-oriented identities across school contexts. In H. Kayi-Aydar, X. Gao, E. R. Miller, M. Varghese, & G. Vitanova (Eds.), *Theorizing and analyzing language teacher agency* (pp. 121–140). Multilingual Matters.
- Vinogradova, P. (2017). Teaching with digital stories for student empowerment and engagement. In M. Carrier, R. M. Damerow, & K. M. Bailey (Eds.), *Digital language learning and teaching* (pp. 127–140). Routledge.
- White, C. J. (2018). Language teacher agency. In S. Mercer, & A. Kostoulas (Eds.), *Language teacher psychology* (pp. 196–210). Multilingual Matters.
- Wyatt, M. (2018). Language teachers' self-efficacy beliefs: An introduction. In S. Mercer, & A. Kostoulas (Eds.), *Language teacher psychology* (pp. 122–140). Multilingual Matters.

- Wyatt, M., & Dikilitaş, K. (2021). English language teachers' self-efficacy beliefs for grammar instruction: Implications for teacher educators. *The Language Learning Journal*, 49(5), 541–553. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2019.1642943>
- Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications. Design and methods*. Sage.
- Yüksel, H. G. (2014). Becoming a teacher: Tracing changes in pre-service English as a foreign language teacher's sense of efficacy. *South African Journal of Education*, 34(3), 1–8. <http://dx.doi.org/10.15700/201409161104>
- Zhou, S., Hiver, P., & Al-Hoorie, A. H. (2021). Measuring L2 engagement: A review of issues and applications. In P. Hiver, A. H. Al-Hoorie, & S. Mercer (Eds.), *Student engagement in the language classroom* (pp. 75–98). Multilingual Matters.
- Zonoubi, R., Rasekh, A. E., & Tavakoli, M. (2017). EFL teacher self-efficacy development in professional learning communities. *System*, 66, 1–12. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2017.03.003>

12 Well-being challenges and growth

Insights from Australian pre-service language teachers

Gary Bonar, Ruth Fielding, and Meihui Wang

Introduction

Language teacher well-being is affected by many factors in countries such as Australia (Lanvers et al., 2021). In these anglophone settings where an ‘English monolingual mindset’ (Clyne, 2008) prevails, language learning is often marginalised in the curriculum, and student participation rates dwindle beyond middle high school to the point where language educators must continually justify the inclusion of language learning in the curriculum. For pre-service language teachers (PSLTs) who first encounter these challenges during their placements, they can also experience significant emotional stresses due to intense workloads and the need to balance personal and academic responsibilities, all of which can lead to heightened feelings of fatigue and anxiety (White, 2020). Additionally, challenges in relationships with supervising teachers, such as feeling unsupported or unfairly critiqued, can further contribute to emotional strain and negatively affect their confidence and well-being during the teaching placement in schools (Grant-Smith et al., 2018).

These challenges coincide with their own identity transformations, as they shift from being students to becoming teachers, and often from learners of the language to teachers of that language in the case of those teaching an LX¹ (Bonar et al., 2022). This transitional phase often involves negotiating their multilingual identity, as PSLTs must reconcile their self-perception as language learners with their emerging professional identities as teachers. Many PSLTs experience crises of confidence regarding their language proficiency, cultural knowledge, and their sense of ownership over the language they are teaching (Asención Delaney, 2012; Barkhuizen, 2017), all of which can have significant impacts on their well-being. Given that well-being is dynamic and context-dependent (Sulis et al., 2021), it is important to consider how PSLTs’ identity transformations and agency interact to influence their professional growth and sense of well-being.

In recognition of this, this study explores the well-being issues faced by Australian PSLTs, their expectations of becoming language teachers, and

the implications for their well-being once they enter the classroom. To do so, we invited initial teacher education students who were studying to become teachers of diverse languages (French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Mandarin Chinese, and Spanish) to participate in this research. Over a period of four years, 24 participants from four cohorts of PSLTs took part. We use the term ‘target language’ (TL) to refer to the language(s) these PSLTs will teach in schools, which may be their L1 or an LX.

Literature review

This literature review highlights recent studies into in-service and PSLTs’ well-being. While most research has focused on teachers of English, the findings are still relevant for understanding the well-being of teachers of other languages. Beginning with how well-being is conceptualised in this study, we then summarise relevant studies on language teacher (multilingual) identity construction, including studies into the transition from student to teacher, and from language learner to language teacher. This is followed by exploring studies on how teacher agency and systemic factors, such as professional recognition and support, influence PSLT well-being. By examining these areas, we can better understand the unique pressures faced by language teachers and identify strategies to support their well-being during teacher education and early classroom experiences.

Conceptualising well-being

The conceptualisation of well-being in research has evolved from its traditional association with health, particularly within biomedical and positivist discourses, to a broader approach that considers not only personal aspects, but also the influence of social and institutional dynamics (Talbot & Mercer, 2021). In advancing an argument for the application of an ecological lens, Mercer (2021) underscores this interaction among personal, relational, and structural factors. Rather than positioning well-being as a solely individual responsibility, this approach foregrounds its inherently collective dimension, shaped by broader educational and institutional frameworks. Such a holistic conception of well-being is also echoed by others who propose a multidimensional framework that transcends the individual to incorporate social, economic, and environmental factors (La Placa et al., 2013). This suggests that there must also be a focus on the systemic challenges faced by teachers, which in some contexts may manifest as precarious working conditions and low professional status (Mairitsch et al., 2021; Mercer, 2020). This ecological view rejects placing the burden of well-being on individuals, instead advocating for structural transformations within the language teacher profession.

In this study, we embrace this ecological perspective, recognising well-being as foundational to pedagogical practice. As an important first step, we argue that understanding well-being from the PSLTs' subjective experiences is paramount. While studies into the well-being of PSLTs of English have been accumulating, a similar attention to pre-service teachers of other languages, many of which are marginalised in education systems, remains underexplored.

Multilingual identity construction

Multilingual identity refers to the way individuals perceive themselves in relation to the languages they speak or are learning, shaped by linguistic, cultural, and social interactions (Bonar et al., 2022). In the context of language education, multilingual identity also involves the recognition of one's role as both a language learner and a teacher. Multilingual identity plays a crucial role in the well-being of PSLTs by influencing their confidence and sense of legitimacy in the classroom (Creese et al., 2014). As our previous work has shown (Bonar et al., 2022), PSLTs often navigate complex feelings related to their language proficiency and cultural affiliations, which can either bolster or undermine their well-being. For instance, PSLTs who see themselves as 'legitimate' members of the TL community and who can integrate cultural understanding into their teaching report a stronger sense of professional identity. Conversely, those who struggle with their connection to the language may believe that they are not sufficiently proficient or culturally competent enough, leading to feelings of self-doubt and anxiety (Iversen, 2021). This emotional labour, compounded by the pressure to conform to 'native speaker' norms, can negatively affect their well-being and lead to increased stress during their initial teacher education and early teaching experiences.

Identity formation during transition from learner to teacher

The transition from student to teacher is a critical period in shaping the professional identity of PSLTs. This phase, marked by uncertainty and emotional labour, can significantly affect teacher well-being. As Sulis et al. (2021) highlight, well-being during this transitional phase can fluctuate, with personal agency and adaptability playing crucial roles in how PSLTs manage the demands of their new professional responsibilities. PSLTs who can exert control over their environments and make intentional decisions regarding their practice are more likely to experience positive well-being outcomes.

However, many PSLTs lack the resources or support to navigate this transition successfully. Hong (2010) identifies a crisis of professional

identity as a major cause of early career attrition. Teachers often enter the profession with idealistic expectations, only to encounter the realities of classroom management, institutional demands, and limited support systems, leading to emotional burnout and diminished self-efficacy, particularly for teachers who feel unsupported within their school environments.

For those PSLTs teaching an LX, the shift from language learner to language teacher adds another layer of complexity to this identity transition. In our previous studies (Bonar et al., 2022, 2024), we examined this identity shift among PSLTs in Australia, highlighting how personal experiences shape teaching practices and beliefs. We argue that language teachers must navigate a dual identity, balancing their connection to their language with professional expectations, a process that can be particularly challenging in contexts such as Australia where language teaching is marginalised. Similar findings have been found in studies of teachers of Chinese in the UK (Jin et al., 2021). The teachers in that study had to navigate institutional expectations, cultural adaptation, and the low status of language teaching. A key finding was that strong support networks, both within and beyond the professional environment, are essential in helping teachers manage these challenges while maintaining a sense of well-being. Moreover, as PSLTs and early career teachers navigate their evolving professional identities, their ability to exercise agency becomes a crucial factor in shaping their well-being and professional resilience.

Teacher agency and its role in well-being

Language teacher agency refers to the capacity of teachers to act intentionally and reflectively in response to the sociocultural and structural factors shaping their professional environment. According to Biesta and Tedder's ecological model (2007), agency emerges through interactions with the environment, influenced by past experiences, present actions, and future aspirations.

The development of agency is crucial for PSLTs' well-being. Challenges such as self-doubt about linguistic competence and pressures to meet 'native speaker' norms can undermine professional identity and well-being (Creese et al., 2014). However, exercising agency by making informed pedagogical choices and reflecting on their experiences can positively impact well-being, leading to greater job satisfaction and emotional resilience. PSLTs who engage in reflective practices and professional development often feel more legitimate as educators, enhancing their sense of well-being. Fostering agency helps PSLTs feel empowered, reduces burnout, and strengthens their commitment to the profession, highlighting the importance of

supporting agency development during initial teacher education (Bonar et al., 2025). While prior studies have focused on pre-service and in-service teachers of English (e.g., Barkhuizen, 2017; Mercer, 2020), less attention has been given to pre-service teachers of other languages who are navigating identity and well-being challenges.

Research questions

Drawing on findings from the studies mentioned above and seeking to explore in a systematic way how PSLTs of diverse languages perceive factors that shape and impact on their well-being, the following research question was developed:

What are the prevailing viewpoints of multilingual PSLTs in Australia regarding issues of well-being during their initial teacher education?

Methods

Participants

Over a four-year period, 24 pre-service teachers volunteered to participate in this research. The languages they were preparing to teach were French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Mandarin Chinese, and Spanish. The two pathways to becoming a language teacher in Victoria are to complete a four-year Bachelor of Education degree or two-year Master of Teaching postgraduate course. The academic year is divided into two 12-week semesters, with a language method unit (course) in each semester. These units focus on language teaching pedagogy to prepare participants as future language teachers for Australian schools. All language teachers study together, providing opportunities to collaborate within and across language groups. Teachers of English as an additional language (EAL) study in a different unit as their curriculum and teaching contexts are different. Language learning is not part of the course, as PSLTs are either teaching their L1 or have completed tertiary-level studies in an additional language (LX). There are also entry pathways for students to take a proficiency test in cases where they do not meet these two criteria. During each 12-week course, PSLTs complete a school placement lasting three to five weeks, where they take on teaching responsibilities under the mentorship of a school-based teacher.

Q methodology

Q methodology is a research technique that combines qualitative and quantitative elements to study subjective viewpoints (Watts & Stenner, 2005).

Participants rank a series of statements based on their perspectives, and by-person factor analysis reveals patterns in how these viewpoints cluster. This method is increasingly being utilised in fields such as education and applied linguistics (Fraschini et al., 2024) as it allows for a nuanced understanding of individual experiences while facilitating comparison across groups.

The first stage of a Q methodology study involves sampling the area of interest (referred to as the ‘concourse’ in Q methodology) and generating statements that represent the topics of inquiry (Stenner & Watts, 2012). In this study, the statements were drawn from previous literature and interview transcripts from the initial cohort of seven participants in the first year of the research. Seven individual 40–60-minute interviews with these teachers of Mandarin Chinese, French, German, Indonesian, Japanese, and Spanish were transcribed and analysed focusing on themes from the literature as well as new themes that were identified. Additionally, written responses from PSLTs during their language teaching studies were analysed to extract relevant comments for the concourse. This process initially resulted in over 80 statements. To ensure the Q sorting process was manageable for the participants, similar or redundant statements were merged or eliminated, resulting in a final set of 38 statements (called a Q-set) (Table 12.1).

In undertaking the Q-sort activity, participants place the statements on a grid (Figure 12.1) on a continuum ranging from statements that most closely represent their opinion (+5) to those that are most unlike their opinion (−5) in response to a prompting statement (condition of sort).

[illegible]

Figure 12.1 Sample Q-sort grid.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions in the first and second years of this study, the Q sorting process was conducted online in year one using an open-source online Q application (Banasick, 2022). To maintain consistency in data collection, online sorting and online interviews have been used for each subsequent data collection stage. For the Q-sort ‘condition of instruction’, participants were asked to arrange the statements in response to the following statement: ‘When I think of being a language teacher, I believe...’. During the online session, the participants first completed the online Q sort and then engaged in a semi-structured interview to discuss their arrangement of the statements and any other pertinent points that emerged during the conversation. The Q-sort statements remained consistent for each cohort over the four years and were analysed as a unified dataset.

Interviews were transcribed and thematically coded in NVivo using an iterative, reflexive approach. Initial themes were derived from the existing thematic structure of the Q-set and key concepts identified during the first-year interviews, as well as from relevant literature. These initial themes formed a coding framework that guided subsequent coding processes. Each new set of interview transcripts was added to NVivo annually, and the coding framework was applied. During this process, the authors remained open to identifying emergent themes that were not captured in the original framework but were significant to participants’ experiences and perspectives. Any new themes were discussed and, if deemed relevant, incorporated into the coding framework, creating a dynamic and responsive analytical process.

To ensure consistency and reliability, Authors 1 and 3 alternated in coding the transcripts, cross-checking each other’s work to reduce individual bias. Regular meetings were held with all three authors to discuss the coding process, address discrepancies, and achieve consensus on theme definitions and coding decisions. This collaborative approach ensured that the coding was thorough, consistent, and reflective of the data.

Analysis

Factor analysis was done using KADE (Banasick, 2019). Using principal component analysis and Varimax rotation, a threshold of eigenvalues greater than 1.0 and at least two statistically significant Q sorts guided the process of factor identification. After a series of iterations, we identified a four-factor solution with 62% explained variance with 22 out of the 24 participants loading significantly on one of the four factors. Two participants had confounded sorts (loaded on more than one factor) and were not included in the analysis. Table 12.1 shows the statement grid placements for each factor.

Table 12.1 Factor array showing statement position on sorting grid for each of the four factors (F1, F2, F3, and F4)

	<i>Statement</i>	<i>F1</i>	<i>F2</i>	<i>F3</i>	<i>F4</i>
1	I have sufficient language knowledge to teach senior levels.	-1	3	0	-3
2	Being able to speak fluently with native speakers is important to me.	2	1	3	0
3	Students often think language classes are unimportant.	1	-1	-1	-1
4	Classroom management is an important part of language teaching.	1	1	0	0
5	Students have lower expectations of teachers who are non-native speakers.	-2	-3	-3	-1
6	I have reflected on how to teach about culture in my language classes.	0	0	-1	-1
7	I am confident to teach my TL in a classroom.	0	2	3	-2
8	I use my TL in a variety of social contexts.	-3	4	-2	2
9	External language assessments/exams should be used to check a teacher's TL proficiency.	-1	0	-1	-2
10	My primary/high school language teachers seemed to be engaged in improving their language teaching.	0	-3	-1	0
11	Parents regard non-native speakers as inferior to native speakers.	-1	-1	-3	0
12	Teaching about cultural aspects is very motivating for students.	2	1	2	-2
13	My language teacher identity is strongly influenced by my language learning experiences.	3	-2	1	-2
14	I feel confident about using my TL in a variety of social contexts.	-1	5	1	0
15	I am highly motivated to continually develop my knowledge of my TL.	5	2	0	2
16	Schools are not the best place to learn languages.	0	-2	1	-3
17	It's difficult to understand the culture embedded in a language if it's not your L1.	-3	-2	0	-5
18	Maintaining networks for me to use the language regularly is important.	1	-1	5	5
19	Building good relationships with students is the most important thing for a language teacher to teach effectively.	3	2	0	-1
20	I feel confident about using my TL in a variety of formal contexts.	-4	3	1	1
21	All students can become successful language users.	4	0	5	4

(Continued)

Table 12.1 (Continued)

	<i>Statement</i>	<i>F1</i>	<i>F2</i>	<i>F3</i>	<i>F4</i>
22	Classroom management is harder for teachers who are non-native English speakers.	-4	-5	-1	0
23	I am confident about integrating language and culture in my teaching.	1	0	1	-3
24	Being multilingual is a strong marker of my identity.	2	4	-4	3
25	I would feel comfortable using the TL anywhere in a school (e.g., staffroom and staff dining area) with other native/non-native speakers.	-2	3	4	5
26	Language teaching will be a rewarding career.	3	1	2	1
27	Reflecting on my actions as a language teacher is a high priority for me.	4	2	2	3
28	Native-like pronunciation is the best model for students.	-3	0	4	3
29	It's sufficient for students to just learn about the mainstream culture linked to my TL.	-5	-4	-2	1
30	Using the TL in regular classroom interactions will feel natural to me.	-2	5	3	-4
31	Using English is the most effective way to manage the classroom.	-2	-4	0	-1
32	Most of my primary/high school language teachers were good at teaching.	0	-3	-3	2
33	Learning about culture is optional in language learning.	-5	-5	-5	-5
34	Language teachers are respected in schools.	0	-1	-2	-4
35	My identity changes when I am using an L2.	1	1	-5	4
36	I need to spend more time developing my TL proficiency.	5	-2	-4	1
37	External language assessments/exams should be used to check a teacher's knowledge of the TL grammar.	-1	-1	-2	1
38	I need to spend more time developing my knowledge of TL grammar.	2	0	2	2

Findings

This section begins with a focus on the consensus statements, as these are ones which showed minimal statistical variation in their grid placement. Each factor (viewpoint) is then analysed with a focus in the distinguishing statements ($p < 0.05$) as these are helpful in delineating key areas of differences between the viewpoints. Each viewpoint will be analysed through the

lens of multilingual identity and agency, in order to discern the connection and impact on teacher well-being. Salient quotes from the post-sorting interviews are added to provide further context and detail.

Consensus statements

Consensus statements are those in which participants, regardless of their factor groupings, placed the statements in similar positions on the sorting grid, whether in the 'agree', 'disagree', or 'neutral' areas. For instance, Statement #2 [Being able to speak fluently with native² speakers is important to me] was placed similarly across viewpoints, indicating that participants, regardless of their factor loading, tended to share a similar degree of agreement on the importance of fluency with 'native speakers'. This may reflect participants' own language learning experiences, where the 'native speaker' model was often emphasised. The consensus around this statement may also indicate that 'native speaker' fluency continues to be seen as a valuable goal in language teaching. As a manifestation of their multilingual identity, the fact that there was mild but not strong agreement with this statement suggests that either communication with other LX speakers of the language was also valued, and/or there was less concern about achieving fluency if the language was their LX.

Another consensus statement related to multilingual identity was #5 [Students have lower expectations of teachers who are non-native speakers], with all viewpoints expressing disagreement with this statement. There is an interesting contrast here between how some participants (particularly those in Viewpoint 2) were more critical of their own perceived lack of proficiency and 'legitimacy', yet when they considered this from the student perspective, they did not believe that students held similarly high standards. This was commented on in some interviews when participants were reflecting back on their own language learning and how they were often not aware or concerned about whether their teacher was an L1 or LX speaker.

Additional consensus can be found in Statement #27 [Reflecting on my actions as a language teacher is a high priority for me], with agreement across all factors suggesting that reflection is a key component of participants' professional identity. This collective emphasis on reflection indicates a shared commitment to agency and the desire to continuously improve as language teachers. However, other consensus statements reveal stronger collective opinions. For instance, Statement #33 [Learning about culture is optional in language learning] was universally rejected by all participants across all factors. The strong disagreement with this statement suggests that participants consider cultural learning an integral aspect of language teaching, reinforcing the idea that they have reflected on the significance

of integrating cultural learning into their language classes. Statement #3 [Students often think language classes are unimportant] saw some level of disagreement across the factors. This suggests that participants are aware of potential challenges in conveying the importance of language learning to their students and highlights the need for careful planning in how they may approach this issue in their future classrooms. In contrast, Statement #26 [Language teaching will be a rewarding career] garnered general agreement across factors, particularly in Factor 1, which rated it as +3, while other factors ranged from +2 to +1. This optimism reflects participants' early-stage enthusiasm, as they are still immersed in learning language teaching pedagogy and have had limited experience in classroom observations. The positive outlook suggests a sense of purpose as they anticipate their future roles as language educators.

Viewpoint 1: Motivated but insecure teachers

Viewpoint 1 comprises 10 participants, the largest group, representing a range of languages including French, Italian, German, and Japanese. A notable feature of this group is that they are all teaching an LX rather than an L1 (Table 12.2).

Multilingual identity

In examining Viewpoint 1, several distinguishing statements reveal key insights into the participants' attitudes and perceptions. Firstly, participants in this group express a clear need to further develop their proficiency in the TL. This is a distinguishing characteristic of this cohort and is reflected in their strong agreement with Statement #36 [I need to

Table 12.2 Participants in Viewpoint 1*

<i>Name**</i>	<i>L1</i>	<i>LX</i>
Talia	English	<i>French</i>
Kara	English	<i>French</i>
June	English	<i>French</i>
Amelia	English	<i>French</i>
Sara	English	<i>French</i>
Claire	English	<i>German</i>
Imogen	English	<i>Italian</i>
Melanie	English	<i>Japanese</i>
Ken	Vietnamese	English and <i>Japanese</i>
Sue	English	<i>Japanese</i>

* All names are pseudonyms.

