

Language Learning Motivation in Post-Secondary Courses: English, German, Spanish, Japanese, and Multilingualism

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Abstract: This study explores the motivational profiles of students enrolled in language courses at the post-secondary level, emphasizing the role of the ideal multilingual self. A sample of 280 learners across English, German, Spanish, and Japanese courses participated in the research. Drawing from the L2 Motivational Self System framework and integrating the concept of the ideal multilingual self, the study utilized a questionnaire to investigate the sources of language learning motivation. The findings revealed English and German as the predominant language choices, primarily influenced by external factors such as academic requirements and societal expectations. In contrast, learners engaged in less commonly taught languages, particularly Japanese, demonstrated heightened intrinsic motivation and a more explicit ideal multilingual self-concept. This trend highlights the significance of multilingualism in shaping learners' motivational profiles, with learners of less commonly taught languages expressing a stronger inclination towards linguistic versatility and proficiency. Moreover, the study revealed a positive correlation between speaking multiple languages and the aspiration for multilingualism, suggesting that learners with multilingual backgrounds are more inclined toward embracing linguistic diversity. These findings contribute to understanding the dynamic relationship between language choice, motivational factors, and the ideal multilingual self-concept in the context of post-secondary language education.

1 Introduction

The importance of proficiency in foreign languages is indisputable in the contemporary context. In a globalized world, language proficiency offers substantial advantages, encompassing improved employment prospects, heightened professional and academic mobility, and effective communication in international contexts. English is the contemporary lingua franca—a shared language underpinning global connectivity, transcending temporal and spatial limitations. Proficiency in English is considered foundational; however, mastering an additional foreign language grants a substantial advantage for navigating the global landscape more easily.

The language policy in the Czech Republic underscores the importance of linguistic versatility from the early stages of education, where secondary school students are mandated to learn two foreign languages. This strategic approach broadens linguistic horizons and aligns with the country's commitment to prepare individuals for active participation in a multicultural and multilingual world while promoting a comprehensive understanding of language learning as a valuable skill set for the future. However, this policy is under scrutiny due to proposed reforms that suggest making learning a second foreign language optional instead

of compulsory. These proposals have ignited substantial debate, drawing interest from a broad spectrum of stakeholders who have voiced concerns about its potential adverse effects on multilingualism, a value upheld by the European Council. This controversy highlights the tension between maintaining rigorous educational standards that promote multilingualism and adapting to the practical challenges students may face in learning multiple languages. While the current policy promotes the acquisition of foreign languages, it does not require students to take the secondary school final exam (*maturita*) in a foreign language.

Following the successful completion of secondary school by passing the *maturita* exam, students in the Czech educational system have several pathways available. Aside from directly entering university upon passing *maturita*, they may also opt for one-year intensive language studies, often organized by private language schools, duly licensed by the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports (MŠMT) based on Regulation 19/2014 Coll. This regulatory framework ensures the quality and adherence to educational standards within these language programs.

Students choose this alternative route as an avenue for honing language skills and occasionally as a strategic choice for those seeking a transitional period after the *maturita*. Some embark on this one-year language course as a deliberate gap year, often in cases where they failed their university entrance exams or are keen on language acquisition while maintaining a student's legal status with its associated benefits. This intentional pause allows individuals to broaden their linguistic repertoire, potentially increasing their competitiveness in future academic endeavors.

The dominant role of English in language education is undeniable. However, contemporary scholarly inquiry highlights the significance of languages other than English (LOTEs), recognizing potential differences from the motivations underlying English language learning (Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2017). Moreover, it is crucial to note that languages in an individual's linguistic repertoire do not exist in separate compartments; instead, they form a cohesive, plurilingual repertoire (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 28), contributing to a novel identity as a speaker of multiple languages (Pavlenko, 2006). Hence, it is plausible to extend the research on motivation to learn a single target language to the broader multilingual¹ identity of an individual language learner or user.

In this context, the article delves into the motivations driving students in post-secondary courses as they navigate the complexities of multilingual proficiency

¹ Note on terminology: This paper refers to multilingualism as a term concerning both individuals and societies, although the authors are aware that the distinction between multilingualism and plurilingualism is sometimes made where the former refers to societal and the latter to individual levels (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 28).

beyond the obligatory educational thresholds. The research explores the differences in motivation to learn a foreign language among students enrolled in various language courses and the potential variations in motivation to learn English and a LOTE. Moreover, the inquiry seeks to explore the potential role of multilingualism. The study poses the following research questions:

1. What is the students' motivational profile for learning a particular language?
2. What are the differences in motivation to learn English and a LOTE?
3. What is the role of multilingualism in their motivational profiles?