** Italics indicates language they will teach.

spend more time developing my TL proficiency], where they emphasise the importance of improving their language proficiency. This following comment from Talia is indicative of how many of these PSLTs expressed their apprehension about communicating in the TL:

I'm actually really nervous about that. I think I struggle a bit with confidence when it comes to like speaking French, because I just haven't properly committed to it since Year 12 [final year of high school].

(Talia)

This viewpoint is further reinforced by their disagreement with Statement #20 [I feel confident about using my TL in a variety of formal contexts]. The strong disagreement with this statement at -4 highlights the participants' lack of confidence in formal language use, suggesting feelings of insecurity or inadequacy in terms of their TL proficiency. Together, these two statements provide significant insight into how participants' multilingual identities are shaped by a perceived lack of language proficiency, which may in turn impact on their sense of authenticity and legitimacy as language teachers. There appears to be an underlying concern regarding their ability to function as language educators, particularly in formal or high-stakes linguistic environments.

Interestingly, this cohort's attitude towards 'native speaker' models, reflected in Statement #28 [Native-like pronunciation is the best model for students], is also a distinguishing feature. The group expressed disagreement with the idea that 'native-like' pronunciation is the best model for students, giving it a rating of -3. This indicates a potential resistance to the traditionally dominant 'native speaker' model, particularly in relation to pronunciation. This pushback may be related to the fact that many participants in this group are teaching an LX, leading them to question the relevance or feasibility of adhering strictly to 'native speaker' norms in their teaching practices.

Further complicating this group's sense of legitimacy is Statement #30 [Using the TL in regular classroom interactions will feel natural to me]. The relatively low confidence in using the TL in regular classroom interactions expressed here could stem from a lack of opportunities to use the TL outside of formal learning contexts, either during their own education or in their broader professional environments. This apprehension aligns with well-documented phenomena in the literature, such as foreign language anxiety and a reluctance to communicate in the TL. It suggests that the same types of anxiety observed in language learners may also manifest among PSLTs, particularly in their reluctance to use the language in informal or spontaneous interactions.

Agency

In terms of agency, however, there are notable signs of motivation and commitment to personal and professional development. Statement #15 [I am highly motivated to continually develop my knowledge of my TL], for example, reveals a strong sense of determination to continually develop their knowledge of the TL, with participants rating this statement at +5, indicating a high level of agreement. This suggests that despite their insecurities regarding proficiency, participants are highly motivated to engage in lifelong learning and professional development.

This was expressed strongly by Claire in the post sort interview where she recalled:

Yeah, I'm a perfectionist. I didn't want to get it wrong. But then I just realised, people, like EAL [English as an additional language] students come here and they don't say everything correctly, but we still understand what they're saying. It's fine to not sound like a native speaker
(Claire)

This was also evident in shifts in her thinking of 'native speaker' as the ideal model and truly legitimate language teacher. As she noted when discussing how students' reactions to having L1 versus LX teachers of a language:

I think non-native speakers understand what it's like to learn a foreign language, and I really do believe that. I feel like sometimes my native teachers, they don't really get it. Whereas me as a non-native speaker, I can understand why the kids are getting certain things wrong, because I was there as well.
(Claire)

Nevertheless, this sense of motivation exists alongside continued anxiety and a lack of confidence in certain teaching contexts. For instance, Statement #7 [I am confident to teach my TL in a classroom], shows less conviction when it comes to teaching in their TL. Additionally, Statement #25 [I would feel comfortable using the TL anywhere in a school (e.g., staffroom, staff dining area) with other native/non-native speakers] highlights that these participants may still feel uneasy about integrating the TL into broader aspects of school life, beyond the confines of formal teaching. The fact that the participants within this viewpoint ranked it at -2 while all the other participants within the other viewpoints agreed with this statement ranging from +3 to +5 highlights this stark difference.

Table 12.3 Participants in Viewpoint 2

<i>Name</i>	<i>L1</i>	<i>Lx</i>
Yvonne	<i>Chinese</i>	English
Yiwei	<i>Chinese</i>	English
Yasmine	<i>Chinese</i>	English
Colin	English	<i>French</i>
Elise	English	<i>French</i>
Anna	English	<i>Indonesian</i>
Celia	English	<i>Italian</i>
Natalie	English	<i>Spanish</i>

Viewpoint 2: Balanced and empowered teachers

Viewpoint 2 comprises eight participants, similarly reflecting a diverse linguistic representation as was seen in Viewpoint 1. However, this factor is distinguished by the presence of participants teaching their L1 or those who, as we learnt during the interviews, have spent time in immersive language environments, a factor which likely influences their instructional practices and perspectives (Table 12.3).

Multilingual identity

Turning to the distinguishing statements of Viewpoint 2, we see a cohort for who being a multilingual is a fundamental aspect of who they are, as shown by the strongest agreement (+4) amongst all the viewpoints with Statement #24 [Being multilingual is a strong marker of my identity]. They also expressed a strong sense of confidence in their TL use, particularly in social contexts. This is evident in their agreement with Statement #14 [I feel confident about using my TL in a variety of social contexts], which received the highest level of agreement at +5. This suggests that participants in this group are comfortable with their language abilities, potentially due to time spent in immersion environments, whether through living in a country where the language is spoken or engaging in similar linguistic experiences. Unlike participants in Viewpoint 1, for whom language proficiency emerged as a significant concern, those in Viewpoint 2 demonstrate a marked confidence, signalling that language anxiety is not a major issue for them.

While this confidence in using the TL could be expected from L1 teachers, it is notable that there were also LX teachers in this group. When asked about their thinking behind the agreement with this statement, the reason usually given was that they had experienced extended periods of

time in immersion contexts where their use of the TL became a regular reality. As Elise commented:

I think because I was recently there, I think if I hadn't done that time in France ... I know a lot of my peers are feeling quite daunted by it and I would be feeling exactly the same, but I'm just really glad that I did that.
(Elise)

Further reinforcing this sense of linguistic confidence, Statement #1 [I have sufficient language knowledge to teach senior levels] was also a distinguishing statement, with participants agreeing at +3 that they have sufficient knowledge to teach senior levels. In the Australian context, senior-level language teaching requires a high degree of proficiency, encompassing various genres, text types, and registers of formality. While this was a major area of concern for Viewpoint 1, participants in Viewpoint 2 did not express the same apprehension, indicating that they feel adequately prepared to handle the linguistic complexities of teaching at higher levels. This may also suggest that their language proficiency is less likely to trigger stress or anxiety, aligning with their overall confidence in using the TL in both formal and social contexts. We view confidence as a signal of the extent to which language teachers identify the language skill as part of their identity and therefore a marker of multilingual identity. Some of the teachers already have a well-developed sense of multilingual identity while others identify a tension in the need to continue their learning of the TL.

Agency

A further indication of their sense of legitimacy and authenticity in using the TL comes from Statement #31 [Using English is the most effective way to manage the classroom], which was strongly disagreed with at -4. This suggests that participants in Viewpoint 2 are confident in their ability to use the TL for classroom management, an area where many teachers, particularly in Australian schools, might rely on English. Classroom management often requires a level of authority and control, with commands and disciplinary language that may feel more natural in the shared language (i.e., English). However, this cohort rejects the notion that English is necessary for effective classroom management, instead seeing the TL as an appropriate and effective tool in this regard. This confidence in using the TL for both instructional and classroom management purposes is significant in efforts to normalise the use of the TL across various classroom contexts.

An interesting distinguishing feature for Viewpoint 2 is their reflection on their own language learning experiences. Statement #10 [My primary/

high school language teachers seemed to be engaged in improving their language teaching] was rated at -3, reflecting a negative recollection of their own language education. This suggests that participants in this group may now possess a more informed understanding of effective language teaching pedagogy. Their critical view of past language instruction likely contributes to their identity as teachers who strive to improve upon the negative experiences they encountered as students. This points to an expression of agency, where participants are motivated to seek new knowledge and make proactive changes in their teaching practices, differentiating themselves from their former teachers and potentially positioning themselves as more engaged and reflective educators.

Viewpoint 3: Fluid multilinguals

Viewpoint 3 presents a unique configuration, with one participant teaching LX Indonesian and another teaching L1 Chinese. This juxtaposition of L1 and LX teachers within a single factor illustrates the nuanced intersection of language proficiency and teaching experience. The presence of these two distinct teaching contexts within the same factor suggests that the grouping of participants is not solely based on the type of language being taught (L1 versus LX) but may reflect deeper, underlying pedagogical or identity-related factors that transcend the specific language or proficiency level (Table 12.4).

Multilingual identity

A key distinguishing feature of this viewpoint is the rejection of the idea that their identity changes when using a different language. Unlike other participants in the study who either strongly agreed or mildly agreed with this notion, these two participants rejected it outright. This is evident in Statement #35 [My identity changes when I am using an L2], where this group expressed strong disagreement. The underlying reasons for this perspective are not immediately clear, but one possible explanation is that their transition between languages feels more fluid and natural. This might suggest that these participants experience no internal conflict or tension when navigating between languages, indicating a level of comfort and flexibility

Table 12.4 Participants in Viewpoint 3

<i>Name</i>	<i>L1</i>	<i>Lx</i>
Ziying	<i>Chinese</i>	English
Craig	English	<i>Indonesian</i>

in their linguistic identities. From the standpoint of well-being, this fluidity could be seen as indicative of a lack of tension or conflict when expressing themselves in different languages. Where others may grapple with how they are perceived or treated in different linguistic contexts, these participants seem to experience no such identity dissonance. This could point to a more integrated sense of self that is unaffected by language shifts.

Agency

One way that agency can manifest is how these novice language teachers proactively seek out and nurture support networks. This was a notable element of Viewpoint 3 as shown by the strong agreement with Statement #18 [Maintaining networks for me to use the language regularly is important]. As Craig explained:

The networks I found so handy, they'd just be like, "Hey do you know any songs, any dances that relate to this topic?" They'd go, "Yeah, I had this from my childhood." Or I can talk to my counterpart from an exchange program I did at the start of the year, for any Indonesian advice, "Hey do you think this would be better than this?" Then, just the other Indonesian teacher support that you get through teachers' associations and yeah and other networks that just seems to be so handy when you discuss things more of an educational nature, that it can really help out.

(Craig)

This highlights the significance these participants place on remaining connected to the sociocultural and linguistic community of the TL. For these participants, the ability to use the language in a range of contexts is not only a professional priority but also an essential aspect that leads to a positive impact on their well-being.

Viewpoint 4: Hesitant but proficient teachers

Similarly, Factor 4 comprises two participants, with one teaching Italian as an LX and another teaching L1 Chinese (Table 12.5).

Table 12.5 Participants in Viewpoint 4

<i>Name</i>	<i>L1</i>	<i>Lx</i>
Yvette Sienna	<i>Chinese</i> English	English <i>Italian</i>

Multilingual identity

As with the participants grouped in Viewpoint 2, both Yvette and Sienna expressed relatively strong agreement (+3) with Statement 24 and the notion that being multilingual was a key aspect of who they are [Being multilingual is a strong marker of my identity]. Three connected distinguishing statements that this group disagreed with more than the other viewpoints were #7 [I am confident to teach my TL in a classroom], #23 [I am confident about integrating language and culture in my teaching], and #30 [Using the TL in regular classroom interactions will feel natural to me]. As Yvette is an L1 speaker of Chinese, and Sienna has family connections to Italy and noted that she uses the language regularly with relatives, the strong disagreement with these statements seemed puzzling in the initial analysis. The impetus for these responses became clearer through analysis of the interview data. When Sienna was asked about why she had disagreed with statements #7 and #30, she made a clear distinction between the language she was more comfortable using in regular conversations versus how she viewed the language used in formal learning contexts. As she said:

I love speaking Italian to everyone, but I struggle to use Italian in that way – I suppose because I haven't really spent much time in an authentic Italian classroom, I'm not that familiar with this kind of vocab.

(Sienna)

For Yvette, even though it was her L1 that she was intending to teach, she felt a lack of in-depth knowledge of both Chinese grammar and the cultural and literature content needed for more advanced classes. As she noted:

I think I still need to build in my target some knowledge about my target language. I found that I never learned the grammar ever before about Chinese, and when I explained to the students about how the structures work, it is quite kind of hard for me. Yeah, I want to build more understanding about Chinese grammar so that I can help students learn in a more systematic way. And another thing ... about Chinese first language [i.e., heritage language learners], what they learn is not very easy. They will have some Chinese literature and stuff.

(Yvette)

While participants display confidence in their language proficiency, and cultural knowledge to some extent, there is a clear hesitation when it comes to the practical application of these in the classroom. Furthermore, despite a positive outlook on their own abilities and their students' potential for success, there is a sense of pessimism regarding how they, as language teachers, are perceived and respected in educational settings. This suggests that

issues of professional recognition and status remain significant concerns for these participants, impacting their overall sense of well-being and multilingual identity as language educators.

Agency

As was seen with the participants in Viewpoint 3, both Yvette and Sienna exercised their agency to develop and maintain support networks. This is evident in their strong agreement (+5) with Statement #18 [Maintaining networks for me to use the language regularly is important]. For Sienna these networks were interconnected with her family's roots back in Italy. Maintaining these connections was also a way for her to be connected to her cultural and linguistic heritage and to draw on this knowledge to help her encourage her students to appreciate the rich cultural and linguistic diversity within Italy. During the interview, she recalled the following experience meeting relatives during one of her first trips there:

It was the funniest thing because at first, I didn't understand what was going on because they'd speak to me in Italian and I understand well enough and be able to respond and then they'd start talking to each other and all of a sudden, I couldn't understand and – even though I thought I was still listening to Italian - and then I realised they were speaking dialect to each other and then standard Italian to me.

(Sienna)

Both Yvette and Sienna's active engagement with support networks illustrates their reliance on these connections to enhance their teaching practice and overcome specific challenges. For Yvette, these networks provide access to resources for teaching advanced-level Chinese, such as grammar explanations and literature, areas where she feels less confident. Similarly, Sienna draws on her familial and cultural ties to Italy not only to enrich her classroom content but also to deepen her connection to the language and its diverse dialects. These actions demonstrate how their agency manifests through targeted efforts to address gaps in their teaching readiness, showing that even confident multilinguals benefit significantly from sustained and meaningful professional and cultural interactions.

Discussion

Identity and language proficiency

A salient theme evident in the findings is the critical role of language proficiency in shaping the professional identity of PSLTs. For participants in Viewpoint 1, a perceived lack of proficiency in the TL emerged as a key

factor influencing their sense of legitimacy as language teachers. This echoes previous literature (Asención Delaney, 2012; Barkhuizen, 2017), which has identified language proficiency as a significant source of anxiety for language teachers, particularly in contexts where ‘native speaker’ norms dominate. Language proficiency is not simply a technical skill for these participants; it is intricately tied to their sense of professional legitimacy and their identity as educators. In contrast, participants in Viewpoint 2 demonstrated higher levels of confidence in their language use, particularly in social contexts, as evidenced by their confidence in using the TL in a variety of social contexts (#14). This suggests that immersion experiences and greater exposure to the TL can mitigate language anxiety and enhance well-being, aligning with Mercer’s argument (2021) that well-being is inherently shaped by broader contextual factors, including opportunities for language use and immersion.

Cultural identity and teaching practice

Another critical dimension of well-being for PSLTs, as seen in Viewpoint 4, is the relationship between language teaching and multilingual identity. Participants expressed reservations about their ability to integrate culture into language teaching, despite their background in the TL culture. The fact that even an L1 Chinese teacher hesitated to express confidence in teaching cultural aspects suggests that cultural familiarity alone does not guarantee confidence in pedagogy. This reinforces the idea that teaching about culture involves more than simply conveying facts; it requires an ability to navigate the complexities of cultural representation in a way that resonates with students. The findings align with Jin et al. (2021), who identified similar challenges among Chinese language teachers in the UK, where integrating culture into the curriculum required a deep understanding of both linguistic and cultural nuances. The PSLTs’ confidence in various aspects of TL use was seen as reflective of their comfort with their multilingual identity – those who felt multilingual also exhibited confidence in a range of language contexts. It was notable that some responses were puzzling where L1 speakers of a TL showed low confidence in certain aspects. We consider that perhaps these PSLTs set a very high bar for themselves, in particular in terms of cultural ‘knowledge’ and therefore find that actually detrimental to their sense of multilingual identity.

Agency and resilience

Teacher agency emerged as a critical factor in shaping well-being across all viewpoints. Participants in Viewpoint 2, for instance, displayed a high level of agency, as reflected in their strong disagreement with Statement #31

[Using English is the most effective way to manage the classroom]. These participants rejected the notion that English was necessary for classroom management, instead expressing confidence in their ability to use the TL in all aspects of teaching. This reflects a sense of autonomy and control over their teaching practice, which aligns with previous work (Sulis et al., 2021) that has shown how personal agency is pivotal in maintaining well-being during periods of professional transition.

Similarly, participants in Viewpoint 1 exhibited strong motivation to engage in professional development, as seen in their agreement with Statement #15 [I am highly motivated to continually develop my knowledge of my TL]. However, this motivation exists alongside feelings of insecurity about their language proficiency, suggesting that agency and self-efficacy may be undermined by external factors, such as the pressures to conform to ‘native speaker’ norms. As noted previously (Mercer, 2021), agency is not solely an individual characteristic but is shaped by institutional and social structures. For these PSLTs, their ability to act with agency may be constrained by broader systemic issues, such as the undervaluation of language teaching in schools.

Conclusion and future research pathways

This study provides an in-depth exploration of PSLTs’ well-being using Q methodology, highlighting the interplay between language proficiency, cultural identity, professional recognition, and teacher agency. The findings show that well-being is closely linked to PSLTs’ perceptions of their linguistic and cultural competence, how they are valued in educational settings, and their ability to exercise agency in teaching. The four perspectives captured – ranging from language confidence to concerns about professional respect – underscore the complex relationship between teacher identity constructions and well-being.

Future research could focus on longitudinal studies following PSLTs as they transition into full-time teaching, tracking how identity, well-being, and agency evolve over time. Such studies would offer a dynamic understanding of how early teacher education shapes long-term professional outcomes. Another key area is cross-cultural comparisons, exploring how different educational systems influence language teacher well-being, particularly in relation to professional respect and emotional labour in the contexts of teaching languages other than English. Finally, research should investigate interventions in teacher education programmes, such as mentorship and language proficiency workshops, to support PSLTs’ well-being. Evaluating these interventions across diverse teaching populations would provide evidence-based recommendations to improve teacher preparation, ensuring future language teachers receive the support needed for sustained professional growth and well-being.

Notes

- 1 To move beyond the problematic notion of ‘native/non-native’ speaker in this chapter, we make use of Dewaele’s (2018) typology of L1 and LX user in which the link between language and nation state is deemphasised.
- 2 As our participants tended to use the terms ‘native speaker’ and ‘non-native-speaker’ in the interviews, and the Q statements were derived from the first set of interview transcripts, we chose to leave this unchanged in the statements (i.e., not to change it to L1 or LX).

References

- Asención Delaney, Y. (2012). Research on mentoring language teachers: Its role in language education. *Foreign Language Annals*, 45(s1), 184–202. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.2011.01185.x>
- Banasick, S. (2019). KADE: A desktop application for Q methodology. *Journal of Open Source Software*, 4(36), 1360. <https://doi.org/10.21105/joss.01360>
- Banasick, S. (2022). *EQ Web Sort Configurator v2.0.0* [JavaScript]. <https://github.com/shawnbanasick/eq-web-sort>
- Barkhuizen, G. (Ed.). (2017). *Reflections on Language Teacher Identity Research* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315643465>
- Biesta, G., & Tedder, M. (2007). Agency and learning in the lifecourse: Towards an ecological perspective. *Studies in the Education of Adults*, 39(2), 132–149. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02660830.2007.11661545>
- Bonar, G., Fielding, R., & Wang, M. (2024). Exploring pre-service language teacher identities using Q methodology. In N. Fraschini, A. Lundberg, & R. Aliani (Eds.), *Q methodology applications in language research* (pp. 25–43). Multilingual Matters.
- Bonar, G., Fielding, R., & Wang, M. (2025). A longitudinal study of pre-service and early career languages teacher agency. In L. Veliz, M. H. Nguyen, Y. Slaughter, & G. Bonar (Eds.), *Language teacher agency: Navigating complex and diverse educational contexts* (pp. 35–50). Bloomsbury.
- Bonar, G., Wang, M., & Fielding, R. (2022). Pre-service language teachers’ multilingual identities – linking understandings of intercultural language learning with evolving teacher identity. In R. Fielding (Ed.), *Multilingualism, identity and interculturality in education* (pp. 139–157). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-5848-9_7
- Clyne, M. (2008). The monolingual mindset as an impediment to the development of plurilingual potential in Australia. *Sociolinguistic Studies*, 2(3), 347–366. <https://doi.org/10.1558/sols.v2i3.347>
- Creese, A., Blackledge, A., & Takhi, J. K. (2014). The ideal ‘native speaker’ teacher: Negotiating authenticity and legitimacy in the language classroom. *The Modern Language Journal*, 98(4), 937–951. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12148>
- Dewaele, J.-M. (2018). Why the Dichotomy ‘L1 Versus LX User’ is Better than ‘Native Versus Non-native Speaker’. *Applied Linguistics*, 39(2), 236–240. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amw055>
- Fraschini, N., Lundberg, A., & Aliani, R. (Eds.). (2024). *Advancing language research through Q methodology*. Multilingual Matters.

- Grant-Smith, D., de Zwaan, L., Chapman, R., & Gillett-Swan, J. (2018). 'It's the worst, but real experience is invaluable': Pre-service teacher perspectives of the costs and benefits of professional experience. In D. Heck & A. Ambrosetti (Eds.), *Teacher education in and for uncertain times* (pp. 15–33). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-8648-9_2
- Hong, J. Y. (2010). Pre-service and beginning teachers' professional identity and its relation to dropping out of the profession. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26(8), 1530–1543. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2010.06.003>
- Iversen, J. Y. (2021). Negotiating language ideologies: Pre-service teachers' perspectives on multilingual practices in mainstream education. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 18(3), 421–434. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2019.1612903>
- Jin, J., Mercer, S., Babic, S., & Mairitsch, A. (2021). 'You just appreciate every little kindness': Chinese language teachers' well-being in the UK. *System*, 96, 102400. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2020.102400>
- La Placa, V., McNaught, A., & Knight, A. (2013). Discourse on well-being in research and practice. *International Journal of Well-being*, 3(1), Article 1. <https://www.internationaljournalofwell-being.org/index.php/ijow/article/view/177>
- Lanvers, U., Thompson, A. S., & East, M. (Eds.). (2021). *Language learning in anglophone countries: Challenges, practices, ways forward*. Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-56654-8>
- Mairitsch, A., Babic, S., Mercer, S., Sulis, G., Jin, J., & King, J. (2021). Being a student, becoming a teacher: The well-being of pre-service language teachers in Austria and the UK. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 106, 103452. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2021.103452>
- Mercer, S. (2020). The well-being of language teachers in the private sector: An ecological perspective. *Language Teaching Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168820973510>
- Mercer, S. (2021). An agenda for well-being in ELT: An ecological perspective. *ELT Journal*, 75(1), 14–21. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccaa062>
- Sulis, G., Mercer, S., Mairitsch, A., Babic, S., & Shin, S. (2021). Pre-service language teacher well-being as a complex dynamic system. *System*, 103, 102642. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2021.102642>
- Talbot, K. R., & Mercer, S. (2021). Language teacher well-being. In H. Mohebbi & C. Coombe (Eds.), *Research questions in language education and applied linguistics: A reference guide* (pp. 567–572). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-79143-8_99
- Watts, S., & Stenner, P. (2005). Doing Q methodology: Theory, method and interpretation. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 2(1), 67–91. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088705qp022oa>
- Watts, S., & Stenner, P. (2012). *Doing Q methodological research: Theory, method and interpretation*. Sage.
- White, M. A. (2020). Pre-service teachers' perceptions of character and well-being. In M. A. White & F. McCallum (Eds.), *Critical perspectives on teaching, learning and leadership: Enhancing educational outcomes* (pp. 165–187). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-6667-7_9

13 Flow as a mediator of the well-being of teachers of multiple languages and multilingual teachers

*Anna Mystkowska-Wiertelak and
Agata Słowik-Krogulec*

Introduction

The centrality of language teachers' psychological health for themselves and their learners' well-being (WB) and their academic success has gradually earned due recognition among researchers and policymakers (cf. Gkonou et al., 2020; Hiver, 2017; Mercer & Gregersen, 2020). The concept of teacher WB has grown in importance, especially in light of the challenges the educational profession has to face today. The stressors and adversities, highly likely to result in burnout and attrition (MacIntyre et al., 2019), include low salaries, insecure working conditions, excessive workload, time-consuming administrative duties, a poor work atmosphere, ineffective and autocratic management styles, discipline issues, lack of tools and resources, the constant need to catch up with advances in technology, and pressure related to exams and rankings (Gkonou et al., 2020; Mercer & Gregersen, 2020; Mercer & Kostoulas, 2018; Piechurska-Kuciel, 2011). In the case of language teachers, this list expands even further to include their own language anxiety (Gkonou et al., 2020), high-energy teaching methods, intercultural issues (Gregersen et al., 2023), and threats or doubts concerning identity or sense of self (Hiver & Dörnyei, 2017; MacIntyre et al., 2019). Teachers of multiple languages (TMLs) must also negotiate multiple identities intertwined with the identities of their learners and related to teaching either their L1 or a foreign language (Ku, 2023) or teaching at home or transnationally (Sadeghi & Pourbahram, 2024b). Moreover, teachers' stress levels oftentimes increase due to global challenges whose consequences they must also face in the classroom, for example, the COVID pandemic, natural disasters, religious persecutions, military conflicts, social and political unrests, all of which significantly compromise teacher WB (Pentón Herrera et al., 2022). Furthermore, supporting students who have undergone traumatic experiences may lead to vicarious trauma, which results in mental exhaustion and compassion fatigue

(Crossman, 2022; O'Loughlin & Custodio, 2021). Given the challenges TMLs take on, it appears that their health and WB require more urgent attention. A better understanding of mechanisms that sustain and generate positivity among this professional group could inform effective policies of support and, perhaps, offer insights for teacher education and the language teaching profession in general.

The literature on multilingualism mostly emphasizes multilingual learners and teaching techniques that capitalize on their linguistic knowledge and awareness (cf. Daryai-Hansen & Drachmann, 2024). When the teacher becomes the focus of inquiry, research highlights the importance of negotiating multiple identities over time and navigating the complexities of instructing students in diverse linguistic environments (cf. Morea & Fischer, 2023). Only recently, thanks to the applications of positive psychology to language learning and teaching (Gregersen et al., 2016; Mercer et al., 2016) more concern has been shown about the uniqueness of TMLs' emotions that differ depending on each of the languages that they teach (Ku, 2023). This adds to the emotion labour (Benesch, 2017) that TMLs need to perform to match expectations regarding expressing emotions depending on the language taught (Ku, 2023).

Another important element of integrating a positive psychology perspective is that it emphasizes not only negative emotions but also positive ones, as well as the broader factors that enhance overall WB, one of which is psychological flow. It is defined as an optimal psychological state of immersion, enjoyment, and concentration in an activity (Csíkszentmihályi, 1990) and has mainly been considered with reference to language learners. Second language acquisition (SLA) research has shown that flow among learners contributes to improved task performance (Czimmermann & Piniel, 2016; Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2024), and enhances learners' motivation, self-efficacy, and autonomy (e.g., Jacobs & Moran, 2022). In this chapter, we explore teachers' flow and its connections to their WB. Situating the study among multilingual teachers (MLTs) and TMLs has enabled us to investigate conditions triggering a positive experience of flow against a wide range of potentially disruptive factors that impact on educators' comfort and their pedagogical practice. Thus, the main objective of this study is to determine the nature of flow, identify its sources, and examine its role in facilitating teachers' WB while also to explore how flow varies with the different languages they speak and teach. In the case of the specific group of teachers involved in this research, the character and scope of contextual and internal influences exceed those typically encountered by teachers of a single foreign language. Taking these influences into account reveals a richer tapestry of factors that either foster or hinder the experience of flow.

Teachers of multiple languages and multilingual teachers

Research on TMLs and MLTs addresses a range of interrelated themes tied to their professional experience and personal lives. Typically, discussions focus on teacher identity (e.g. Aslan, 2015; Li & Lai, 2022), emotions (e.g. Calafato, 2020), and beliefs (Haukås, 2015). One line of inquiry focuses on teaching practices that TMLs employ in their classrooms (Aslan, 2015; Calafato, 2021; De Costa & van Gorp, 2023). Some studies examine perceived differences between teaching one's native language and teaching a foreign language (Kramsch & Zhang, 2018). Drawing from TMLs' experience enables comparisons between beliefs, emotions, identities, as well as teacher knowledge and practices in relation to the different languages they teach to specific student populations. In the literature, teaching multiple languages is predominantly viewed as a complex and dynamic experience that is highly dependent on context characteristics (e.g., Aslan, 2015; Ku, 2023). This contextual complexity extends to language teacher identities, which are shaped by how teachers perceive themselves and are perceived by others in the language teaching environment.

Ku (2023, p. 11) defines language teacher identities as “the ways that language teachers understand, construct, perform and reflect on who they are and how others perceive them within the context of language teaching.” What makes TMLs distinct from teachers of a single language is that having to manoeuvre between languages and cultures, they develop a specific kind of knowledge and skills. In the case of TMLs, identity also involves those that pertain to the complexity of teaching more than one language that may not be their mother tongue. Moreover, teaching two or more languages often involves applying different teaching methodologies and mediums of instruction in differing instructional settings, for example, comparisons and transfer across languages, strategies for metalinguistic awareness, code-switching, and the use of cognates, all of which enhance and support language learning and instruction (Otwinowska-Kasztelanica, 2014). Transitioning from teaching one language to another may influence teachers' beliefs concerning their experience, the role, and effective pedagogical practice. They may need to deal with conflicting emotions concerning one language as opposed to another (e.g., Kim & Smith, 2019), as well as judge emotions that motivate them to teach one language and demotivate them to teach another (Fan & de Jong, 2019). For some teachers, undertaking the teaching of another language may be a form of self-development (Ku, 2023), from which they derive a sense of completeness that extends beyond the classroom and makes them more open to different people and cultures (Mutlu & Ortaçtepe, 2016). Moreover, teaching more than one language can in some contexts increase employability and translate into higher status (Rostami et al., 2021). Furthermore,

the possibility of shifting from teaching one language to teaching another may also help cope with negative emotions evoked in relation to the historical or cultural aspects associated with one of the languages (Kramsch & Zhang, 2018). The negotiation of cultural identity is usually related to the native/non-native status; however, it may also relate to living in the country whose language one teaches and other multicultural experiences that increase teachers' openness and tolerance, showing how the experience of teaching multiple languages can enrich the lives of TMLs beyond the classroom (Rostami et al., 2021).

Teacher well-being

In mainstream educational research, there is a common agreement that teacher WB has a positive impact on teachers and students alike. Not only do higher levels of teacher WB result in better, more creative pedagogic practice and effective handling of discipline problems, but also students of such teachers reach higher levels of academic success (cf. Benesch, 2017; MacIntyre et al., 2022; Mercer, 2021). Research on language teachers' WB has grown significantly in recent years (e.g., Gkonou et al., 2020; Mercer & Kostoulas, 2018; Sulis et al., 2023). Initially, its focus was on teachers' individual characteristics and their role in generating positive affect and buffering negativity, suggesting that teachers' mental health and job satisfaction resides solely within their responsibility and neglecting the role of educational institutions in this process (Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2024). Mercer (2021, p. 16) observes that, in her view, "well-being is not only subjective and individual, but it is also objective and social," pointing out that although individuals may react to similar conditions differently, the context and its structure play a critical role in shaping one's experience and perception of WB. Therefore, Mercer (2021) advocates taking an ecological perspective that defines WB as a sense of leading a meaningful and satisfying life that emerges from interactions with the environment.

Research suggests that fostering a positive work environment is a collective responsibility to be shared between all educational stakeholders (Babic et al., 2022; Sadeghi & Pourbahram, 2024a). Gregersen and MacIntyre (2024) underscore the importance of listening to teachers' voices and using them as valuable resources for decision-making processes related to educational policies and practices. Despite the wealth of insights into individual and contextual conditions that contribute to or hinder WB provided by the research so far, there are still areas that require further investigations taking into account a larger diversity of contexts and populations. The present study addresses one of such under-researched settings: the WB of MLTs and TMLs and its link to the experience of flow. Barcelos (2015) proposes that teaching multiple languages should be understood as a dynamic, ongoing

process rather than a fixed role. This perspective implies that teachers who already speak two or more languages may decide to add another language to their teaching repertoire at any time. As a result, our study includes not only traditionally defined TMLs but also MLTs more generally. We recognize that any educator with sufficient language proficiency and formal teacher training could potentially begin teaching an additional language, illustrating how the transition to teaching multiple languages can be fluid and situational, rather than strictly predetermined.

Flow

Flow is an intense and inherently dynamic, complex, and multidimensional state. It is an optimal experience that involves the right balance of positive and negative emotions (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2022a). The voluntary aspect of task participation that triggers flow seems particularly interesting in the context of formal education, where most research in the SLA domain has been conducted (e.g. Czimmermann & Piniel, 2016; Piniel & Ritecz, 2022; Wang & Huang, 2022). The first and most fundamental condition for flow to occur is experiencing the right balance between the perceived demands of a task and skills necessary to perform it. Other criteria known to promote flow include a strong goal orientation that allows a person to focus on the given activity, as well as explicit and constructive feedback that immediately follows the task and can involve both positive and negative evaluation (Piniel & Albert, 2019). Finally, deep concentration should lead to a feeling of merging action and awareness, with the individual feeling in control of the activity, which in turn enhances intrinsic motivation (Dewaele et al., 2022). To remain in this state, all the requirements need to be fulfilled, the challenge gradually enhanced and new skills developed along the way (Csíkszentmihályi, 1988).

Emotion regulation also plays a role in flow, as an imbalance in the challenge to skills ratio can lead to anxiety, apathy, and boredom, with the former two emotions triggered by tasks that are too difficult and the latter resulting from tasks that are too simple (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2022c). In fact, recent studies on flow and anti-flow experiences (Wang & Huang, 2022) concentrate on the interplay between these two constructs and the related emotions: foreign language enjoyment and foreign language classroom anxiety, which are predictive of the occurrence of each of the states, respectively (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2022a, 2022b, 2022c). However, thus far, the research mainly focuses on learners, disregarding the potential of flow to be contagious or jointly shaped by all the course participants (Muir, 2020), including the teacher, who can either co-construct it, or enter the state independently (Khajavi & Abdolrezapour, 2022; Mystkowska-Wiertelak & Słowik-Krogulec, 2024). Flow has been shown

to positively influence FL learners' overall quality of life, or WB, by strengthening their autonomy, self-efficacy beliefs and motivation to learn (Piniel & Albert, 2019). Teachers who frequently experience flow often report higher job satisfaction, reduced stress, and stronger motivation (e.g., Oxford, 2016). However, the outcomes of flow, its possible contagion, and its relationship with teacher WB remain underexplored, particularly in the context of TMLs. Further investigation is needed so that both learners and educators can flourish and fully enjoy the socially stimulating experience of FL learning and teaching.

Aim of the study

The primary aim of the study has been to explore the nature of flow which TMLs and MLTs experience in the classroom. The study will identify the sources of teachers' flow and its role in enhancing their WB. The following research questions (RQs) have been addressed:

RQ1: How does teaching a single language differ from teaching multiple languages when viewed through the lens of teachers' job satisfaction as a possible precursor to flow?

RQ2: How do TMLs and multilingual teachers describe their experiences of flow and conditions related to it?

RQ3: What factors shape TMLs' and multilingual teachers' WB?

RQ3a: What appears to be the link between TMLs' and multilingual teachers' experience of flow and their WB?

Method

Participants

The snowball sampling technique was used to recruit ten language teachers to take part in the study, nine of whom were women, aged between 23 and 42 years (average 32.2). Initially, we emailed two language teachers who met the recruitment criteria and were employed at the same university. Through their referrals, we contacted new candidates via a similar email invitation until the sample reached sufficient size and diversity. The participants' teaching experience in individual languages was difficult to establish due to the fact that not infrequently were the additional languages taught intermittently or for short periods. Three of the participants were native speakers of Polish, the others' mother tongues (L1) included Czech, Italian, Kurdish, Russian, Slovak, Spanish, Turkish, and Ukrainian. Two declared themselves native speakers of two languages. Only two of the participants reported teaching their L1s to students, while the others taught their L2 or

Table 13.1 Demographics and languages spoken and taught

No.	Name (pseudonym)	Age	Languages spoken					Languages taught
			L1	L2	L3	L4	Ln	
1.	Tom	23	Polish	English C2	German B2	Ukrainian B2	Serbian, Czech, Macedonian A1/2	English
2.	Eve	34	Kurdish B1/ Turkish	Kurdish/ Turkish	German A2	French A2		English, Turkish
3.	Sue	42	Russian	Belarusian C1/2	English C2	Ukrainian A2	Polish B2	Russian, English, Polish
4.	Rita	28	Polish	English C2	French C2			English, French
5.	Ann	23	Italian	Polish C1	English C1	German C1	French B2	Italian
6.	Agnes	26	Slovak	French C1	English C1/2	Polish B2+	Czech B2	English, French
7.	Betty	26	Ukrainian	Russian C1	Polish C1	English C1	German B2	Polish, Ukrainian, English
8.	Mary	38	Spanish	Polish C1	English C2	Portuguese C1	French, Colombian sign language C1	Spanish, English
9.	Rose	40	Polish	Chinese C1	English C1			Chinese, English
10.	Kim	42	Polish / Czech	English B2	French B2	Serbian B2	Russian B1	Polish, Czech

L3, and in one case, L4. Two participants were still involved in language teaching programmes at the time of data collection and taught only one language despite knowing other languages. Nevertheless, they used L3 in the classroom for instructional purposes (see Table 13.1 for detailed demographic data).

Design and procedure

The data were collected through semi-structured interviews lasting between approximately 23 minutes and 48 minutes; the total length of the recordings was 5 hours 26 minutes 32 seconds. All but one interview, which was in English, were conducted in Polish because it was either the participants' mother tongue or they expressly preferred it and their proficiency allowed for expressing complex ideas in this language. The interview protocol was structured around using and teaching multiple languages in the classroom, perceptions of WB, its sources, stressors, positive and negative emotions, circumstances conducive to the occurrence of flow, differentiating between teacher and student flow, as well as collective flow, that is flow experienced jointly by the teacher and students. While enquiring about both WB and flow, we encouraged the participants to discuss differences in their perceptions and experiences depending on the language taught (see Appendix for Interview Protocol). The interviews were recorded, transcribed and put into NVivo 14 software for analysis. All participants were informed of the study aims and procedures before consenting to take part. Each participant's privacy and confidentiality were safeguarded by pseudonyms and secure data storage protocols. The interviews were conducted only with explicit, voluntary consent, and participants were advised they could withdraw from the study at any point.

Analysis

Data analysis involved reflexive thematic analysis (RTA; Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2021) that focuses on understanding complex human experiences and perspectives. Following the method recommendations (Braun & Clarke, 2021, p. 39), themes were developed by using codes during a recursive six-phase process: familiarization; coding; generating initial themes; reviewing and developing themes; refining, defining and naming themes; and writing up. We engaged with the data and performed the analysis in several rounds of coding separately to ensure internal validity. Then the themes were compared, and the discussion that followed aimed at achieving richer interpretations of meaning, instead of providing a single "correct" vision (cf. Braun & Clarke, 2013). Patterns were identified using semantic (explicit) or latent (implicit) coding frameworks. Both the inductive and

deductive analytic approaches were used in the analysis. While the former emphasized data-based meanings, the latter was employed to make sure that the developed themes were relevant to the RQs underlying the study.

Results and discussion

Following Braun and Clarke's (2013) recommendation that data should be synthesized and contextualized alongside their presentation, we will discuss the themes that have emerged in the analysis and explain their significance in relation to the RQs and the results of previous research.

Teaching multiple languages vs. teaching a single language

Two major themes pertaining to RQ1 emerged from the data: *Multilingualism supporting language teaching* and *Multilingualism supporting language learning*. In both cases, a few subthemes have also been established. In the case of teaching, a category labelled *Language transfer* contains descriptions of instances in which knowing additional languages expanded teachers' didactic means, for example, by comparing language systems or showing cognates provided by each participant. This is in line with previous research (e.g., Calafato, 2021; de Costa & van Gorp, 2023; Otwinowska-Kasztelanic, 2014) that highlights ways in which multilingual practices contribute to improving language instruction. In addition, apart from providing examples, two teachers reflected more generally on this topic, as, for example, Mary, who noted:

Yes, it helps me. It allows me, for example, to compare. It helps me understand certain language functions better or compare what similarities or differences there might be. It also helps me show how language reflects the world. For example, in conversation classes, we analysed idiomatic expressions. I told them that in Polish, you can see how important mushrooms are. For example, there's a saying 'grows like mushrooms after rain,' (...) in Spanish, at least in Colombia, they say 'grows like rice.'

Moreover, three teachers commented on ways in which additional languages can serve as a means of instruction in a situation in which the only shared language is learners' L1, as explained by Tom, who uses his L3, Ukrainian, to facilitate learning of English by Ukrainian students: "[The knowledge of] the Ukrainian language in the context of Ukrainian students gives me greater confidence that I have an additional tool through which students will be able to understand what I am teaching them, understand the [English] material."

The second subtheme identified here is *Language choice* and refers to dilemmas teachers have when teaching their L1 or Lns, as well as learners' expectations and preferences concerning the languages the teacher uses during classes. As also observed by Kramsch and Zhang (2018), for some teachers, it makes a difference if they teach their L1, as they feel better qualified and more adequate, but, for others, that does not matter, and they perceive the knowledge of multiple languages as a general asset they can draw from while teaching. Mary highlighted the role of learners' preferences in this respect showing how this aspect can be perceived as an advantage or a disadvantage, depending on the learners' proficiency level:

On the one hand, English students believe that at their level, it would be nice if all conversation classes, which I conduct, were with native speakers because of the cultural aspect. To some extent, I agree with this. On the other hand, Spanish students feel that at their level, classes with a native speaker can sometimes be too much because they don't understand everything.