The research was conducted in a private language school in the capital of the Czech Republic, offering English, German, Spanish, and Japanese courses. It involved 280 participants. The study employed a quantitative research design, using a motivational questionnaire to gather data on participants' motivational profiles.

Understanding motivation is crucial for comprehending the dynamics of language acquisition and the significance of alternative educational pathways, particularly LOTEs. Exploring post-secondary students' motivations holds particular value for higher education, as many students undertaking one-year language courses will likely progress into university. Consequently, delving into their motivations enhances our understanding of language learning dynamics and aids in developing more effective language education strategies in university settings, including plurilingual approaches.

2 Motivation and Language Learning

Motivation in applied linguistics gained prominence in the 1960s when Gardner and his colleagues explored the social-psychological aspects of language learning in Canada. Gardner's socio-educational model (Gardner, 1985, 2010) introduced a prominent dichotomy between integrative and instrumental motivation, arguably one of his framework's most well-known aspects (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 41). Integrative motivation relates to attitudes toward the target language community, the desire for interaction with its members, and the aspiration to assimilate with the target culture. In contrast, instrumental motivation ties to practical reasons for learning a language, such as passing a language exam or increasing the likelihood of securing better employment. The distinction between integrative and instrumental motivation plays a pivotal role in motivation research, and Gardner's socio-educational model, coupled with a testing battery, remains a fundamental approach to studying motivation to this day (Boo et al., 2015).

Motivation research within applied linguistics further differentiates between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation (Noels et al., 1999, 2001), a distinction initially grounded in self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Internal motivation

stems from intrinsic motives, fuelled by joy and satisfaction. Individuals propelled by such internal desires engage in activities out of voluntary choice, presenting a self-imposed challenge to surpass their current competencies. In contrast, externally motivated individuals may lack an inherent interest in the activity and instead strive to attain a goal defined instrumentally. However, distinguishing between these two motivations can sometimes be challenging (Lamb, 2004), as individuals may exhibit a blend of internal and external motivational factors.

During the early 1990s, Crookes and Schmidt (1991) criticized the socio-educational model for emphasizing social and psychological aspects of motivation. They highlighted a noticeable gap in the integration of motivation with pedagogy. Consequently, the subsequent decade witnessed a shift in pedagogy. Dörnyei (1994), for example, proposed a conceptual framework for motivation encompassing three dimensions: the language level, the learner level, and the learning situation level. This framework embraces attitudes towards the language community and associated cultural values, the individual differences among language learners, and the educational environment where learning occurs. It integrates motivation with pedagogy by acknowledging the interconnectedness of language, learners, and learning environments.

At the turn of the century, Dörnyei (2005) endeavored to bridge second language acquisition research with contemporary psychology, aiming to synthesize existing theoretical approaches into the L2 Motivational Self-System (L2MSS, Dörnyei, 2009). The L2MSS is rooted in the amalgamation of the possible selves theory (Markus & Nurius, 1986) and self-discrepancy theory (Higgins, 1987). Possible selves, defined as individuals' envisioned images of "what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming," serve as a conceptual link between cognition and motivation (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 954). The motivating force within the L2MSS arises from the perceived gap between an individual's current and future selves and their desire to attain their ideal self. At its core, the L2MSS comprises three principal components: the ideal L2 self, representing the individual's vision of what they aspire to achieve as an L2 user; the ought-to L2 self, encompassing traits considered desirable to meet expectations and avert adverse outcomes (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 86); and the L2 learning experience, incorporating motivation derived from past language learning experiences and the current learning situation, such as the influence of the teacher, course content, or classroom activities. Thus, the L2MSS draws upon three fundamental sources of motivation: the intrinsic desire to become a proficient user of the target language, the social pressures within the individual's operating environment, and the unique aspects of the individual's language learning experience (Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017).