The third subtheme embodying yet another way in which multilingualism supports language teaching has been labelled *Importance of Culture* and comprises teachers' observations concerning the supportive and motivational role their knowledge of other cultures can play in the classroom. This aspect emerged from three teachers' responses and can be exemplified by Mary's contribution:

Not only do you see the relationships between languages, but you also see cultural relationships, and it's easier to refer to something. And this also shows students why we learn these languages in the first place, to notice these relationships.

The second major theme is *Multilingualism supporting language learning* and refers to teachers' own experiences as language learners. The following subthemes have been found: *Language transfer* and *Importance of culture*. The first concerns situations in which knowing additional languages facilitates comprehension or assists acquisition, mentioned by six participants and aptly exemplified by Ann:

When learning French, knowing Italian, of course, helped me a lot because they are both Romance languages. And also, of course, knowing English helps a bit with German because there are some similar words, and (...) many Polish words come from German (...) so I could always quickly understand what a word meant.

The importance of culture has also transpired as a subcategory of the *Learning* theme. Apart from examples showing how immersing in the target language culture has facilitated participants' language learning, they also shared their opinions about the inseparability of the two:

There is a big difference between what people acquire in practice and how the language is really used. So, culture seems to me like a bridge between language as an entity that is described by rules and regulations of how it works. It's what connects and allows us to understand how to use the language.

(Mary)

For Mary, culture serves as a crucial link or "bridge" that connects technical aspects of language (its rules and structures) with its practical usage. Thus, she can grasp not just the mechanics of a language, but also how to use it appropriately and effectively. The analysis of responses pertaining to teachers' multilingualism suggests that MLTs' experiences as language learners fuel their opinions concerning effective teaching and, consequently, shape classroom procedures. Being aware of how beneficial drawing from the knowledge of numerous languages can be, they create space for translanguaging and code-switching in their classrooms, legitimizing learners' L1 use.

Types and conditions of flow

In reference to RQ2, tapping into teachers' experiences of the state of flow, the following main themes were developed: *Types of flow*, *Emotions associated with flow*, *Conditions leading to flow*. The first main theme comprises four subthemes: (1) *Teacher individual flow*, (2) *Student individual flow*, (3) *Group flow*, and (4) *Collective flow*. An account of the first type of flow was provided by Rose:

I see that they are catching on, they have questions, so I write this and also that, and this as well while I'm at it. I tell them, if it's too much or too fast, let me know because I can see that I'm starting to get excited as if I had 2–3 coffees.

Rose can clearly see that her students can understand the information or concepts she presents and the questions that they ask indicate curiosity and a desire to deepen their understanding. She contributes additional explanations in response to their inquiries, at the same time being aware of their potential limits. All that increases her energy level, likening it to the effect of consuming a large amount of coffee, which suggests she has become animated and engaged.

Descriptions of students entering flow individually have been gathered under the second subtheme. An example provided by Rose shows learners deeply engrossed in checking and comparing their answers after a quiz:

Yeah, especially at moments like after they have had a quiz, and they are verifying things, and that's how their time passes (...) [this happens] more often in Chinese, maybe because it's the first year, so they really experience the difference of that language.

The teacher attributes the occurrence of flow to the challenge that learning Chinese poses to her students. They seem centred on correcting their errors and understanding the sources of their problems. Orientation towards a specific goal has been previously shown among flow antecedents (e.g., Egbert, 2003; Piniel & Albert, 2019) as a factor helping to focus attention on an activity, which is evident in the excerpt above.

Our data suggest that learners can enter yet another type of flow, which we subsumed under a label of *Group flow* which involves experiencing the state together with other group or pair members, as described by Mary:

I see that there are moments when they can all be engaged, working in their pairs, like when they were preparing questions because they were supposed to conduct an interview (...). The next part is asking those questions—you need to be prepared—what to ask, how to ask it. They asked me if it's this way or that way.

The specific circumstances that lead to group flow will be discussed in the next section.

The final subtheme in this category is *Collective flow*, an experience shared by learners and their teacher, turned out to be an individual experience that was mentioned by only four participants. The reciprocal or contagious character of this type of flow has been exemplified by Rita, who shows her conscious effort to “engage” her students so that they follow her in the state:

Together, definitely, both they and I. Sometimes it happens that it's mainly me, but I try to engage them. But I think that when the flow is really great, then we are all together in it, both I and they.

A different direction of flow contagion, from students to the teacher, has emerged from Kim's account, who thus described the situation:

Sometimes they work on their own, and I just leave them for 15–20 minutes, and they kind of have to get themselves into it. I can't just stand

over them like a mother hen and check if they are at the right energy level. It also affects me when they enter that state so deeply... maybe I'm a little crazy. (...) So yes, I really think that this flow is something that characterizes me, and that's probably why it brings me pleasure.

These results corroborate Aubé et al.'s (2014) as well as Muir's (2020) observations that classroom flow is primarily a social phenomenon. Moreover, the two excerpts presented above clearly demonstrate the dynamic character of flow (cf. Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2022c; Egbert, 2003) that can, in an instant but not without effort, expand to other participants in the learning process.

The second major theme, *Emotions associated with flow*, subsumes data corresponding to three emotions most frequently referred to by the respondents and, while excitement and satisfaction have often been mentioned in the literature (e.g., Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2022a; Egbert, 2003), exhaustion, reported by five respondents, appeared as a slightly surprising consequence of flow. Rose explains how it blends with other emotions:

I finish the class, and I'm drained because I have such an emotional burst that later I don't really feel like talking much. I'm already fulfilled, I've had my pleasures, so later I come back and I'm exhausted and I don't feel like doing much afterwards.

The final category corresponding to flow and answering RQ2 has been labelled *Conditions leading to flow* and comprises five subthemes: (1) *Engagement*, (2) *Atmosphere*, (3) *Task characteristics*, (4) *Autonomy*, and (5) *Topic*, each of which denotes specific circumstances that respondents identified as conducive to the occurrence of flow. The aspects included here reflect conditions usually mentioned in the literature (cf. Czimmermann & Piniel, 2016; Piniel & Ritecz, 2022; Wang & Huang, 2022). Engagement in an activity seems to be the initial step for flow to occur. Although the two are distinct constructs, flow is frequently characterised as the highest form of engagement (Philp & Duchesne, 2016), a state of active involvement in an educational activity encompassing behavioural, cognitive, and emotional components (Hiver et al., 2021). Engagement can range from minimal attention to more intense focus, but it may lack the deep immersion characteristic of flow. Teachers can discern between the two states, as explained by Kim:

Of course, there can be engagement, like being involved in learning, wanting to do something, and then present it, but I think group work is on a different energetic level than working alone. At least it seems that way to me. So, the state of flow in group work is different.

Kim's excerpt also refers to the next subtheme, *Atmosphere*, implying that group dynamics can foster a heightened sense of motivation and inspiration. The phrase "different energetic level" suggests that the collective energy can stimulate collaboration and creativity that may not be present in individual work. A related subtheme of *Task characteristics* comprises descriptions of highly engaging activities, mostly communicative, that necessitate collaboration, as aptly summarized by Sue: "I like to do interactive lessons to activate the students and encourage them to work together. In pairs, in teams, or in groups. (...) then time flies by quickly."

The next flow antecedent comprised in the *Autonomy* subtheme pinpoints the importance of enabling students' control of the learning process as well as their creativity. Kim describes this in the following way:

I think that doing something together and then giving them the opportunity to create something on their own provides a lot of flow. There's an element of creativity, and I think that's very important, and I try to make sure it happens, though not always, as it's not always possible, but I try to make sure that often something like this happens in the lessons so they can create things themselves.

The teacher suggests that creative opportunities help learners engage with the material in a deeper and more meaningful way. At the same time, she reflects on the effort she undertakes to create an environment where learners can fully immerse in their activities.

The final theme in this category is *Topic* and refers to the potential of an interesting topic to trigger increased focus and magnify emotional response, as mentioned by Tom: "I try to choose topics that are interesting both for me and my students. So, if we have a common interest and it clicks, then we really do lose track of time because of the topic."

Precursors of MLTs' WB

Themes pertaining to *Promoting MLTs' WB* (RQ3) include *Work-related positive affect*, further subdivided into *Internal* and *Context-related factors*; next, *Triggers*, comprising *Novelty*, *Outcomes*, *Self-development*, as well as *Student* and *Teacher flow*. The third main theme, labelled as the *Social dimension of WB*, comprises two subthemes: *Rapport* and *Concurrence*.

Work-related positive affect comprised under the *Internal factors* subtheme, is related to teachers' emotional states that translate into greater work-satisfaction and general contentment, as presented by Mar: "There are classes after which I feel like I've recharged my battery, feeling that 'Oh, today I had a great class, so now I have energy and a lot of ideas

for the next classes.’” Context features can also induce similar emotions, which Kim describes in the following way:

When students are happy and leave the class, like today, saying, ‘Wow, it was great, such a tough topic, but actually it was fine, thanks, and can you recommend something else?’ It’s satisfying, though maybe a bit vain, but pleasant, that someone appreciates your work.

Here, the teacher’s positive affect has been triggered by the positive feedback she received from her students, despite the lesson being challenging. Kim acknowledges that receiving such feedback is gratifying and boosts her morale.

Novelty, which belongs to the theme of *Triggers* suggests that many MLTs thrive when confronted with new challenges or meeting new people, which gives them an opportunity to get to know their cultures. For Rose, it was the challenge of, first, learning and then teaching Chinese, for Mary, the pleasure of starting to learn yet another language, which she summarizes in such a way: “It’s that phase of falling in love with the language, where there is novelty, it’s interesting, and now that I know these tenses, I can say or write it—that’s the novelty effect.”

The second subtheme among *Triggers* is *Outcomes* and concerns a boost of teachers’ WB when seeing the positive change in their students brought about by their work. Their learners’ success enhances their mood and the way they perceive themselves as teachers, being a source of satisfaction. The subtheme of *Self-development* belongs to the same category and denotes all the instances in which the respondents commented on how the experience of teaching has enriched them personally and/or professionally. The satisfaction they feel, characteristic of intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2001), makes teaching a highly rewarding experience. For example, Rita asserts:

I learned a bit of this during my work: distance from students’ comments, distance from the fact that sometimes we don’t know something, but also from making mistakes, and distance from taking everything too seriously, right? Because then it discourages both us and the students.

Both teachers’ accounts show that their WB should be understood as a combination of eudaimonic and hedonic perspectives (cf. Mercer, 2021), since, on the one hand, teaching leads to self-actualization, on the other, it is a source of fulfilment and gratification.

Two types of flow, *Students’ Flow* and *Teachers’ Flow* have also been classified among WB Triggers. Observing students deeply engrossed in an activity or highly enjoying it fills instructors with positive emotions.

Realizing that one has also entered the state of flow is highly gratifying, as vividly described by Rose:

I get such an endorphin rush that I don't even control it anymore. I just really enjoy that state, and I don't even notice how much time has passed. We're so absorbed that suddenly it turns out we've started and then, bang, the class is over.

The subtheme directly addresses RQ3a which examines the connection between WB and flow. It appears that not only does the teachers' own flow strongly impact their emotions but also seeing one's students in the state of flow heightens teachers' satisfaction and enjoyment. Having an opportunity to share the experience of flow with one's students (collective flow) boosts one's affect even stronger.

The theme of *Social dimension* concentrates on how WB can be fostered by relations with others. What both subthemes, *Rapport* and *Concurrence*, have in common is the concept of transmission of positive affect between teachers and students. *Rapport* concerns efforts and instances of establishing and sustaining good relationships with others, *Concurrence* emphasizes reciprocity, a perfect example of which is a comment by Eve:

I like sharing what I know with others and especially I like being with teenagers, with young people so much and when they learn new things, and I like their faith, I like the emotions that they express on their face so... [it] makes me feel very happy.

Surprisingly, the topic of the responsibility of educational institutions for supporting teachers' WB did not appear in our data, which corroborates Gregersen and MacIntyre's (2024) claim that generally the role of institutions in this respect has not been emphasized enough so that even teachers themselves seem to neglect it. Nevertheless, our results confirm the social character of WB that, as stressed by Mercer (2021), necessitates considering the phenomenon in conjunction with the environment. In our study, the personal perspective prevails as the respondents focused mainly on in-class experiences when discussing factors increasing their WB.

The main themes under the category of *Factors hindering WB* that also relate to RQ3, include *Work-related negative affect* and *Contextual influences*. The first comprises three diverse themes: *Negative emotions* with mentions of anxiety, boredom and frustration, *Language dependent*, a subtheme that recognizes the impact of individual languages on how teachers feel, and finally, *Language independent*, which refers to negative emotions emerging irrespective of the language taught. Thus, Agnes admits that teaching French is more stressful for her than teaching other

languages: “There is one thing that seems to differentiate these languages and affects the stress a bit, and that is explaining to the parents of the children I teach that French is not impossible to learn.” The data show that MLTs’ WB may partly depend on the language they are teaching at a particular moment, as suggested by, for example, Fan and de Jong (2019); however, certain job-related stressors remain constant across all language contexts. In other words, while each language may pose unique joys and challenges, many core pressures of the teaching profession continue to shape MLTs’ overall WB regardless of which language they happen to be teaching.

The second main theme among factors hindering WB has no subthemes and has been labelled as *Workload*. The self-explanatory category, occupying one of the central positions in the literature on WB (e.g., Babic et al., 2022; Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2024), concerns to the sheer amount of time and effort that the job requires, as expressed by Sue:

Such negative emotions may be related to having too many different things to manage and spending a lot of time preparing and doing tasks, which leaves me with too little rest. This, of course, affects my physical state. The negative emotions associated with this lead to a moment where I just want to reject everything and take a break.

We decided to single out yet another main theme since it could not be subsumed under any of the categories discussed so far. It has been categorized as *Recognising the role of the student* and further subdivided into *Students’ negative affect* and *Students’ positive affect*. The main reason behind this was the need to highlight the inseparability of students’ WB from the WB of their teachers. Thus, Eve contends: “When (...) most of the students get low scores from a certain course I also feel stressed because I think this time I blame myself,” showing that she is aware of the connection. Rose, in turn, comments on how her pupils’ nice gestures enhance her mood:

I revisit those thoughts, like when someone has said something to me, for example, someone sent me a nice email or drew something for me in the context of a task. Sometimes I would add to their drawings. Of course, these are small things, but they are nice gestures from people who are, after all, still somewhat like kids.

Both excerpts suggest that high and low WB states can be contagious, as has been shown with respect to akin phenomena such as emotions (cf. Moskowitz & Dewaele, 2019) and flow (Muir, 2020; Słowik-Krogulec & Mystkowska-Wiertelak, 2026).

Conclusion

Our data show that flow can be an important building block of teacher WB. Since the conditions for the occurrence of flow have been precisely delineated in the literature, steps can be taken to maximize the experience in the classroom. Significantly, the positive impact of flow is not limited to teachers' individual experience, but extends to collective flow, when the teacher and their students immerse and focus on an activity together. This relationship, however, is clearly bidirectional as each student's focus transfers onto other group members and the teacher thus the experience of flow becomes co-constructed by all the participants. In addition, the mere act of witnessing students in flow can also increase teachers' satisfaction and pride at their expertise as those who are capable of staging tasks that generate an intense and enjoyable state. It should therefore be highlighted that the outcomes of flow, thus far often neglected in the literature on the topic (cf. Muir, 2020), are equally important to its antecedents, which have been given much more attention (e.g. Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2022a; Piniel & Albert, 2019; Wang & Huang, 2022). Satisfaction, enjoyment, fulfilment, and feeling of gratification, all result from the inherently rewarding joint social experience of deep engagement, the conditions of which inadvertently create an environment that supports self-development and facilitates learner and teacher subjective WB. In the analysis, teachers' multilingualism emerges as a powerful asset, significantly enlarging the scope of pedagogical means but also creating opportunities for exploring novel languages and cultures, which adds up to the factors contributing to WB, flow being one of them. A teacher who views multilingual instruction positively may be more likely to experience flow due to perceived competence and enjoyment, whereas negative or conflicted beliefs might impede it (cf. Haukås, 2015).

Even if some aspects of teaching remain the same for all languages taught, having the chance to compare different contexts grants a wider vision and deeper understanding of the processes leading to language attainment. In addition, a teacher's personal interest in other languages and cultures may positively affect learners' skill repertoire important also outside the classroom (Mercer et al., 2018). As a result, despite embarking on a difficult task of learning and teaching multiple languages that has its indisputable hazards (Ku, 2023), TMLs seem to benefit from this rich knowledge and the ability to transfer it onto their students, thus, making sure that both themselves and their FL learners can thrive. Although complex, dynamic, and multifaceted (Egbert, 2003), the experience of flow with the host of positive emotions it entails seems to be a highly desirable state clearly facilitating TMLs' overall quality of life.

References

- Aslan, E. (2015). When the native is also a non-native: “Retrodicting” the complexity of language teacher cognition. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 71(3), 244–269. <https://doi.org/10.3138/cmlr.2575>
- Aubé, C., Brunelle, E., & Rousseau, V. (2014). Flow experience and team performance: The role of team goal commitment and information exchange. *Motivation and Emotion*, 38(1), 120–130.
- Babic, S., Mercer, S., Mairitsch, A., Gruber, J., & Hemphkin, K. (2022). Language teacher wellbeing in the workplace. *Theory and Practice of Second Language Acquisition*, 8(1), 11–34. <https://doi.org/10.31261/tapsla.11514>
- Barcelos, A. M. F. (2015). Unveiling the relationship between language learning beliefs, emotions, and identities. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 5(2), 301–325. <https://doi.org/10.14746/sslrt.2015.5.2.6>
- Benesch, S. (2017). *Emotions and English language teaching*. Routledge.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2013). *Successful qualitative research: A practical guide for beginners*. Sage Publications.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). Can I use TA? Should I use TA? Should I not use TA? Comparing reflexive thematic analysis and other pattern-based qualitative analytic approaches. *Counselling & Psychotherapy Research*, 21(1), 37–47. <https://doi.org/10.1002/capr.12360>
- Calafato, R. (2020). Language teacher multilingualism in Norway and Russia: Identity and beliefs. *European Journal of Education*, 55(4), 602–617. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ejed.12418>
- Calafato, R. (2021). “I feel like it’s giving me a lot as a language teacher to be a learner myself”: Factors affecting the implementation of a multilingual pedagogy as reported by teachers of diverse languages. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 11(4), 579–606. <https://doi.org/10.14746/sslrt.2021.11.4.5>
- Crossman, K. (2022). Vicarious trauma and the unregulated education of pre-service adult language instructors. In L. J. P. Herrera, G. Martinez-Alba, & E. Trinh (Eds.), *Teacher well-being in English language teaching* (pp. 129–146). Routledge.
- Csikszentmihályi, M. (1988). The flow experience and its significance for human psychology. In M. Csikszentmihályi & I. S. Csikszentmihályi (Eds.), *Optimal experience: Psychological studies of flow in consciousness* (pp. 15–35). Cambridge University Press.
- Csikszentmihályi, M. (1990). *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience*. Harper & Row.
- Czimmermann, E., & Piniel, K. (2016). Advanced language learners’ experiences of flow in the Hungarian EFL classroom. In P. D. MacIntyre, T. Gregersen, & S. Mercer (Eds.), *Positive psychology in SLA* (pp. 193–214). Multilingual Matters.
- Daryai-Hansen, P., & Drachmann, N. (2024). ‘I like exploring other languages’: Primary and lower secondary students’ attitudes towards plurilingual education. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2024.2336098>

- De Costa, P. I., & van Gorp, K. (2023). Centering critical multilingual language awareness in language teacher education: Towards more evidence-based instructional practices. *Language Awareness*, 32(4), 553–559. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09658416.2023.2285359>
- Dewaele, J.-M., Albakistani, A., & Kamal Ahmed, I. (2022). Is flow possible in the emergency remote teaching foreign language classroom? *Education Sciences*, 12(7), 444. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci12070444>
- Dewaele, J.-M., & MacIntyre, P. (2022a). Flow in the Spanish language classroom. In M. del Carmen Méndez & J. Andoni Duñabeitia (Eds.), *Factores cognitivos y afectivos en la enseñanza de español como lengua extranjera* (pp. 303–330). Routledge.
- Dewaele, J.-M., & MacIntyre, P. (2022b). Do Flow, enjoyment and anxiety emerge equally in English foreign language classrooms as in other foreign language classrooms? *Revista Brasileira de Linguística Aplicada*. 22, 156–180. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1984-6398202218487>
- Dewaele, J.-M., & MacIntyre, P. (2022c). “You can’t start a fire without a spark”. Enjoyment, anxiety, and the emergence of flow in foreign language classrooms. *Applied Linguistics Review*, 15(2), 403–426. <https://doi.org/10.1515/applirev-2021-0123>
- Egbert, J. (2003). The study of flow theory in the foreign language classroom. *Modern Language Journal*, 87(4), 499–518.
- Fan, F., & de Jong, E. J. (2019). Exploring professional identities of nonnative-English-speaking teachers in the United States: A narrative case study. *TESOL Journal*, 10(4), e495. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.495>
- Gkonou, C., Dewaele, J.- M., & King, J. (Eds.). (2020). *The emotional roller-coaster of language teaching*. Multilingual Matters.
- Gregersen, T., Macintyre, P., & Mercer, S. (2016). *Positive psychology in SLA*. Multilingual Matters.
- Gregersen, T., & MacIntyre, P. D. (2024). Language teacher wellbeing: an individual–institutional pact. *ELT Journal*, 78(2), 179–188. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccad053>
- Gregersen, T., Mercer, S., Macintyre, P., Talbot, K., Banga, C. A., & Labs, E. (2023). Understanding language teacher wellbeing: An ESM study of daily stressors and uplifts. *Language Teaching Research*, 27(4), 862–883. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168820965897>
- Haukås, Å. (2015). Teachers’ beliefs about multilingualism and a multilingual pedagogical approach. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 13(1), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2015.1041960>
- Hiver, P. (2017). Tracing the signature dynamics of language teacher immunity: A retrodictive qualitative modeling study. *The Modern Language Journal*, 101(4), 669–690.
- Hiver, P., Al-Hoorie, A., & Mercer, S. (Eds.). (2021). *Student engagement in the language classroom*. Multilingual Matters.
- Hiver, P., & Dörnyei, Z. (2017). Language teacher immunity: A double-edged sword. *Applied Linguistics*, 38(3), 405–423.
- Jacobs, C. P., & Morgan, W. (2022). “That was amazing!” A two-study perspective on language classroom experiences through the lens of psychological “flow”.

- Journal for the Psychology of Language Learning*, 4(2), e428722. <https://doi.org/10.52598/jpll/4/2/4>
- Khajavi, Y., & Abdolrezaipoor, P. (2022). Exploring English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers' experience of flow during online classes. *Open Praxis*, 14(3), 202–213. <https://doi.org/10.55982/openpraxis.14.3.495>
- Kim, J., & Smith, H. Y. (2019). Beyond nativeness versus nonnativeness in the construction of teacher identity in the context of Korean as a foreign language. *The Sociolinguistic Journal of Korea*, 27(2), 25–50. <https://doi.org/10.14353/sjk.2019.27.2.02>
- Kramsch, C., & Zhang, L. (2018). *The multilingual instructor*. Oxford University Press.
- Ku, E. K. (2023). *Teachers of multiple languages: Identities, beliefs and emotions*. Multilingual Matters.
- Li, Z., & Lai, C. (2022). Identity in ESL-CSL career transition: A narrative study of three second-career teachers. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, 23(6), 910–924. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15348458.2022.2065992>
- MacIntyre, P. D., Mercer, S., Gregersen, T., & Hay, A. (2022). The role of hope in language teachers' changing stress, coping, and well-being. *System*, 109, 102881. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2022.102881>
- MacIntyre, P. D., Ross, J., Talbot, K., Mercer, S., Gregersen, T., & Banga, C. A. (2019). Stressors, personality and wellbeing among language teachers. *System*, 82, 26–38. <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.SYSTEM.2019.02.013>
- Mason, S. (2017). Foreign language teacher attrition and retention research: A meta-analysis. *NECTFL Review*, 80, 47–68.
- Mercer, S. (2021). An agenda for well-being in ELT: An ecological perspective. *ELT Journal*, 75(1), 14–21.
- Mercer, S., & Gregersen, T. (2020). *Teacher well-being*. Oxford University Press.
- Mercer, S., & Kostoulas, A. (Eds.). (2018). *Language teacher psychology*. Multilingual Matters.
- Mercer, S., MacIntyre, P. D., Gregersen, T., & Talbot, K. (2018). Positive language education: Combining positive education and language education. *Theory and Practice of Second Language Acquisition*, 4(2), 11–31. <https://www.journals.us.edu.pl/index.php/TAPSLA/article/view/7011>
- Mercer, S., Oberdorfer, P., & Saleem, M. (2016). Helping language teachers to thrive: Using positive psychology to promote teachers' professional well-being. In D. Gabryś-Barker & D. Gałajda (Eds.), *Positive psychology perspectives on foreign language learning and teaching* (pp. 213–229). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-32954-3_12
- Morea, N., & Fisher, L. (2023). Multilingual teachers and teachers of multilinguals: Developing pre-service teachers' multilingual identities during teacher education. *Language Learning Journal*, 53(1), 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2023.2251499>
- Moskowitz, S., & Dewaele, J.-M. (2019). Is teacher happiness contagious? A study of the link between perceptions of language teacher happiness and student attitudes. *Innovative Language Learning and Teaching* 15, 117–130. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17501229.2019.1707205>

- Muir, C. (2020). *Directed motivational currents and language education: Exploring implications for pedagogy*. Multilingual Matters.
- Mutlu, S., & Ortaçtepe, D. (2016). The identity (re)construction of nonnative English teachers stepping into native Turkish teachers' shoes. *Language and Inter-cultural Communication*, 16(4), 552–569. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14708477.2016.1194852>
- Mystkowska-Wiertelak, A., & Słowik-Krogulec, A. (2024). Task-specific flow in older adult EFL learners. *Journal of the Psychology of Language Learning*, 62(2), e6223024. <https://doi.org/10.52598/jpll/6/2/4>
- O'Loughlin, J. B., & Custodio, B. (2021). *Supporting the journey of English learners after trauma*. University of Michigan Press.
- Otwinowska-Kasztelanica, A. (2014). Does multilingualism influence plurilingual awareness of Polish teachers of English? *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 11(1), 97–119. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2013.820730>
- Oxford, R. L. (2016). Toward a psychology of well-being for language learners and teachers: The “EMPATHICS” vision. In P. D. MacIntyre, T. Gregersen, & S. Mercer (Eds.), *Positive psychology in SLA* (pp. 10–87). Multilingual Matters.
- Pentón Herrera, L. J., Martínez-Alba, G., & Trinh, E. (Eds.). (2022). *Teacher well-being in English language teaching: An ecological approach* (1st ed.). Routledge.
- Philp, J., & Duchesne, S. (2016). Exploring engagement in tasks in the language classroom. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 36, 50–72. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0267190515000094>
- Piechurska-Kuciel, E. (2011). Foreign language teacher burnout: A research proposal. In M. Pawlak (Ed.), *Extending the boundaries of research on second language learning and teaching* (pp. 211–223). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-20141-7_17
- Piniel, K., & Albert, Á. (2019). Motivation and flow. In M. Lamb, K. Csizér, A. Henry, & S. Ryan (Eds.), *The Palgrave handbook of motivation for language learning* (pp. 579–597). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Piniel, K., & Ritecz, F. (2022). Flow experiences during speaking tasks in the Hungarian English as a foreign language high school classroom. In G. Tanko & A. M. Wind (Eds.), *ELTE DEAL challenges and opportunities in contemporary English applied linguistics* (pp. 197–225). ELTE DEAL. <https://doi.org/10.21862/ELTE.DEAL.2022.8.197>
- Rostami, F., Yousefi, M. H., & Amini, D. (2021). How shifting from teaching Arabic or Persian to English prompts the professional identity: A thematic study. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Applied Literature: Dynamics and Advances*, 9(1), 123–144. <https://doi.org/10.22049/jalda.2021.27098.1255>
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2001). On happiness and human potentials: A review of research on hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52(1), 141–166.
- Sadeghi, K., & Pourbahram, R. (2024a). Exploring factors affecting English language teacher wellbeing: Insights from positive psychology. *System*, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2024.103274>
- Sadeghi, K., & Pourbahram, R. (2024b). Transnational English language teacher wellbeing: An ecological perspective. *Porta Linguarum Revista Interuniversitaria*

- de Didáctica de las Lenguas Extranjeras*, 135–152. Article 10.3274. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2024.103274>
- Słowik-Krogulec, A., & Mystkowska-Wiertelak, A. (2026). The individual and collective experience of flow in teaching English to older adult learners. In J. M. Wainwright & U. Stickler (Eds.), *Language learning later in life*. Toronto University Press.
- Sulis, G., Mercer, S., Babic, S., & Mairitsch, A. (2023). *Language teacher wellbeing across the career span*. Multilingual Matters.
- Wang, X., & Huang, C. (2022). Conceptualization and measurement of flow in a Chinese blended English as a foreign language learning context. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.839267>

14 Multilingual language teacher psychology

Interactions between emotional resonance, self-efficacy, and metalinguistic knowledge

Raees Calafato

Introduction

Research on language teacher cognition and affect, for example, their attitudes, beliefs, emotional labor, and anxiety, has traditionally centered on how these factors relate to students' learning (Burns et al., 2015; Griffiths & Tajeddin, 2020; Kubanyiova, 2019). While this focus has advanced our understanding of classroom dynamics, it has largely overlooked teachers' multifaceted identities as language learners, users, and professionals navigating their own linguistic and emotional landscapes (Mercer, 2018). It also risks oversimplifying teachers' roles, reducing them to classroom 'tools' rather than recognizing their complexity as individuals. The dangers of oversimplifying the complexity of teacher's psychological experiences are particularly acute against the backdrop of the growing number of language teachers working in multilingual contexts, for instance, teaching multiple languages, using more than one language as the medium of instruction for different school subjects, or working with multilingual learners (Calafato, 2022, 2024; Kramsch & Zhang, 2018; Ku, 2023). Teachers who instruct in multiple languages must navigate complex cognitive and emotional demands tied to each language (Calafato, 2025), not only in their teaching but also in their personal engagement with these languages (after all, they must manage and nurture their own cognitive, affective, and social connections to their taught languages). Yet, little is known about how they manage this.

A critical, albeit understudied, aspect of language teachers is their metalinguistic teaching practices, that is, the strategies and activities they use to explicitly teach students about language, its structure, rules, and functions. These practices involve making linguistic concepts visible, fostering students' awareness of how language works, and encouraging reflection on language choices (Calafato, 2021, 2022, 2024). Such practices can be especially valuable when teachers work with multiple languages, for instance, teaching French as a first language (L1) and German as a second language

(L2) or using multiple languages across school subjects. Here, teachers can draw on their metalinguistic knowledge, their conscious and declarative understanding of language (Andrews, 1999; Gutiérrez, 2013; Roehr, 2008), to help students compare and contrast languages, building bridges between what students already know and what they are learning (Calafato, 2021, 2022). However, even with a strong foundation in metalinguistic knowledge, implementing metalinguistic teaching practices meaningfully in the classroom is far from straightforward. It can depend on a range of cognitive, affective, and social factors (Aslan, 2015; Calafato, 2021).

Despite their limited number, studies indicate that, besides their metalinguistic knowledge, teachers' beliefs in their ability to leverage their metalinguistic knowledge when completing tasks during lessons (metalinguistic self-efficacy), their emotional ties to the languages they teach (i.e., emotional resonance), and broader institutional policies or language ideologies can also affect their metalinguistic teaching practices (e.g., Andrews, 1999; Aslan, 2015; Calafato, 2021; Wernicke, 2017). For instance, institutional policies emphasizing implicit language teaching over explicit focus on linguistic form can discourage teachers from using metalinguistic strategies (Calafato, 2022). Similarly, teachers who endorse monolingual ideologies, beliefs that devalue multilingual approaches or dismiss explicit language instruction, often avoid metalinguistic teaching altogether (Calafato, 2021, 2022). Even when teachers do employ these practices, superficial understandings of language structures can limit the pedagogical impact of such practices, undermining student learning (Myhill, 2000). Research also documents how teachers with high metalinguistic self-efficacy are more likely to implement these metalinguistic teaching practices, drawing from their formal and in-depth study of their taught languages (e.g., Aslan, 2015; Ng, 2018).

Emotions, too, play a role. Though limited, research documents how emotional resonance, the affective bonds individuals form with their languages, varies across languages (Dewaele et al., 2024; Weimer et al., 2022), with variations influencing teachers' metalinguistic self-efficacy and teaching practices (e.g., Aslan, 2015). It is worth noting that the links between language teachers' emotional resonance and metalinguistic self-efficacy have primarily emerged incidentally in studies, where the focus was on other aspects of teachers' professional identities (e.g., Aslan, 2015; Ng, 2018; Wernicke, 2017). Even if incidental, the findings are not unexpected. For instance, a teacher who grew up speaking their taught language might feel a strong emotional connection to it, making them more enthusiastic and passionate when teaching it and leading them to incorporate engaging, culturally rich materials. However, such emotional resonance could also cause the teacher to rely more on personal experiences and cultural attachments, leading to a more intuitive, less structured approach to teaching

(Aslan, 2015). In this way, their emotional connection could make it challenging for them to critically distance themselves from the language, which is a necessary step for them to leverage their metalinguistic knowledge when teaching (Sharpe & Zelazo, 2002).

Three theoretical frameworks help explain how emotional resonance and metalinguistic self-efficacy can shape teachers' metalinguistic teaching practices: Dual-Process Theory (DPT) (Augusto, 2024), Cognitive Load Theory (CLT) (Sweller et al., 2011), and Russell's (2003) Dimensional Model of Emotions (DME). DPT posits two cognitive systems: System 1 (fast, automatic, emotionally driven) and System 2 (slow, deliberate, analytical). Metalinguistic teaching practices rely heavily on System 2, as they require conscious analysis of language rules. However, teachers with strong emotional resonance toward a language may default to System 1, favoring intuitive, emotionally charged instruction over explicit metalinguistic strategies, as observed in Aslan (2015). CLT adds nuance: high emotional arousal (e.g., excitement or frustration) can amplify cognitive load, depleting mental resources needed for System 2 tasks like metalinguistic teaching (Plass & Kalyuga, 2019). For example, a teacher's intense emotional resonance with a language might trigger activating emotions (e.g., enthusiasm), paradoxically overwhelming their working memory, reducing their capacity to teach metalinguistically and eroding their metalinguistic self-efficacy over time.

Russell's (2003) DME bridges these perspectives by framing emotions along dimensions of valence (positive/negative) and arousal (high/low). As already stated, high-arousal emotions (e.g., passion or anxiety) (e.g., triggered by emotional resonance) interact with cognitive load, straining teachers' ability to engage System 2 and implement metalinguistic teaching practices. The study reported in this chapter aims to contribute to the research on teachers of multiple languages and their cognition and emotions by exploring the relationship between their emotional resonance regarding their taught languages, metalinguistic self-efficacy, and metalinguistic teaching practices. The goal is to help language teachers become more aware of their emotional connections to their taught languages and how these connections can impact their metalinguistic self-efficacy and teaching practices.

Literature review

Metalinguistic knowledge and self-efficacy

A critical component of any language teacher's professional competence is their Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) (Blömeke & Kaiser, 2017; Gordon & Arias, 2024), which integrates *content knowledge* (what to

teach) with *pedagogical knowledge* (how to teach). More recently, this framework has expanded to emphasize Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK), which underscores the role of technology in enhancing instructional practices (Koehler et al., 2013). At its core, PCK involves understanding which subject-specific topics are essential, identifying effective methods to represent and explain them, and anticipating challenges students may face. Language teachers with strong PCK can diagnose misconceptions, adapt their teaching strategies, and scaffold learning effectively. Central to PCK in language teaching is metalinguistic knowledge (Andrews, 2007), which manifests in metalinguistic teaching practices such as using phonetic transcription to compare sounds across languages, teaching morphemic awareness and word-formation processes (e.g., compounding, affixation), developing cognate recognition and grammatical comparisons between languages, deconstructing complex sentence structures (e.g., clause analysis, syntax trees), and exploring genre-specific language use and semantic mapping (Nagle et al., 2023; Watson et al., 2021; Wenling et al., 2002).

Research indicates that language teachers who implement metalinguistic teaching practices positively contribute to their students' learning outcomes (Ng, 2018; van Rijt et al., 2022), including for pronunciation and writing (Gordon & Arias, 2024; Matre & Solheim, 2016). At the same time, studies indicate that metalinguistic self-efficacy (i.e., beliefs in one's ability to leverage their metalinguistic knowledge when completing tasks) affects metalinguistic teaching practices (e.g., Andrews, 1999; Aslan, 2015), aligning with broader findings that self-efficacy in general is one of the most consistent predictors of teacher behavior (see Klassen & Tze, 2014). Indeed, studies suggest that teachers who report low metalinguistic self-efficacy either avoid metalinguistic teaching practices during classroom instruction or do so poorly (e.g., Andrews, 1999; Aslan, 2015). For example, one of the teachers participating in Andrews' (1999) study, Rose, reports low metalinguistic self-efficacy. As a result, she relies heavily on the textbook without critically assessing its content, leading to her students forming awkward and unnatural sentences in English. She also provides explanations that contradict established grammar rules without clarifying or providing examples. Ultimately, these shortcomings prevent her from offering meaningful and accurate explanations to her students, leading to confusion and hindering their progress.

Emotional resonance and language teaching

Historically, the affective domain in language education was overshadowed by a focus on cognition, largely due to the subjective and complex nature of emotions, which made them difficult to observe and measure (Pekrun & Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2014). This cognitive bias can be traced

to Cartesian dualism, a philosophical framework that positions emotion as separate from, and subordinate to, rationality (Zembylas, 2024). Since the 1990s, however, the ‘affective turn’ in educational research has challenged this dichotomy, reframing emotion as inseparable from cognition (Pekrun & Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2014; Zembylas, 2024) and central to language teaching (Haukås, 2024; Sulis et al., 2022). Parallel to this turn, research on language teacher emotions, often in relation to their cognition, has expanded significantly over the past three decades. Spurred by the rise of positive psychology in language education research, studies have diversified beyond anxiety to explore themes such as emotion regulation, emotional labor, grit, and language teaching enjoyment (Han et al., 2023). Despite this growth, emotional resonance, that is, the emotional connections individuals form with their languages, remains underexplored in the literature on teachers.

Research on emotional resonance reveals that individuals express themselves differently across languages and experience varying emotional intensities when switching between them (see Ivaz et al., 2016). For learners, studies consistently show that languages acquired early in life (L1) carry stronger emotional weight than later-learned languages (LX), often leading them to prefer their L1 for expressing heightened emotions like anger and love (Ivaz et al., 2016; Sharif & Mahmood, 2023). However, LX can still develop strong emotional resonance under specific conditions, such as prolonged cultural immersion or meaningful personal use, where individuals strategically switch to their LX to discuss sensitive topics, circumventing cultural taboos tied to their L1 (e.g., Dewaele et al., 2024). For teachers, research remains limited, but emerging evidence suggests emotional resonance may shape instruction, including metalinguistic teaching practices. For example, Aslan’s (2015) case study of Ezgi, a French and German instructor in the United States, highlights this interplay. In the study, Ezgi exhibits strong emotional connections to French, her L1, infusing her lessons with humor and cultural insights. However, she struggles to deliver metalinguistic feedback (e.g., grammar explanations). She is not as emotionally connected to German as she is to French, yet she consistently employs metalinguistic terms when teaching. These findings imply a potential inverse relationship between emotional resonance and metalinguistic teaching practices: stronger emotional ties to a language may prioritize affective engagement over metalinguistic teaching, whereas weaker ties may facilitate it.

Research questions

A lack of emphasis on metalinguistic teaching practices during instruction risks hindering learners’ language learning and their ability to transfer linguistic knowledge to new contexts, including the learning of additional

languages. However, research on the use of such practices by language teachers, particularly those working in multilingual contexts, remains limited. While advanced metalinguistic knowledge is foundational (Andrews, 1999, 2007), existing research has yet to systematically identify the cognitive, affective, and contextual factors that influence how teachers operationalize such knowledge in the classroom. Research is needed to support the design of evidence-based teacher education programs and targeted interventions aimed at enhancing pedagogical effectiveness. This study seeks to address these dual gaps by investigating the following research questions:

- RQ1. How do participants describe their emotional resonance with respect to their taught languages?
- RQ2. What factors do they believe contribute to their emotional resonance?
- RQ3. To what extent do they believe that their emotional resonance contributes to their metalinguistic self-efficacy and teaching practices?

Methods

Research design

The study employed a qualitative research design, incorporating narrative elements to explore the research questions. The use of narrative inquiry allows for a deep exploration of language teachers' life histories, capturing the complex ways in which their emotional connections to languages are formed and how these connections relate to their metalinguistic self-efficacy and teaching practices.

Participants

Purposive and convenience sampling strategies were employed to recruit participants for this study, targeting language teachers in Norwegian upper-secondary schools who met three inclusion criteria: (1) teaching at least two foreign languages, (2) a minimum of ten years of teaching experience to prioritize seasoned educators with stabilized pedagogical practices, and (3) L2 speaker status in their taught languages (comparisons between L1 and L2 acquisition contexts are inherently problematic due to fundamental differences in acquisition pathways). Recruitment proceeded via administrators at two schools in eastern Norway (with whom the researcher had prior collaborations). These administrators provided a list of teachers who satisfied the criteria, after which the teachers were contacted. Ultimately, two teachers, Sarah and Nina (pseudonyms), participated in the study based on their alignment with the criteria, geographic accessibility, availability (no scheduling conflicts), and willingness

to participate. Sarah and Nina, both L2 speakers of English and French, had acquired these languages through formal education, reflecting trajectories typical of classroom-based L2 learners. Sarah reported proficiency in Norwegian (L1), English (C2), French (C1), German (B1), and Italian (A0), while Nina's was as follows: Norwegian (L1), English (C2), French (B2), German (A2), and Spanish (A1). Both used the CEFR scale, with which they were familiar, for self-assessment. Note that their metalinguistic knowledge was not formally assessed for the study. Both teachers had over 20 years of experience teaching English and French exclusively in Norwegian upper-secondary schools. Ethical protocols were rigorously followed: informed consent emphasized participants' rights to skip questions or withdraw, and confidentiality was ensured through pseudonyms.