In recent decades, the L2MSS has dominated the research on language learning motivation (Boo et al., 2015; Mahmoodi & Yousefi, 2022). However, as it has been empirically tested predominantly within English as the target language (Al-Hoorie, 2018), its application to LOTEs may reveal weaknesses (Oakes & Howard, 2022; Thompson, 2017; Thompson & Liu, 2021). With the growing interest in multilingualism in applied linguistics (Cook, 2016; Douglas Fir Group, 2016), scholars have hinted at the research potential of possible differences in motivation for learning English compared to other languages (Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017; Ushioda, 2017), prompting a critical re-evaluation of existing motivational frameworks. By examining the interplay between ideal multilingual selves and motivation across diverse language learning contexts, researchers can attain more profound insights into the dynamics of language motivation in today's increasingly multilingual world. Consequently, there is a growing consensus on the importance of adapting existing L2 motivational self-systems into multilingual motivational self-systems (Henry, 2017), with scholars advocating for exploration into individuals' multilingual selves (Henry, 2020; Henry & Thorsen, 2018; Thompson, 2020).

The debate on motivation in language learning opened in the Czech and Slovak academic realms, particularly in the context of foreign language learning in higher education. These studies showcase innovative methods and theoretical frameworks, including online contexts and autonomous learning. For instance, Mičínová (2018) and Pavlíková (2018) explored motivating strategies in teaching writing and speaking in English language classrooms, while Igazová (2017) highlighted the motivating potential of excursions in foreign language education, illustrating how real-world interactions can significantly boost learner engagement and practical language application. Malášková (2016) addressed part-time students' challenges in acquiring foreign languages, suggesting flexible learning strategies that cater to adult learners' unique needs and balancing education with other life responsibilities. In online language learning, Katrňáková (2017) focused on fostering student independence and motivation in virtual classrooms. Additionally, Hradilová and Chovancová (2023) investigated how visual representations can motivate students and alleviate feelings of isolation in distance learning environments.

From a theoretical viewpoint, Zouhar Ludvíková (2016) discussed how learner autonomy can be a significant motivational force in language acquisition. From a broader perspective, Bobáková (2017) reviewed the quality factors that influence foreign language education, analyzing the elements that create effective learning environments. Further adding to these insights, Doleží (2023) emphasized the crucial role of emotions in the learning process, advocating for an empathetic and emotionally aware teaching approach that addresses the emotional dimensions of learning.

Although these studies originate from the context of higher education, the insights and strategies they present are applicable and valuable in various other educational settings. The principles of motivation, autonomy, and technology integration in language learning can be adapted to different age groups and learning environments, making them universally relevant and beneficial.

3 Research Design and Data Collection

The study used a quantitative research design to investigate the sources and levels of motivation in learning a foreign language within post-secondary education at a private language school. It aimed to compare motivations for learning different languages based on various factors, including current language experience, L2 motivational self-system, and the significance of the ideal multilingual selves in motivation.

The study employed a structured questionnaire comprising 40 questions, drawing inspiration from various existing instruments exploring language learning motivation (Dornyei & Csizér, 2012; Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011; Gardner, 1985). Additional questions were included to incorporate the multilingual dimension into the study and explore the participants' ideal multilingual selves. These questions were adapted from the work of Thompson (2017), allowing for a more comprehensive examination of motivation across different language learning contexts. The questionnaire was designed to gather data on the participants' demographic information (eight questions) and further focused on the language learning motivation within the particular language of study and the attitude towards multilingualism. Responses to all questions were recorded using a five-point Likert scale. The scale ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), allowing participants to express the extent of their agreement or disagreement with the statements provided. The questionnaire was in the Czech language, the participants' mother tongue. For reference, it can be retrieved online (Kadeřábková, 2023).

Participants received a paper copy of the questionnaire during their language class sessions, ensuring a high rate of return. After completion, teachers collected the questionnaires and transferred them to the researcher, who manually entered the responses into Excel tables for subsequent analysis of the L2 motivational profiles, including the ideal multilingual selves. The researcher conducted descriptive statistics to summarize the data and identify general patterns and trends in the motivational profiles of the participants.

4 Participants

The sample consisted of students enrolled in post-secondary language courses at a private language school in Prague. The survey was conducted in the spring of

2022, allowing participants to have completed over six months of study within the language course. While the courses are designated as *post-secondary studies*, students are not required to have completed their secondary school leaving exam in the preceding academic year. Enrollment in post-secondary courses is open to individuals of all ages and educational backgrounds, irrespective of whether they completed their leaving exam more than a year ago or held higher education qualifications.