Data collection

Eight classroom observations (two for English and two for French per participant) were conducted over five weeks in the spring, preceding the interviews to minimize priming effects, collect real-time data on participants' metalinguistic teaching practices, and use the data to inform the interviews, contributing to more targeted inquiries based on actual classroom practices. Observations were scheduled flexibly, averaging two sessions per week per participant, with efforts to avoid having two sessions per participant occurring on the same day (i.e., one each for English and French for the same participant). A single researcher conducted all observations, taking detailed open-ended field notes during 90-minute lessons to document instances of metalinguistic teaching practices, including explicit grammar instruction, linguistic task design, and feedback on student work (oral and written). Notes were shared with participants post-observation for verification (member checking), allowing teachers to clarify or expand on their recorded (in the field notes) practices. No audio or video recordings were made. Semi-structured interviews, conducted in English, followed the observations. To avoid influencing participants' classroom behavior, the study's focus on metalinguistic practices was not disclosed during recruitment; instead, participants were informed broadly that the research explored 'language teachers' experiences and pedagogical strategies.' Interviews probed participants' life histories related to language learning and teaching, focusing on their emotional connections to English and French. Questions were tailored to observations to triangulate observed practices with self-reported beliefs. Specifically, participants were invited to discuss their experiences learning and teaching English and French, alongside (more briefly) learning other languages such as German and Spanish, including pivotal events (e.g., study abroad in France) and learning contexts (e.g., formal education versus self-study). They were

asked to describe their emotional connections to each language, reflecting on how these developed across stages of their lives (e.g., secondary school, university, teaching career) and assessing the intensity of these connections. A pre-interview guide, distributed to the participants one week prior, outlined themes (teaching approaches, emotional experiences, language proficiency self-assessments) without specifying metalinguistic terminology to prevent rehearsed responses. Interviews lasted approximately 150 minutes, were audio-recorded with consent, and transcribed verbatim.

Data analysis

Data from the interviews and observations were analyzed through an iterative thematic analysis process (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The process began with familiarization, during which the transcribed interviews and field notes were reviewed multiple times to understand participants' language learning trajectories, emotional resonance with English and French, and metalinguistic self-efficacy and teaching practices. Coding followed a hybrid inductive-deductive approach. The text was systematically segmented and labeled with descriptive codes (e.g., 'metalinguistic self-efficacy,' 'cultural alignment'). Codes related to emotional resonance were explicitly guided by the study's theoretical frameworks: valence (positive/negative) and arousal (high/low) dimensions (Russell, 2003) were applied deductively. For instance, Nina's description of her detachment from French was coded as 'low-arousal, negative valence,' while Sarah's enthusiasm for British humor was coded as 'high-arousal, positive valence.' Inductive codes (e.g., 'self-initiated cultural engagement') emerged organically from participants' narratives. A second researcher independently coded 20% of the interview transcripts and observation notes. Discrepancies (e.g., differing interpretations of 'metalinguistic self-efficacy' instances) were resolved through discussion until consensus was reached. Note that observation data were juxtaposed with interview data to identify patterns. For instance, Nina's self-reported challenges explaining the language (when teaching English) aligned with her brief, example-scarce metalinguistic feedback in English lessons, whereas her systematic French grammar explanations during lessons matched her interview claims of engaging in compensatory language study. Codes were clustered and then developed into broader themes. Finally, findings were contextualized within the study's theoretical frameworks to explain how emotional resonance was linked to participants' metalinguistic self-efficacy and teaching practices.

Findings

The interview and observation data have been organized according to the study's research questions.

Emotional resonance regarding English and French

Both Nina and Sarah indicated strong, sustained, positive emotional connections with English throughout their lives, characterized by affection and enjoyment when using the language professionally and privately. Their emotional connections to French were more complex, ranging from frustration, self-doubt, and regret to boredom in the present, and a love of French early on. In discussing their emotional connections, three main themes emerged: authenticity, internationality, and culture, though these gained importance at different times in their lives. Authenticity and culture were reflected in the participants' strong desire to engage with authentic content in English and French, beginning in primary school, and to interact with English and French speakers, which became prominent in lower secondary school, alongside internationality. Internationality represented the participants' intense wish for international experiences, including wanting to live in other countries, and was a reaction to their parents' mostly monolingual, Norway-specific experiences. In their teacher years, internationality had waned somewhat due to now having their own families and had been replaced by a growing interest in American and French politics and society, as opposed to a love of primarily English and French literature and other media that dominated their childhood.

Asked about her emotional links to English, Nina referred to her primary school years, noting, "I loved English, and I loved reading English. I wanted to watch the originals of movies, and I wanted to read the originals of books." She revealed that her love for English developed independently of her parents, who used Norwegian, except when traveling:

Researcher: Did your parents play any role in your love of English?

Nina: I started reading books in English quite early, um, but my parents have never done that. There's nothing from my mom and dad. Only Norwegian with us. And, at vacations, maybe English but then we haven't been very, like, well-travelled.

She said that, in some ways, her desire to learn English and French (and Spanish) was her way of differentiating herself from her parents, who only spoke Norwegian. She explained that she wanted to feel more international and gain international experiences, including living abroad. Similarly, Sarah saw languages as a means to connect with the world beyond Norway and recalled seeing English as 'cool' when she was a child. She attributed her love for English and languages in general (she studied German in school) to two individuals: her father and a boy from the fourth grade. She mentioned that her father was deeply interested in languages and their structure, especially German, and would often discuss proper language use and "sort of correct anything in the paper." As for the boy, she explained that he had "moved

to our little community when we were eight or nine” and “he spoke only English,” which she found ‘extremely exotic’ because it was foreign. She noted that, during her school years, she had never traveled abroad except for trips to Sweden and Denmark, underscoring her desire to have international experiences. She would find pen pals from other countries, with whom she corresponded using dictionaries as a teenager.

While the participants’ emotional connections to French (and the reasons for such connections) resembled those provided for English during their school and early university years, they began to diverge as the participants approached graduation and the start of their teaching careers. For example, at university, Nina’s connection to French was initially driven by her desire to live abroad. She studied French as an exchange student in France for a semester, where she ultimately experienced homesickness: “I ended up spending a lot of time with other exchange students. I didn’t necessarily make a best friend in French.” She noted that she now felt emotionally detached from French, which she regretted for instrumental reasons: “Even though I feel that I should know more French, that’s only because I teach it, not necessarily for any other reason.” Discussing her connections to English, she associated it with American society and politics, which interested her. She said she now reads most of her news in English. In contrast, she admitted not being drawn to French politics and society to the same extent, exclusively associating these with France. Sarah, too, reported a weakening of her links with French as she drew closer to finishing university, although her reasons were quite different. Sarah’s love of English was strongly tied to Britain and British culture, especially British humor and the particularities of British English (e.g., idioms). She said she struggled to connect emotionally with French because she did not identify in the same way with French culture:

Researcher: Why is there this difference in English and French for you?

Sarah: I think I like English culture more. Yeah. You know, in the sense that I understand their humor better. And it’s British. Sometimes, I don’t know, but I think there are quite a few cultural similarities, which I don’t find in the same way with French culture. When I watch French TV, I sometimes see things and think I understand the language but why are they laughing?

Impact of emotional resonance on metalinguistic self-Efficacy and teaching Practices

Both participants felt that they were competent teachers of French and English overall. They expressed confidence in designing lesson plans, managing classroom dynamics, providing feedback to students, and assessing their progress effectively. Their approaches to teaching English and French

were also broadly similar. In English, they worked on various texts (e.g., fiction and non-fiction), tasked students with writing essays, reports, and summaries, explored the history, politics, and culture of English-speaking countries such as the United Kingdom and United States, and discussed contemporary global issues, such as democracy, human rights, and diversity, often using media sources. They did much the same in French, an elective foreign language in Norwegian schools, although there was a stronger focus on grammar than in English. Nina and Sarah said they found teaching to be easier in English, explaining that they considered themselves generally more proficient in English and more emotionally connected to it. Referring to the differences between English and French, Nina noted, "I feel I should be more connected to French, maybe, but I'm not. I don't know if it's because I don't necessarily visit France. Maybe I don't speak French enough with other people." However, this lack of emotional resonance with French led to an interesting dynamic: they compensated for their perceived lower proficiency and weaker emotional links vis-à-vis French by studying it more extensively as language teachers.

Referring to her need to compensate for her weak connections with French, Sarah observed, "French is maybe the one I feel least passionate about, but that's also why I've studied it more, like French more than English." The result of this effort was that she had become more knowledgeable about the French language and could explicitly discuss its aspects with students in a way she could not with English. As Nina noted when asked about her ability to explain how English worked as a language, "With English, I sometimes struggle to find the right translations or explanations. I have to think more about how I teach it." When asked whether students' proficiency in English and French affected their ability to explain language explicitly, Nina said that her students had varying levels of ability in both languages, which required her to frequently explain how each language functioned, regardless of which one she was teaching. Prompted to elaborate on why she had trouble explaining things in English, she noted that English was an emotionally loaded language for her, which sometimes made it difficult for her to organize her thoughts:

I don't know if it's emotionally loaded more than French, yeah. You know, something comes up with someone asking something, and you're trying to formulate a response, right? Maybe more, I can be more diplomatic in French, or like, where your emotions are more contained? Is this something like that, where your thoughts are more, I don't know, organized in one versus another? Yeah, I think my thoughts are more organized in French.

Sarah similarly described her English teaching as less reliant on 'empirical knowledge' and, instead, drawing from her experiences visiting

English-speaking countries and what she had learned through media. In observing the participants teach, notable differences were discovered in the level of *detail* and *duration* of metalinguistic feedback provided in English and French lessons. Note that no new grammatical concepts were introduced during these sessions, nor were any specific metalinguistic tasks assigned to students as part of the lesson plan. Both participants primarily provided metalinguistic feedback on their students' oral and speech production. Specifically, metalinguistic feedback during English lessons had a shorter delivery, was less detailed than for French, and frequently lacked guidance (i.e., examples of correct usage). For instance, in one English class, when a student confused 'fun' with 'funny' when speaking, Sarah responded, "Remember, 'fun' is something enjoyable, and 'funny' means something that makes you laugh." She left it at that. Similarly, following a presentation in English by a student about a short story they had read in another lesson, she provided the following feedback: "You pronounced the word 'society' incorrectly. It is a very common word." To another student, she said that they had placed the stress in the wrong part of the word 'exuberant.'

In contrast, during a French lesson, when a student incorrectly conjugated a verb when speaking, Sarah took time to go over the rules of French verb conjugation. She pointed out that for regular '-er' verbs, the conjugation must align with the subject, explaining that with 'il' or 'elle,' the ending '-e' is added, whereas for 'nous,' the appropriate ending is '-ons.' She mentioned that these rules vary depending on the verb group and provided the example of regular '-ir' verbs, where the conjugation for 'nous' becomes '-issons,' as in nous finissons (we finish). She reminded students that irregular verbs, such as être (to be) or avoir (to have), do not follow these patterns and must be memorized separately. A similar dynamic was observable in Nina's lessons. For example, during an English writing task, Nina scanned their text and provided quick corrections on word choice to a student, simply telling them, "'Big' is better here than 'large.'" Giving feedback on an essay in her French lesson, she spent more time discussing the difference between 'grand' and 'gros' as used by the student writing the essay, highlighting how the choice depends on the context and type of noun. Addressing the student, she explained that 'grand' typically refers to height or size in terms of length or stature, while 'gros' is used to indicate bulk or volume. She said that understanding the nuances between the two adjectives was important because using one over the other could change the meaning of the sentence.

Discussion

Divergent emotional connections

Nina and Sarah's emotional links with English and French appeared to stem from intrinsic factors, meaning their connections were deeply personal and

self-motivated. Their love for both languages developed independently of external pressures, driven by a desire to engage with authentic content, such as literature and films, and to connect with the wider world beyond Norway. As they grew older, their ties to English were reinforced by an appreciation for the language's relevance to understanding politics and society in the United States and Britain. In contrast, their connections to French became progressively more instrumental and weaker in adulthood, largely tied to their professional *need* to teach it (note that intrinsic factors tend to have a stronger influence on performance than extrinsic ones; see Cerasoli et al., 2014). They did not identify as strongly with French culture or politics as adults. While previous studies on learners (but not teachers) have shown that languages learned earlier in life and used more frequently tend to evoke stronger emotional resonance and correlate with higher proficiency (e.g., Dewaele et al., 2024), the findings from this study suggest that emotional connections and proficiency can degrade as the factors that underpin them lose relevance. In other words, for French, 'internationality,' participants' aspiration for global experiences, and authentic media initially anchored their emotional investment. However, as personal priorities shifted, this anchor dissolved, leaving French adrift.

Paradoxically, their sustained efforts to improve their French as language teachers (see below) highlights a tension between their expectations of how a language teacher should be able to perform in the classroom and the cognitive-emotional toll of teaching a language with dwindling personal resonance. These divergent emotional connections underscore the dynamic interplay between cognitive, affective, and contextual systems in multilingual individuals (Jessner, 2008). Indeed, for multilingual individuals, emotional connections to languages may vacillate alongside proficiency, reflecting the adaptive nature of dynamic systems. The findings suggest that teacher education programs must explicitly address the role of emotions in shaping teaching practices. Given that emotional resonance waxes and wanes, as seen in Nina and Sarah's trajectories, teacher training should equip teachers with strategies to regulate and leverage these fluctuations, for example, through reflective practices and mindfulness techniques (see Lau, 2016).

*Emotional resonance, metalinguistic self-efficacy,
and teaching practices*

Sarah and Nina's emotional connections to English appeared to foster greater confidence in teaching English and a stronger sense of overall proficiency in the language compared to French, with the participants noting that English felt more intuitive due to their deeper affective engagement with it. However, their deeper affective engagement with English, combined with a weaker emotional connection to French and lower self-perceived

proficiency in French, prompted a compensatory pedagogical strategy: they directed greater effort toward studying French structure to enhance their language teaching. This dynamic suggests an inverse relationship in which a declining emotional resonance with a language (and perceived proficiency) leads teachers to adopt a more analytical approach, addressing perceived linguistic gaps and weak emotional connections through more systematic study of that language, including its structure. This pattern aligns with Higgins' (1987) self-discrepancy theory, in that discrepancies between the participants' 'ideal' and 'ought' selves drove compensatory strategies that contributed to the metalinguistic teaching practices observed in the participants' French lessons in this study. Over time, the frequent implementation of such practices would have reinforced their French-related metalinguistic self-efficacy. It is worth noting that the participants did not attempt to increase their emotional connections to French as a compensatory strategy; rather, they engaged in more formal study of the language, indicating the impact of professional exigencies as opposed to a personal need to reverse their weakened emotional connections to French.

Based on DPT (Augusto, 2024), the participants primarily relied on System 1 (fast, intuitive, emotion-driven processing) when teaching English but predominantly engaged System 2 (slow, deliberate, analytical processing) for French, as their weaker emotional connection to French likely reduced the accessibility of intuitive teaching modes. Their reliance on System 1 for English instruction was evident in their descriptions of teaching practices, which prioritized emotional, personal experiences over empirical knowledge. CLT (Sweller et al., 2011) posits that high emotional engagement can deplete cognitive resources required for System 2 tasks. For example, Nina's frustration with metalinguistic explanations in English ("I struggle to find the right translations") contrasted with her analytical approach to French, highlighting a potentially critical challenge for teachers instructing in multiple languages: balancing intuitive pedagogy with metalinguistic practices across languages of unequal emotional significance. Interestingly, the metalinguistic strategies employed by the participants in French did not transfer to their English teaching. Perhaps their emotional resonance with English acted as a filter or barrier, suppressing the cross-linguistic application of metalinguistic practices. The findings contrast with theoretical frameworks for multilingualism, such as Jessner's (2008) Dynamic Model of Multilingualism, which emphasizes the interactive, synergistic nature of linguistic repertoires. In the current study, the participants' apparent emotional and cognitive compartmentalization of English and French suggests that the two languages occupied distinct pedagogical and personal spaces, with strategies used in one domain (i.e., English teaching) failing to reinforce those in the other (i.e., French teaching). Few studies have documented similar phenomena, but this study partially supports the findings

from Aslan (2015). A key distinction, however, lies in the participants' linguistic backgrounds: in Aslan's study, French was the instructor's first language (L1), whereas Sarah and Nina taught French as a second language (L2).

Conclusion and implications

The findings underscore the role played by teachers' emotional connections to their taught languages in shaping their metalinguistic self-efficacy, and teaching practices. Teachers with strong emotional connections to a language may feel more intuitive and confident in their teaching, yet this may also interfere with their ability to implement metalinguistic practices and, over time, their metalinguistic self-efficacy. These dynamics highlight the necessity for language teachers to consciously cultivate emotional engagement with their languages while simultaneously strengthening their metalinguistic knowledge and self-efficacy, including an awareness of the importance of metalinguistic practices. With regard to research, more studies are needed that explore the relationship between emotional resonance and teaching practices, particularly among teachers of multiple languages (and, ideally, longitudinally). Here, the current study's narrow focus on two Norwegian teachers of English and French, while insightful, raises questions about how these dynamics might unfold in broader linguistic and sociocultural contexts. For example, future research could extend this work by examining teachers of marginalized languages (e.g., minority languages) or typologically distinct languages (e.g., Mandarin and Arabic), where emotional resonance and metalinguistic practices may intersect differently. Finally, the study did not examine how participants' metalinguistic self-efficacy and teaching practices impacted student learning outcomes. It is hoped that future studies will address these issues.

References

- Andrews, S. (1999). Why do L2 teachers need to 'know about language'? Teacher metalinguistic awareness and input for learning. *Language and Education*, 13(3), 161–177. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09500789908666766>
- Andrews, S. (2007). *Teacher language awareness*. Cambridge University Press.
- Aslan, E. (2015). When the native is also a non-native: "Retrodicting" the complexity of language teacher cognition. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 71(3), 244–269. <https://doi.org/10.3138/cmlr.2575>
- Augusto, R. (2024). Two kinds of process or two kinds of processing? Disambiguating dual-process theories. *Review of Philosophy and Psychology*, 15(1), 277–298. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13164-023-00673-1>
- Blömeke, S., & Kaiser, G. (2017). Understanding the development of teachers' professional competencies as personally, situationally and socially determined.

- In D. J. Clandinin, & J. Hsu (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of research on teacher education* (pp. 783–802). Sage.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101.
- Burns, A., Freeman, D., & Edwards, E. (2015). Theorizing and studying the language-teaching mind: Mapping research on language teacher cognition. *The Modern Language Journal*, 99(3), 585–601. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12245>
- Calafato, R. (2021). “I feel like it’s giving me a lot as a language teacher to be a learner myself”: Factors affecting the implementation of a multilingual pedagogy as reported by teachers of diverse languages. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 11(4), 579–606. <https://doi.org/10.14746/ssllt.2021.11.4.5>
- Calafato, R. (2022). Multilingual teacher identity in the Emirates. In S. Hopkyns & W. Zoghbor (Eds.), *Linguistic identities in the Arab Gulf States* (pp. 198–214). Routledge.
- Calafato, R. (2024). Multilingual pedagogies in first versus foreign language contexts: A cross-country study of language teachers. *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, 62(2), 249–273. <https://doi.org/10.1515/iral-2022-0019>
- Calafato, R. (2025). Language aptitude and its links with metalinguistic knowledge, self-efficacy, anxiety, and language maintenance in multilingual language teachers. *Language Awareness*, 34(1), 100–118. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09658416.2024.2337663>
- Cerasoli, C. P., Nicklin, J. M., & Ford, M. T. (2014). Intrinsic motivation and extrinsic incentives jointly predict performance: A 40-year meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 140(4), 980–1008. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/a0035661>
- Dewaele, J. M., Alsuhaibani, Y., Altalhab, S., & Alghamdi, W. (2024). How frequency and intensity of exposure to a foreign language boosts its emotional resonance. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 21(4), 1968–1982. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2023.2233551>
- Gordon, J., & Arias, R. S. (2024). “The most important thing is to make them aware”: A case study of teacher metalanguage knowledge and explicit L2 pronunciation instruction. *TESOL Quarterly*, 58(4), 1666–1702. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.3301>
- Griffiths, C., & Tajeddin, Z. (Eds.). (2020). *Lessons from good language teachers*. Cambridge University Press.
- Gutiérrez, X. (2013). Metalinguistic knowledge, metalingual knowledge, and proficiency in L2 Spanish. *Language Awareness*, 22(2), 176–191. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09658416.2012.713966>
- Han, J., Jin, L., & Yin, H. (2023). Mapping the research on language teacher emotion: A systematic literature review. *System*, 118, 103138. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2023.103138>
- Haukås, Å. (2024). Understanding the factors supporting language teachers’ sustained motivation until retirement. *The Modern Language Journal*, 108(2), 430–445. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12920>
- Higgins, E. T. (1987). Self-discrepancy: A theory relating self and affect. *Psychological Review*, 94(3), 319–340. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/0033-295X.94.3.319>