All participants' native language was Czech; their average age was 20 (the youngest was 20, and the oldest was 29). They formed four groups based on their languages of study: English, German, Spanish, and Japanese. Each group comprised a different number of participants, representing the enrollment numbers in the respective language courses. The total number of participants was 280, but 13 questionnaires were dropped because they were improperly filled in. The final analysis totaled 267 participants. Table 1 summarizes their distribution across the language groups.

Tab. 1: *Participants in the language groups*

Language	Number of Parallel Classes	Levels	Number of Participants	Male/Female
English	10	B1–C1	139	55/84
German	5	A2–B2	69	27/42
Spanish	3	A2–B2	41	14/27
Japanese	2	A1–B1	18	5/13

In accordance with research ethics, all participants received information about the study's purpose and design before completing the questionnaire and signed informed consent for the processing of the data they provided.

5 Results

5.1 English Self Guides

During the academic year in question, three proficiency levels (B1, B2, and C1) were available to study, and there were ten parallel English classes. English was the most participants' L2 (91%), and only a limited number considered English their L3 (9%).

The motivation profiles in the English language courses varied. The results underscored the significant influence of integrative motivation on language usage and communication patterns among the participants, as evidenced by 73% reporting regular use of English outside the classroom. Similarly, a substantial proportion (71%) expressed genuine enjoyment in communicating with others in English. Notably, a relationship between proficiency levels and language usage emerged,

with advanced proficiency-level students demonstrating a greater propensity to communicate in English beyond the classroom.

Additionally, a prevalent motivator for learning English was the desire for travel and cultural exploration, highlighting the integrative nature of the ideal L2 self. On the other hand, a solid ought-to L2 self was evident among English learners as more than 50% of the participants enrolled with a clear objective of acquiring an international language exam certificate, highlighting the importance placed on formal language proficiency validation. This suggests that many students pursued English learning due to external expectations or obligations.

The responses unveiled a spectrum of perspectives on the ideal multilingual self among participants learning English. Besides English, 55% expressed a strong desire to achieve fluency in multiple foreign languages, showcasing a keen aspiration for linguistic versatility. Additionally, roughly half of the participants exhibited positive emotions associated with learning foreign languages, reflecting a generally favorable attitude toward language acquisition. However, approximately one-third admitted feeling burdened by learning foreign languages, revealing a contrasting perspective on multilingualism.

Moreover, about 35% of English language learners envisioned themselves in careers where multilingual communication is essential, while slightly less than half emphasized the importance of mastering multiple foreign languages. Furthermore, almost 60% of the learners desired to match individuals proficient in multiple languages, highlighting a solid motivation for linguistic parity. Lastly, approximately one-third of the participants envisioned seamlessly integrating multiple foreign languages into their daily lives, illustrating a vision of effortless multilingualism as part of their future identities.

5.2 German Self Guides

The German language course was the second most attended, with two proficiency levels (A2–B1 and B1–B2) in five parallel classes. One-quarter of the participants identified German as their L2, while three-quarters considered it their L3, reflecting a mix of language learning backgrounds. All 69 participants commenced the course immediately after completing their high school graduation examinations.

The data revealed significant intrinsic motivation to enroll in German courses, with an overwhelming 95% indicating that they took the initiative to join the classes without external pressure. However, despite this intrinsic drive, there was a notable disparity in the emotional response towards learning German. While approximately 56% of participants expressed positive emotions or enjoyment in learning the language, almost 32% admitted to feeling burdened by the task.

Those who found learning German burdensome were less likely to have enrolled in the course out of their initiative.

Unlike the overwhelming majority of English learners who expressed enjoyment or interest in the language (over 80%), only slightly above 56% of German learners shared similar sentiments. Beyond the classroom, almost 70% reported using German outside, indicating a willingness to apply their language skills in real-life situations. Furthermore, over 71% expressed enjoyment in communicating in German, suggesting a desire for integrative language use in social contexts.

Regarding multilingualism, many German learners expressed a strong desire for linguistic versatility, with almost 70% stating their wish to speak multiple foreign languages fluently. Notably, all of these participants were concurrently learning at least one additional foreign language alongside German, indicating a proactive approach to language acquisition. Furthermore, all 41 participants who enjoyed learning foreign languages also stated a higher proficiency level. This alignment suggests a link between enjoyment and proficiency in language learning among German learners.