- Ivaz, L., Costa, A., & Duñabeitia, J. A. (2016). The emotional impact of being myself: Emotions and foreign-language processing. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition*, 42(3), 489–496. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/xlm0000179>
- Jessner, U. (2008). A DST model of multilingualism and the role of metalinguistic awareness. *The Modern Language Journal*, 92(2), 270–283. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.2008.00718.x>
- Klassen, R. M., & Tze, V. M. (2014). Teachers' self-efficacy, personality, and teaching effectiveness: A meta-analysis. *Educational Research Review*, 12(1), 59–76. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2014.06.001>
- Koehler, M. J., Mishra, P., & Cain, W. (2013). What is technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK)? *Journal of Education*, 193(3), 13–19. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002205741319300303>
- Kramsch, C., & Zhang, L. (2018). *The multilingual instructor*. Oxford University Press.
- Ku, E. K. (2023). *Teachers of multiple languages: Identities, beliefs and emotions*. Multilingual Matters.
- Kubanyiova, M. (2019). Language teacher motivation research: Its ends, means and future commitments. In M. Lamb, K. Csizér, A. Henry, & S. Ryan (Eds.), *The Palgrave handbook of motivation for language learning* (pp. 389–407). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lau, S. M. C. (2016). Language, identity, and emotionality: Exploring the potential of language portraits in preparing teachers for diverse learners. *The New Educator*, 12(2), 147–170. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1547688X.2015.1062583>
- Matre, S., & Solheim, R. (2016). Opening dialogic spaces: Teachers' metatalk on writing assessment. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 80, 188–203. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2016.07.001>
- Mercer, S. (2018). Psychology for language learning: Spare a thought for the teacher. *Language Teaching*, 51(14), 504–525. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444817000258>
- Myhill, D. (2000). Misconceptions and difficulties in the acquisition of metalinguistic knowledge. *Language and Education*, 14(3), 151–163. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09500780008666787>
- Nagle, C., Sachs, R., & Zárate-Sánchez, G. (2023). Spanish teachers' beliefs on the usefulness of pronunciation knowledge, skills, and activities and their confidence in implementing them. *Language Teaching Research*, 27(3), 491–517. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168820957037>
- Ng, P. C. (2018). Overcoming institutional native speakerism: The experience of one teacher. In S. Houghton, & K. Hashimoto (Eds.), *Towards post-native-speakerism: Intercultural communication and language education* (pp. 3–15). Springer.
- Pekrun, R., & Linnenbrink-Garcia, L. (Eds.). (2014). *International handbook of emotions in education*. Francis & Taylor.
- Plass, J. L., & Kalyuga, S. (2019). Four ways of considering emotion in cognitive load theory. *Educational Psychology Review*, 31(2), 339–359. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-019-09473-5>
- Roehr, K. (2008). Metalinguistic knowledge and language ability in university-level L2 learners. *Applied Linguistics*, 29(2), 173–199. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amm037>

- Russell, J. A. (2003). Core affect and the psychological construction of emotion. *Psychological Review*, 110(1), 145–172.
- Sharif, H., & Mahmood, S. (2023). Emotional processing in bilinguals: A systematic review aimed at identifying future trends in neurolinguistics. *Humanities & Social Sciences Communications*, 10(1), 438. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-023-01926-1>
- Sharpe, D., & Zelazo, P. D. (2002). The foundations and development of metalinguistic knowledge. *Journal of Child Language*, 29(2), 449–488. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0305000902295343>
- Sulis, G., Babic, S., Mairitsch, A., Mercer, S., Jin, J., & King, J. (2022). Retention and attrition in early-career foreign language teachers in Austria and the United Kingdom. *The Modern Language Journal*, 106(1), 155–171. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12765>
- Sweller, J., Ayres, P., & Kalyuga, S. (2011). *Cognitive load theory*. Springer.
- van Rijt, J., Myhill, D., De Maeyer, S., & Coppen, P. A. (2022). Linguistic meta-concepts can improve grammatical understanding in L1 education: Evidence from a Dutch quasi-experimental study. *PLoS One*, 17(2), e0263123. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0263123>
- Watson, A. M., Newman, R. M., & Morgan, S. D. (2021). Metatalk and metalinguistic knowledge: The interplay of procedural and declarative knowledge in the classroom discourse of first-language grammar teaching. *Language Awareness*, 30(3), 257–275. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09658416.2021.1905655>
- Weimer, A., Koniakowsky, I., Nazir, T. A., & Huckauf, A. (2022). Behavioral evidence for differences in emotional resonance during processing first and second language. *International Journal of Bilingualism*, 26(6), 784–798. <https://doi.org/10.18725/OPARU-49169>
- Wenling, L., Anderson, R., Nagy, W., & Houcan, Z. (2002). Facets of metalinguistic awareness that contribute to Chinese literacy. In L. Wenling, J. S. Gaffney, & J. L. Packard (Eds.), *Chinese children's reading acquisition* (pp. 87–106). Springer.
- Wernicke, M. (2017). Navigating native-speaker ideologies as an FSL teacher. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 73(2), 208–236. <https://doi.org/10.3138/cmlr.2951>
- Zembylas, M. (2024). Revisiting the notion of critical thinking in higher education: Theorizing the thinking-feeling entanglement using affect theory. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 29(6), 1606–1620. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2022.2078961>

15 Breaking the boundaries

Integrating PLLT and multilingualism

Giulia Sulis, Sarah Mercer, and Åsta Haukås

Introduction

The aim of this edited volume was to explore the interconnections between Psychology of Multilingual Learners and Teachers (PLLT) and multilingualism. Although these are two closely related domains with many areas of overlap, they have essentially developed into two separate communities of scholars with only a small number working in both domains. However, as the three editors all share interests in both domains, we were keen to create a space which would bring them together and illuminate areas of commonality, differences, and ways in which each domain could learn from the other.

As Krishnan (2009) suggests, academic disciplines are typically characterised by a distinct object of study, specialised bodies of knowledge, unique theoretical frameworks and methodologies, discipline-specific terminology, and institutional presence within academia. While not all disciplines may share these features, “the more of these boxes a discipline can tick, the more likely it becomes that a certain field of academic inquiry is a recognised discipline” (Krishnan, 2009, p. 10). Although PLLT and multilingualism share some of the characteristics of academic disciplines, they cannot be fully considered as disciplines in their own right. One of the main reasons is that both fields are inherently interdisciplinary: they exist at the intersection of several disciplines rather than as completely independent bodies of knowledge, their research topics often overlap with other fields, and they draw on theories and methodologies from different areas of study. This is particularly evident in the case of PLLT, where scholars are required to draw on and engage with the two areas of psychology and language learning and teaching (Mercer & Ryan, 2016). This is also the case of multilingualism (Ayres-Bennett & Fisher, 2022); for instance, Cenoz (2013) identifies several key disciplines central to the study of multilingualism, such as linguistics, psycholinguistics, neurolinguistics, sociolinguistics, education, and language policy. Wray and Wallace (2015)

recognise that the broader field of applied linguistics, from which many PLLT and multilingualism scholars come, is also inherently interdisciplinary. They explain,

Applied linguistics sits in pole position to integrate claims about language from across many other disciplines — including linguistics — into more coherent and comprehensive accounts of how form, function and usage combine through learning and cognition to achieve social purposes, and how information across all domains of human activity are influenced the medium of their expression.

(p. 31)

Therefore, since PLLT and multilingualism cannot be regarded as standalone disciplines and inherently involve a degree of interdisciplinarity, we believe the term “fields of inquiry” is more appropriate to describe them. This term better reflects specific areas of investigation within a broader discipline or spanning multiple disciplines.

Yet, the challenges that arise when integrating multiple fields of inquiry often mirror those encountered when attempting to integrate distinct academic disciplines. A popular definition of interdisciplinarity is provided by Moran (2010), who describes it as “any form of dialogue or interaction between two or more disciplines” (p. 16). Similarly, Repko and Szostak (2017) note that interdisciplinarity “studies a complex problem (including mega ones) by drawing on disciplinary insights (and sometimes stakeholder views) and integrating them” (Repko & Szostak, 2017, p. 26–27). In this edited volume, recognising the inherently interdisciplinary nature of both PLLT and multilingualism, we have encouraged the authors to integrate insights from both fields in order to enrich our understanding of the complex lived experiences and psychologies of learners and teachers in relation to multilingualism. As many participants naturally adopted the language of interdisciplinarity when describing their experiences of working on their chapters, we will broadly refer to an interdisciplinary approach when reporting on their experiences of working across PLLT and multilingualism in this chapter. It is important to note that this book is not meant as a how-to manual or a step-by-step guide to integrating PLLT and multilingualism, but rather as a collection of diverse perspectives that explore their connections and interactions. Some authors draw more on one field of inquiry than the other, which is also a characteristic feature of much interdisciplinary work (Mercer & Ryan, 2016). Our hope is to showcase the diversity of lenses but also the rich potential stemming from working across fields of inquiry.

In order to understand the authors’ experiences of working at the crossroads of these two fields of inquiry, we invited them to produce a written

reflection on their experience of collaborating on this project. Drawing parallels with interdisciplinary work, we explicitly asked them to reflect on the joys, challenges, and lessons learnt from working on these chapters. In this final chapter, we synthesise their insights to explore the benefits and challenges of combining PLLT and multilingualism as areas of scholarship, and we outline potential pathways for future research integrating these two domains.

Benefits

A recurring theme in the authors' reflections was that adopting a multilingual perspective when examining PLLT constructs (e.g., WTC, motivation, etc.) allowed them to move beyond the traditional L2 perspective and the idea of languages as isolated, self-contained systems. Much of the field has historically been grounded in second language acquisition (SLA) frameworks, which often rely on monolingual native speaker norms as a benchmark for assessing L2 development. These approaches typically focus on a single target language at a time, typically English, rather than considering languages as interrelated components of a broader holistic linguistic repertoire. As highlighted by Kramsch (2015), this is also an issue in the broader field of applied linguistics, which "still remains monolingual/monocultural in its research cultures and intellectual/teaching traditions" (p. 463). As such, multilingual approaches and ways of thinking often remain unfamiliar to researchers in PLLT. Contributing to this volume has prompted these authors to engage in fresh thinking, to critically reflect on their assumptions about languages and language learning, and to re-examine the familiar through entirely new lenses.

One of the central issues emerging from the authors' reflections is indeed about understanding PLLT constructs (e.g., motivation, WTC, engagement, etc.) across languages rather than only in relation to specific languages (see, e.g., Henry & MacIntyre, this volume). Naturally, this requires reconceptualising the notion of language domains and what exactly is meant by the domain specificity of such constructs. While multilingualism researchers often speak of a single, integrated linguistic repertoire, it is equally important to recognise that individuals often have different relationships to each of their languages in terms of aspects such as identity, emotion, and motivation. In our view, therefore, the core issue is not whether to reject single language-domain specificity altogether, but rather to understand when it is more appropriate to view these constructs through the lens of the entire multilingual repertoire, and when it makes more sense to focus on individual languages. For example, learners may hold different beliefs or emotional associations with each language they know (see, e.g., Sulis et al., 2025), and this nuance matters to understand how certain constructs

exist “in the Lx and in the Ly”, as suggested by Henry and MacIntyre in Chapter 2. As such, the goal is to consider whether a construct is best conceptualised as spanning a person’s full linguistic repertoire, or whether it would be best examined in relation to specific languages, depending on the research focus.

Researchers who were less familiar with PLLT were also encouraged to see multilingualism through a new lens. This shift involved moving beyond the traditional emphasis on technical and cognitive skills in multilingualism research to acknowledge the crucial role of affective and other psychological processes. Incorporating PLLT and multilingual perspectives can offer a richer understanding not only of what individuals can do with their languages, but also of who they are and how they feel in relation to their linguistic selves. It gives voice to learners as holistic, complex beings. As summarised by Lee and Forbes, “the ‘cognitive’, the ‘metacognitive’, and the ‘affective’ are, at the end of the day, inseparable and not to be discussed in isolation”, and this combined approach allows researchers to “explore ‘the nuanced becoming’ of a multilingual”. In sum, as concluded by Shen and Lamb, “learning a language is rarely only about the language”, and combining lenses and fields of inquiry as we have tried to do in this collection can do better justice to the multifaceted complexity of the psychology of learners and teachers in relation to multilingualism.

The authors also reported on other broader benefits from integrating these two fields of inquiry. As mentioned by most contributors, working across disciplines is a continuous learning journey, which requires flexibility, creativity, open-mindedness, and perseverance (see also Mercer & Ryan, 2016). While it calls for stepping outside one’s comfort zone to engage with unfamiliar theories or methodologies, it is this challenge that makes it so intellectually rewarding. Nazila Fattahi and colleagues, for instance, explain:

I have realized that true interdisciplinary work is not about merely applying familiar methods in a new context but about actively engaging with different disciplines to understand their nuances. This requires a willingness to develop new skills and expand one’s knowledge base.

Thus, by challenging researchers to reflect on their ontological assumptions and practices, such research opens up new ways of exploring and thinking and serves as a form of transformative learning. Crucially, it can also be a transformative experience for participants, as highlighted, for instance, by Humphries and colleagues: “Too many studies focus purely on the academic linguistic aspects of SA [study abroad], but it became clear from our participants that sharing their emotional experiences had more value as they grappled with their emerging multilingual identities”.

As the authors from this collection highlight, sharing best practice across areas of expertise and incorporating diverse theoretical and methodological approaches not only allows fields to enrich one another but also enhances the rigour of research design and adds complexity and depth to the analysis. As highlighted by Kramsch (2015), in fact, interdisciplinary approaches lead researchers “to adopt mixed methods of research, which has produced more contextualized and therefore more valid findings than single research methods, and thus do better justice to the complex systems studied by the field” (p. 462). Crucially, interdisciplinary approaches can lead not only to new theoretical insights and methodological innovation, but also to new implications for practice, as highlighted by Słowik-Krogulec and Mystkowska-Wiertelak: “Overall, this project allowed us to expand our perspectives, offering not just theoretical insights but also practical implications for supporting teachers in multilingual environments”. Similarly, Calafato highlights the practical value of interdisciplinary research and explains that, “venturing beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries can lead to innovative solutions for complex educational challenges”. As such, an interdisciplinary approach is well suited to solving practical “problems in the world in which language is implicated” (Cook, 2003, p. 3).

One of the most frequently mentioned benefits of this kind of research in the authors’ reflections is also the opportunity for professional collaboration across research areas. In several chapters, scholars from different fields of inquiry worked together. According to the authors, this exchange not only strengthens the research itself but also deepens the researchers’ understanding of each other’s fields of inquiry and opens up new research approaches and lines of thinking. Collaboration is therefore central to the success and value of any kind of interdisciplinary research. Torregrossa and colleagues, for instance, reflected on the value of such collaboration: “As three researchers with diverse linguistic background, working in different contexts and employing varied methodologies” [...] “our collaboration has been an incredibly enriching experience”. Thus, as suggested by Mercer and Ryan (2016), on a more practical level, “we need to make interdisciplinary collaboration an attractive proposition and a policy of gradual persuasion focusing on the potential benefits that collaborators can apply within their home discipline” (p. 3). However, there are challenges from working through an interdisciplinary approach, too.

Challenges

Interdisciplinary research is notoriously challenging (Ayres-Bennett & Fisher, 2022). As noted by most authors in their reflection pieces, each field of inquiry has its own constructs, terminology, methodologies, and theoretical frameworks. As such, engaging in interdisciplinary dialogue requires

what Pavlenko (2008) describes as academic multilingualism, namely, “the ability to speak and read in more than one ‘academic language’, the ability to translate between them, and a willingness to interact with speakers of “other languages” (p. 197). Given the interdisciplinarity already inherent in PLLT, Mercer and Ryan (2016) highlight that a critical obstacle is the requirement to develop expertise in two or more disciplines, which “can place an unrealistic burden on individual scholars who are required to be fully conversant with the literature in both applied linguistics and psychology to fully appreciate the complexity and connections within and across the fields” (p. 4). Bringing multilingualism to the mix further expands the scope of required expertise, adding yet another domain with its own set of terminologies, theories, and methodologies to navigate – which can be challenging on both an intellectual and practical level. This issue was highlighted by most authors including Andria, who explained: “One of the most substantial challenges I encountered was reconciling varying theoretical frameworks and methodologies”. Accordingly, a key attitude required to engage in interdisciplinary work or work across fields of inquiry is academic humility, a point raised by several authors in their reflections. Fattahi and colleagues, for instance, recognise that “there is also a constant need to recognize one’s limitations and blind spots, as venturing into unfamiliar disciplines necessitates caution and humility”. This approach can help researchers to recognise the limits of their own knowledge and to appreciate how much there is still to learn from the other field of inquiry.

Working across these specific fields of inquiry also raises important ethical considerations that researchers need to attend to. PLLT researchers often address sensitive issues, so they need to incorporate careful ethical considerations into their research designs in addition to the usual concerns such as about psychological risk through discussing possible triggers, where to seek psychological support, and the options for debrief after talking about topics which may be sensitive. Integrating both PLLT and multilingualism introduces an additional layer of ethical complexity. For example, well-intentioned researchers need to take care not to make problematic assumptions about learners’ willingness and comfort in discussing their linguistic repertoires, identities, or use of multiple languages. Indeed, there may be potential emotional triggers, including generational trauma associated with certain languages (see, e.g., Rolland et al., 2023). Learners may not wish to embrace a certain language identity for complex personal issues (Gayton & Fisher, 2022). The whole native speaker ideology can add problematic issues of confidence and perceptions of authenticity or imposter syndrome in respect to various languages (Ushioda, 2017). Different languages also bring with them varying associations of status and prestige which can affect an individual’s emotional attachments and comfort in talking about or identifying with a language (Becker, 2023).

Such issues thus need to be approached with care and respect, avoiding assumptions. While striving to create inclusive, welcoming spaces, we must also recognise that this alone is not sufficient; ongoing ethical critical reflection is needed on how diverse participants may feel in multilingual research. In addition, PLLT scholarship can be emotionally demanding for researchers as a result of the vicarious impact of listening to participants' experiences and perspectives, especially when dealing with difficult topics and emotions. Scholars therefore need to be prepared to handle others' emotional responses, while also ensuring they have provided and planned for their own support and debrief options.

Researching across PLLT and multilingualism also requires scholars to carefully reflect on their own positionality. How researchers position themselves, socially and linguistically, and how they position others "raise broader concerns over language, identity and power that condition the research process and its outcome" (Selleck & Barakos, 2023, p. 674). As such, a researcher's positioning informs which questions are asked, which voices are prioritised, and how language practices are framed – whether as resources or problems (Giampapa & Canagarajah, 2020; Heller & Martin-Jones, 2001). In addition, researchers need to reflect critically on their positionality in relation to their own linguistic identities and assumptions about languages, status, multilingualism, and supposed norms. This makes it equally important to consider the emotional and ethical impact of research not only on the participants but also on the researchers themselves. Some of these issues are summarised by Siying Shen and Martin Lamb:

Therefore, while adopting a multilingual lens appears to be an exciting direction, careful considerations are also needed in the research design stage to reflect its strengths, such as forming a research team with different language backgrounds, or integrating member-checking into the process of data collection.

This means "questioning our own assumptions and taken-for-granted actions, thinking about where/who we are and where/who we would like to be, challenging our conceptions of reality and exploring new possibilities" (Cunliffe, 2004, p. 411).

There are also institutional and professional challenges to acknowledge when working across fields of inquiry. Rather than the cross-fertilisation of ideas and the subsequent innovation and creativity of scholarship from this "interdisciplinary-style" space, researchers may risk a lack of validation from experts in either or both fields of inquiry (Mercer & Ryan, 2016). Academic identities are typically fostered within specific spaces, communities, conferences, journals, and categories of scholarship so that

crossing those boundaries can be challenging and leave scholars in a kind of “no man’s land”. Additional tensions may arise over professional expectations, research outputs, and funding – for example, when departments pressure researchers to work exclusively within their own linguistic discipline, which may ultimately contribute to gatekeeping. As highlighted by Mercer and Ryan (2016), “the consequence of this is that interdisciplinary intellectual curiosity can get relegated behind the security of familiar structures” (p. 4), meaning that rather than be celebrated for their innovation, scholars are directly and indirectly encouraged to focus and become narrow and singular in their orientation to meet structural expectations and constraints.

Context-sensitivity is another key challenge when integrating PLLT and multilingualism research. For instance, certain psychological constructs may have different meanings and significance across cultures and languages (Mesquita, 2022; Tsai et al., 2006). Particularly when exploring the notion of multilingualism and working with diverse languages, it can be challenging to ensure constructs are communicated, conceptualised, and utilised in the same sense of meaning and appropriacy across languages and settings.

The authors’ reflections also prompted us to critically consider the roles of English and LOTE in this respect. Sometimes, there is an implicit assumption that a focus on LOTE inherently reflects a multilingual perspective. However, this is not always the case. LOTE are often examined as isolated target languages, without considering their interaction with learners’ broader multilingual repertoires. As such, research on LOTE may reproduce traditional SLA paradigms, rather than embracing a truly multilingual perspective. Furthermore, rejecting English or presenting it as inherently problematic simply replaces one narrow view of language with another. Ultimately, what is needed is a balanced, respectful approach that recognises and values all languages – including English – and their complex relationships within multilingual contexts. In this book, our authors provided a multitude of perspectives on this relationship (see, e.g., Humphries et al., this volume; Kouraichi, this volume).

New directions and future research

The authors’ reflections also provided much food for thought about many new exciting directions that work in this area could take. We would therefore like to conclude this edited volume by offering suggestions for future research integrating PLLT and multilingualism, in the hope of encouraging scholars to further explore how these fields can mutually enrich each other. We focus on four key areas: populations, contexts, ontologies, and methodologies.