The ideal multilingual self mirrored in their future aspirations, with 67% of the learners expressing a vision of themselves in careers where multilingual communication is essential. Moreover, a majority (82%) emphasized the significance of mastering multiple foreign languages, highlighting the value of linguistic versatility in both professional and personal spheres.

More than half of the participants (54%) regarded multilingualism as necessary, indicating an aspiration for linguistic flexibility and adaptability. Additionally, while 39% expressed a neutral stance, only a tiny proportion (6%) did not perceive the ideal multilingual self as significant to them. This diversity of perspectives reflected the multifaceted nature of individuals' attitudes toward multilingualism.

5.3 Spanish Self Guides

Participants in the Spanish courses studied in three parallel classes on two levels (A1/B1 and B1/B2).

Most learners (83%) opted for Spanish as their L3. The overall attitude towards learning Spanish was overwhelmingly positive, with 78% expressing enjoyment or interest in the process. Additionally, 73% emphasized the importance of proficiency in mastering Spanish for effective communication, travel, and cultural integration. Their integrative motivation mirrored their eagerness to engage with Spanish beyond the classroom: nearly 70% expressed a desire to communicate with other Spanish speakers or watch Spanish films.

Despite the prevailing positive attitude towards learning Spanish, 12% of the Spanish learners cited external expectations or obligations as their reason for engagement. For one-third of the participants, their ought-to Spanish self was linked to receiving a certificate from an international language exam, while one-fifth mentioned learning Spanish because it was expected of them, and a similar number stated necessity as their motivation. These responses revealed a sense of obligation or external pressure to acquire language proficiency, combined with internally driven motivation.

Spanish learners revealed a strong desire for linguistic versatility and proficiency in multiple languages. Most participants, totaling 76%, expressed a high level of importance attached to the multilingual self, suggesting an aspiration to become users of multiple languages beyond just Spanish.

Moreover, the proactive approach towards multilingualism among Spanish learners was evident. All participants who desired to speak multiple languages fluently were concurrently learning at least one additional foreign language. Additionally, their desire to engage with multiple foreign languages in various contexts, such as envisioning themselves using them in future occupations or daily communication, further underscores the significance of the ideal multilingual self among Spanish learners. The Spanish group was more inclined towards the ideal multilingual self than the English and German learners groups.

5.4 Japanese Self Guides

The Japanese learner group was the smallest, with 18 participants in two parallel groups on A1–B1 levels. Learners of Japanese exhibited a distinct motivation for their language acquisition journey. Among the 18 participants, 16 enrolled in Japanese courses immediately following their high school graduation, while two others completed their high school exams more than five years ago. The average age of Japanese learners stood at 25 years, marking a five-year increase compared to learners in the other language groups. Furthermore, all 18 participants identified Japanese as the most recent language of study.

All participants voluntarily embarked on their Japanese learning journey without external pressure or academic requirements. Their enthusiasm for learning Japanese was palpable, with 85% expressing a positive attitude towards the language. Moreover, none of the participants perceived learning Japanese as burdensome or obligatory, nor did they feel compelled by external expectations.

Despite acknowledging the challenges inherent in mastering Japanese, only 39% of the learners found the learning process demanding. However, a significant majority (more than 66%) felt well motivated by their instructors, indicating a supportive learning environment.

The participants' future aspirations further underscored the intrinsic and integrative sources of motivation. A substantial number expressed a desire to incorporate Japanese into their daily lives. In these envisioning scenarios, they would study in Japanese-speaking institutions, work in Japanese-speaking environments, or use Japanese extensively in various contexts.

The ideal multilingual self of Japanese learners was mirrored in their strong desire for linguistic versatility and proficiency in multiple languages. The data revealed that many learners aspired to speak fluently in several foreign languages, with almost 90% of participants expressing this desire explicitly. Furthermore, a similar number of learners found joy in learning other languages.