Populations

While this collection already covers a wide range of populations in different geographical, cultural, and educational settings, there remains even greater potential to broaden our understanding of the multilingual lives and experiences of learners and teachers in additional and underrepresented contexts. First of all, more research is needed on the psychology of language learners and teachers from minority groups who are at greater risk of systemic linguistic discrimination or marginalisation. Research merging PLLT and multilingualism has so far largely focused on elite forms of multilingualism (see De Costa, 2019). There is still considerable scope to illuminate the multilingual experiences of refugees, migrants, individuals in war zones, and ethnic minorities, while remaining mindful of the ethical considerations discussed earlier (see, e.g., Hedman & Fisher, 2025; Tavares & Benediktsson, 2024; Xerri, 2024 as exceptions). Doing so can help amplify the voices of these communities. Crucially, we also need more research on the language experiences of indigenous populations whose languages are at risk of being erased (see, e.g., Chiblow & Meighan, 2022). Finally, we must also understand the multilingual experiences of vulnerable groups such as people with disability or with specific learning needs; for instance, understanding issues related to their motivation and emotions in relation to language learning may help to better support their successful inclusion in the language classroom, and such research is still limited at present (for an exception see, e.g., Kormos & Smith, 2023).

Another population with a relative absence of scholarship concerns teachers of all kinds, working at all levels of the education system from primary through to tertiary and including language teacher educators (Calafato, 2020; Gao & Yang, 2023). Only recently has PLLT begun to address the complex psychology of language teachers (see, e.g., Mercer & Kostoulas, 2018) and the same gap is evident in multilingualism research. Both fields have so far tended to mainly focus on learners and, indeed, the chapters collected together in this volume represent the same imbalance. Yet, the chapters in this volume collectively emphasise the importance of considering teachers' psychology in relation to multilingualism not only as a counterpart to students' multilingualism, but also as a distinct and equally crucial area of investigation. One promising area for further research concerns teachers' multilingualism and how this is psychologically experienced in their professional lives (see, for example, Calafato, 2021; Haukås, 2016; Melo-Pfeifer, 2023; Morea & Fisher, 2025). The chapters by Bonar et al. (this volume) and Słowik-Krogulec and Mystkowska-Wiertelak (this volume), focusing respectively on the well-being and flow of multilingual teachers and teachers of multiple languages, have illustrated how teachers' construction of their multilingual identities influences their confidence, sense of legitimacy, and

well-being within the language classroom. Calafato (this volume) showed how teachers' emotional ties to the languages they teach influence their metalinguistic self-efficacy and multilingual teaching practices.

Furthermore, the concepts explored in relation to learner psychology in Part 1, such as self-efficacy, identity, and emotions, are strongly echoed in Part 2, where they are re-examined from the teachers' perspective. These parallels between the two parts highlight the reciprocal, dynamic relationship between student and teacher psychology. For example, Spaliviero (this volume) suggests a complex interaction where language teachers' self-efficacy beliefs when implementing multilingual pedagogies influence how learners subsequently engage with their multilingual repertoires. These findings highlight the need to link research on student and teacher psychology in order to fully understand how multilingual pedagogies are experienced and implemented in practice.

Contexts

Another key area with potential for expansion concerns the types of research contexts in geographical and educational level terms. Some settings remain underrepresented in research, such as Africa and South America, despite the fact that many countries on these continents are characterised by great linguistic diversity and rich multilingualism (see Basnight-Brown et al., 2022; Ndhlovu & Makalela, 2021; Oostendorp et al., 2024 as some exceptions). There is also a need for more cross-cultural research that examines the PLLT across diverse contexts to explore the extent to which conceptualisations of constructs are indeed similar or different for different linguistic and cultural populations (see, e.g., Mesquita, 2017).

Furthermore, research is needed across both fields at all levels of education, including primary, secondary and tertiary education, as well as teacher education. For instance, research on primary-level learners is particularly scarce in both PLLT and multilingualism (see, e.g., Hofer & Jessner, 2019, as an exception). In addition, there is also a need for further research into individuals' multilingual experiences in informal contexts outside the classroom (see also Sulis, 2023). One particularly under-researched but growing area is that of multilingual families, which offers valuable insights into the psychological experiences of how multilingualism is lived and enacted in everyday life (see, e.g., Hosseini & Haukås, 2024; La Morgia, 2025; Tang & Calafato, 2024), and how these out-of-class lives link to their formal language learning and teaching lives (Sulis & Mercer, 2025; Sulis, 2023).

Ontologies

The authors' reflections revealed that such an interdisciplinary approach requires careful consideration of one's ontological assumptions about

languages and language learning. As highlighted by Ortega (2018), “ontology of language itself – what is language, what is its nature? – has been paid little attention” (p. 65). Similarly, Henry’s and MacIntyre’s chapter (this volume) has highlighted the crucial need for researchers to deeply engage with language ontologies and “to develop an awareness of the effects that ontological assumptions have on the conceptualization of constructs and the ways they are researched” (p. 13). A key issue in psychological work has been to reflect on domain specificity but what the domain is, especially in multilingual settings, may need much deeper reflection than it is given or assumed at present.

In addition to the choice between essentialist and non-essentialist ontologies of language, researchers seeking to bridge the fields of PLLT and multilingualism must make other important ontological choices that inform their work. For instance, they must deliberately choose to what extent they see constructs (e.g., motivation, WTC, and engagement) as fixed traits or as dynamic processes that evolve over time (see also Sulis, 2024). They have to decide to what extent to view language learning as an internal, individual process or as a process fundamentally determined by social practices and interactions, and where the boundaries lie between the internal and external worlds (see, e.g. The Douglas Fir Group, 2016). They must reflect critically on the extent to which they conceived of language phenomena and learner/teachers experiences as being universal at their core across different settings, or as being uniquely different across different levels of social contexts (e.g., interaction, institution, social culture etc.) and how those levels of experience relate to each other (see, e.g., Mercer, 2021; Van Lier, 2014). While some of these choices are often made implicitly, we encourage researchers to explicitly and deliberately reflect on their underlying ontological underpinnings especially when working across fields of inquiry as these ontological choices also inform researchers’ operational and design choices (Ortega, 2018).

Methodologies

Similarly, those ontological choices impact research designs and methodologies. In this volume, there is a variety of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method approaches to exploring the connections between PLLT and multilingualism. Increasing use of technologies and multi-modal forms of research offers great potential in this field as shown, for instance, by Spaliviero’s chapter (this volume) on multilingual digital storytelling which combines surveys, reflective diaries, and focus group discussions, and Torregrossa et al.’s chapter (this volume) drawing on language portraits and interview data to examine learners’ multilingual identities.

One area with specific potential for further work is longitudinal studies. Exploring the dynamic nature of PLLT and multilingualism across multiple

timescales (e.g., seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, years) and thus different levels of granularity, we can gain critical insights into how the psychology of learners and teachers in relation to multilingualism (e.g., self-efficacy, and agency) can change over time in diverse ways. This can also offer a critical set of insights for educational practice in helping to understand how and when positive change in relation to these aspects can occur (Sulis, 2024).

Relatedly, more research is needed which deliberately seeks to foster such change through interventions. Such research is still limited but shows great promise. For example, work conducted by Forbes, Fisher and colleagues in the British context (see e.g. Fisher et al., 2020; Forbes et al., 2024) has shown that their identity-based interventions broadened learners' understanding of multilingualism and of themselves as multilinguals, which, in turn, increased their emotional connection to languages. Intervention studies also represent an invaluable means of bridging the gap between research and practice and could be an excellent context for more participatory and collaborative research (see, e.g., Storto, 2024).

Concluding remarks

To conclude, we would like to thank the authors for their invaluable contributions, from which we have learnt so much and for their openness to embracing the challenges of such scholarship and showcasing the rich potential and benefits it offers. This book is a first collective step in explicitly connecting these two fields of inquiry and providing an impetus and stimulus for more research in this exciting space. We are looking forward to expanding our horizons and moving this agenda forward from and beyond this collection.

References

- Ayres-Bennett, W., & Fisher, L. (Eds.). (2022). *Multilingualism and identity: Interdisciplinary perspectives*. Cambridge University Press.
- Basnight-Brown, D. M., Ayoub, A., & Altarriba, J. (2022). Emotion processing in a highly proficient multilingual Sub-Saharan African population: A quantitative and qualitative investigation. *Languages*, 7(4), 280. <https://doi.org/10.3390/languages7040280>
- Becker, A. (2023). *Identity, power, and prestige in Switzerland's multilingual education*. Transcript.
- Calafato, R. (2020). Language teacher multilingualism in Norway and Russia: Identity and beliefs. *European Journal of Education*, 55(4), 602–617. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ejed.12418>
- Calafato, R. (2021). "I feel like it's giving me a lot as a language teacher to be a learner myself": Factors affecting the implementation of a multilingual pedagogy as reported by teachers of diverse languages. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 11(4), 579–606. <https://doi.org/10.14746/ssl.2021.11.4.5>

- Cenoz, J. (2013). Defining multilingualism. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 33, 3–18. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S026719051300007X>
- Chiblow, S., & Meighan, P. J. (2022). Language is land, land is language: The importance of Indigenous languages. *Human Geography*, 15(2), 206–210. <https://doi.org/10.1177/19427786211022899>
- Cook, G. (2003). *Applied linguistics*. Oxford University Press.
- Cunliffe, A. (2004). On becoming a critically reflexive practitioner. *Journal of Management Education*, 28(4), 407–426. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1052562904264440>
- De Costa, P. (2019). Elite multilingualism, affect and neoliberalism. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 40(5), 453–460. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2018.1543698>
- Douglas Fir Group. (2016). A transdisciplinary framework for SLA in a multilingual world. *The Modern Language Journal*, 100(S1), 19–47. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12301>
- Fisher, L., Evans, M., Forbes, K., Gayton, A., & Liu, Y. (2020). Participative multilingual identity construction in the languages classroom: A multi-theoretical conceptualisation. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 17(4), 448–466. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2018.1524896>
- Forbes, K., Evans, M., Fisher, L., Gayton, A., Liu, Y., & Rutgers, D. (2024). ‘I feel like I have a superpower’: A qualitative study of adolescents’ experiences of multilingual identity development during an identity-based pedagogical intervention. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2024.2313564>
- Gao, X. A., & Yang, W. (2023). Multilingualism and language teacher education. *System*, 118, 103127. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2023.103127>
- Gayton, A., & Fisher, L. (2022). Multilingual identity construction through participative reflective practice in the languages classroom. In W. Ayres-Bennett & L. Fisher (Eds.), *Multilingualism and identity: Interdisciplinary perspectives* (pp. 299–320). Cambridge University Press.
- Giampapa, F., & Canagarajah, S. (Eds.). (2020). *Skilled migration and global English*. Routledge.
- Haukås, Å. (2016). Teachers’ beliefs about multilingualism and a multilingual pedagogical approach. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 13(1), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2015.1041960>
- Hedman, C., & Fisher, L. (2025). Critical multilingual language awareness among migrant students: Cultivating curiosity and a linguistics of participation. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, 24(1), 87–102. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15348458.2022.2078722>
- Heller, M., & Martin-Jones, M. (Eds.). (2001). *Voices of authority: Education and linguistic difference*. Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Hofer, B., & Jessner, U. (2019). Multilingualism at the primary level in South Tyrol: How does multilingual education affect young learners’ metalinguistic awareness and proficiency in L1, L2 and L3? *The Language Learning Journal*, 47(1), 76–87. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2016.1195865>
- Hosseini, M., & Haukås, Å. (2024). The role of parental language profile and home linguistic environment in shaping teenagers’ multilingual identity. *Nordic Journal of Language Teaching and Learning*, 12(2), 222–239. <https://doi.org/10.46364/njtl.v12i2.1287>

- Kormos, J., & Smith, A. M. (2023). *Teaching languages to students with specific learning differences*. Multilingual Matters.
- Kramsch, C. (2015). Applied linguistics: A theory of the practice. *Applied Linguistics*, 36(4), 454–465. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amv039>
- Krishnan, A. (2009). *What are academic disciplines? Some observations on the disciplinarity versus interdisciplinarity*. NCRM Working Paper Series. ESRC National Centre for Research Methods. Available at: <https://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/id/eprint/783>
- La Morgia, F. (2025). *La famiglia multilingue: Genitori e figli nella trasmissione linguistica intergenerazionale*. Meltemi Editore.
- Melo-Pfeifer, S. (Ed.). (2023). *Linguistic landscapes in language and teacher education: Multilingual teaching and learning inside and beyond the classroom*. Springer.
- Mercer, S. (2021). An agenda for well-being in ELT: An ecological perspective. *ELT Journal*, 75(1), 14–21. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccaa062>
- Mercer, S., & Kostoulas, A. (Eds.). (2018). *Language teacher psychology*. Multilingual Matters.
- Mercer, S., & Ryan, S. (2016). Stretching the boundaries: Language learning psychology. *Palgrave Communications*, 2(1), 1–5. <https://doi.org/10.1057/palcomms.2016.31>
- Mesquita, B. (2022). *Between us: How cultures create emotions*. WW Norton & Company.
- Mesquita, B., Boiger, M., & De Leersnyder, J. (2017). Doing emotions: The role of culture in everyday emotions. *European Review of Social Psychology*, 28(1), 95–133. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10463283.2017.1329107>
- Moran, J. (2010). *Interdisciplinarity*. Routledge.
- Morea, N., & Fisher, L. (2025). Multilingual teachers and teachers of multilinguals: Developing pre-service teachers' multilingual identities during teacher education. *The Language Learning Journal*, 53(1), 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2023.2251499>
- Ndhlovu, F., & Makalela, L. (2021). *Decolonising multilingualism in Africa: Recentering silenced voices from the global south*. Multilingual Matters.
- Oostendorp, M., Little, T., & Berghoff, R. (2024). First language primacy in multilingualism and emotion research: A view from Africa. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 27(10), 1360–1374. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2024.2360113>
- Ortega, L. (2018). Ontologies of language, second language acquisition, and world Englishes. *World Englishes*, 37(1), 64–79. <https://doi.org/10.1111/weng.12303>
- Pavlenko, A. (2008). Bi-and multilingualism as a metaphor for research. *Bilingualism: Language and cognition*, 11(2), 197–201. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1366728908003374>
- Repko, A. F., & Szostak, R. (2017). *Interdisciplinary research: Process and theory* (3rd ed.). Sage.
- Rolland, L., King, H. M., & Lorette, P. (2023). Methodological implications of participant and researcher multilingualism: Making language dynamics visible. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 44(8), 645–656. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2023.2224774>

- Selleck, C., & Barakos, E. (2023). A reflexive approach to researching bilingualism in Wales: Language, legitimacy and positionality. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 44(8), 672–688. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2023.2195382>
- Storto, A. (2024). ‘To be multilingual means...’: Exploring a participatory approach to multilingual identity with schoolchildren. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 21(2), 607–627. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2022.2082441>
- Sulis, G. (2023). Exploring learner engagement with languages (LX) within and beyond the English classroom. *Language Teaching Research*, 13621688231216869. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688231216869>
- Sulis, G. (2024). Exploring the dynamics of engagement in the language classroom: A critical examination of methodological approaches. *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics*, 3(3), 100162. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rmal.2024.100162>
- Sulis, G., Mairitsch, A., & Mercer, S. (2025). “The more languages you know, the better you are”: Learners’ pride in being multilingual and their motivation for language learning. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* [advanced access]. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2025.2576616>
- Sulis, G., & Mercer, S. (2025). The choreography of engagement in the language classroom: Exploring the dynamic interplay between learner and teacher engagement. *Learning and Individual Differences*, 117, 102586. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2024.102586>
- Tang, F., & Calafato, R. (2024). “You have to repeat Chinese to mother!”: multilingual identity, emotions, and family language policy in transnational multilingual families. *Applied Linguistics Review*, 15(2), 427–448. <https://doi.org/10.1515/applirev-2021-0173>
- Tavares, V., & Benediktsson, A. I. (2024). Ukrainian refugees learning Icelandic through drama plays: A multiliteracies perspective. In V. Tavares (Ed.), *Empowering language learners in a changing world through pedagogies of multiliteracies* (pp. 251–269). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Tsai, J. L., Levenson, R. W., & McCoy, K. (2006). Cultural and temperamental variation in emotional response. *Emotion*, 6(3), 484–497. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/1528-3542.6.3.484>
- Ushioda, E. (2017). The impact of global English on motivation to learn other languages: Toward an ideal multilingual self. *The Modern Language Journal*, 101(3), 469–482. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12413>
- Van Lier, L. (2014). *Interaction in the language curriculum: Awareness, autonomy and authenticity*. Routledge.
- Wray, A., & Wallace, M. (2015). Developing research expertise in applied linguistics: Capacity-building for today’s interdisciplinary challenges. *ITL-International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 166(1), 3–36. <https://doi.org/10.1075/itl.166.1.01wra>
- Xerri, D. (2024). ‘Children owning the language’: The Hands Up Project in Palestine. *Journal of Education for Multilingualism*, 1(2), 314–328. <https://www.um.edu.mt/library/oar/handle/123456789/130282>



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

Index

- accomplishment 16, 117, 134, 137, 143, 148–149, 152–153
- agency 110, 160, 180, 200, 207–210, 214–215, 221, 227–229, 234–37, 242, 245, 247, 251–253, 308
- applied linguistics 2–3, 39, 72, 79, 80, 92, 118, 134, 137, 238, 298–299
- assembly dynamics 19, 27–28
- autonomy 81, 149, 228, 253, 257, 261, 268–269
- beliefs 3, 118, 134, 140, 161, 163, 182, 185–187, 193–195, 199–200, 207, 209–211, 214, 226–227, 229, 258, 280
- bilingualism 1, 140
- capacity to speak (CTS) 35–39, 42–54
- classroom environment 1, 117, 126, 136, 140, 146, 210, 236, 269
- code-switching 15, 22, 25–27, 258, 266
- Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) 61–62, 64–65, 285
- complex dynamic systems theory (CDST) 38, 110
- cross-linguistic interaction 2, 5, 39, 52, 118, 292
- cross-linguistic knowledge 81, 84, 88, 90, 211, 228
- developmental dynamics 43, 227
- digital literacies 208, 221, 225, 228
- digital storytelling 208–209, 228, 307
- ecological perspective 234–236, 259
- emotional labour 235, 253, 279, 283
- emotional resonance 280–281, 283–284, 287–289, 291–293
- emotions 3, 19, 24, 47, 49–51, 60, 63, 78–80, 86, 89–91, 103, 134, 137, 143–145, 153, 257–260, 268, 271–272, 280–283, 305–306
- engagement 96–99, 101–112, 117, 137, 144–145, 207, 210–211, 215, 222–229, 251, 268, 291
- field of inquiry 3–4, 298, 301
- flow 257, 260–261, 263, 266–273, 305
- idiodynamic method 20, 29, 35, 38
- intercultural awareness 147, 208, 220, 228
- intercultural communication 128
- interdisciplinarity 4, 129, 200, 297–304
- ideal self 98, 108, 117–118, 121, 135
- L2 motivational self-system 116
- language anxiety 18, 24, 37–38, 51, 71, 80, 100, 137, 233, 244–245, 247, 252, 260, 279, 283
- language enjoyment 24, 37, 63, 65, 71, 80, 90, 110, 128, 137, 257, 260, 273, 283
- language learning experience 122, 129, 138, 147, 182, 242, 247

- language portraits 181, 195–198
- languages other than English (LOTEs)
 - 33, 40–41, 52, 54, 102,
 - 107–109, 111–112, 115–119,
 - 121–129
- learning goals 133–136, 138–139, 144, 153–154, 304
- linguistic distance 78, 80–82, 87, 91
- linguistic repertoire 2, 17, 21–22, 25, 28, 33, 39, 47, 50, 60–62, 72, 74, 78, 82, 85, 87, 97–98, 104, 108, 111, 116, 118, 124, 134, 136, 152, 160, 180–183, 187, 195, 197–200, 208, 210–211, 226, 229, 292, 299–300, 306
- metalinguistic awareness 63, 258
- metalinguistic knowledge 81, 90, 280–282, 293
- motivation 4, 13, 18, 34, 89–90, 97–98, 110–112, 115–118, 121–129, 133–154, 163, 172, 180, 245, 253, 257, 260, 269–270, 299, 307
- multilingual identity 106, 128, 139, 154, 179–180, 182–184, 186–200
- multiliteracies 208, 229
- ontologies 13–14, 30, 306–307
- open-mindedness 51, 59, 63, 182, 186–199
- ought-to L2 self 98, 117–118, 125, 128, 134–136, 143, 149, 152–153
- PERMA 134–138, 143, 145, 149–153
- personality 18, 26–27, 36, 38, 46, 52–53, 63
- positive psychology 80, 134, 257, 283
- psychotypology 78, 80–81, 83–92
- reflective practice 221–222, 227, 291
- self-efficacy 37, 90, 111, 161–164, 168–175
- study abroad (SA) 34, 39, 285, 300
- target language 13–14, 39, 79, 80, 97–98, 117, 121, 128, 145, 153, 172–173, 183, 234, 250, 266, 299, 304
- teacher professional development 207–209, 226, 229, 236, 245, 253
- teaching practices 207, 209–211, 222, 229, 236, 244, 248, 251–253, 258, 279–283, 288–289, 291–293, 306
- timescales 19, 38–39, 52, 308
- translanguaging 26, 40, 45, 47, 50, 52, 184, 266
- vision 97–98, 101, 105–112, 117, 123, 127, 135, 152, 185, 273
- well-being 134, 137, 149, 179, 184, 209, 229, 233–237, 249–253, 259, 305
- willingness to communicate (WTC) 14–30, 34–35, 40, 54