Notably, none of the participants expressed frustration or annoyance at the prospect of learning additional languages, indicating a genuine enthusiasm for linguistic acquisition. Additionally, 16 participants envision themselves in future occupations that utilize multiple languages for communication, emphasizing the practical importance they attribute to multilingualism. Furthermore, out of the 18 participants, 17 envisioned seamlessly incorporating multiple languages into their daily lives, underscoring their commitment to becoming proficient users of various languages in everyday contexts. Overall, the data suggests that the ideal multilingual self held considerable importance for Japanese learners, with 90% of participants viewing it as a significant aspect of their language-learning journey.

5.5 Ideal Multilingual Self

The desire to become proficient in multiple languages was a significant driving force among language learners, as evidenced by the data from various language groups. The concept of the ideal multilingual self, wherein individuals envision themselves as fluent speakers of several languages, played a crucial role in their motivation. This aspiration was firm among learners of less commonly taught languages such as Japanese, where 90% of participants desired to achieve multilingual fluency. Similarly, substantial numbers of learners in Spanish (76%), German (70%), and even English courses (55%) showed a keen interest in mastering multiple languages. This trend highlights the intrinsic motivation to learn a target language and integrate multiple languages into one's identity, reflecting a broader, more versatile linguistic ambition. The strong inclination towards the ideal multilingual self indicates that language learners are motivated by the prospect of enhanced cognitive flexibility, cultural understanding, and professional opportunities that come with being multilingual.

The following diagrams present the desire to become a user of multiple languages in the four language groups:

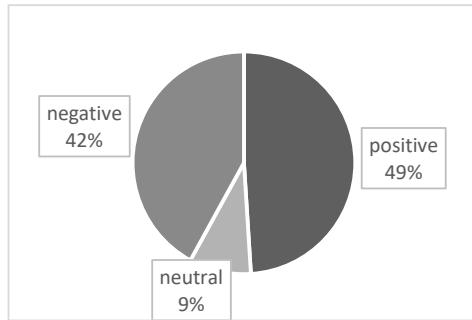


Diagram 1: *Attitude to Becoming Multilingual: Learners of English*

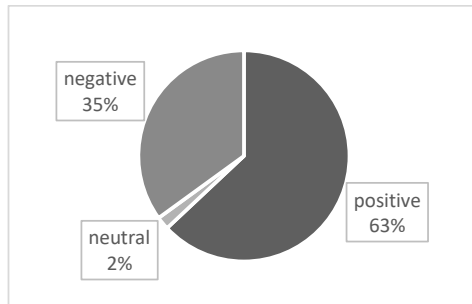


Diagram 2: *Attitude to Becoming Multilingual: Learners of German*

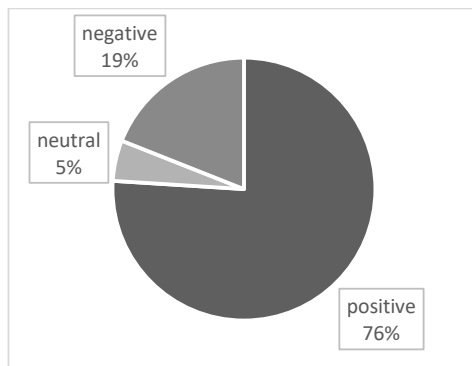


Diagram 3: *Attitude to Becoming Multilingual: Learners of Spanish*

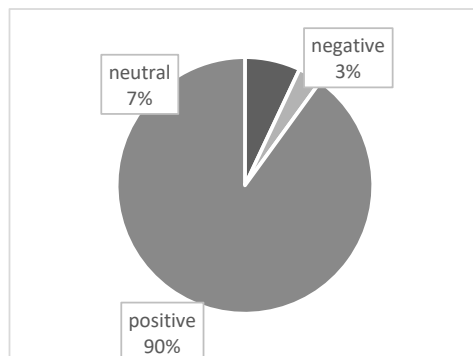


Diagram 4: *Attitude to Becoming Multilingual: Learners of Japanese*

6 Discussion

The findings of this study shed light on the language preferences and motivational dynamics among post-secondary language learners. English and German emerged as the preferred choices, aligning with previous research (Dörnyei et al., 2006). English, recognized as the lingua franca of today's globalized world, assumed a dominant role, underscored by the highest proficiency levels achieved among the participants, ranging from B1 to C1 levels. This dominance of English can be attributed to its perceived indispensability for academic and professional success. It reflects broader societal trends where English proficiency is increasingly considered a prerequisite for global engagement and upward mobility. Similarly, the preference for German can be traced back to the geographical proximity and historical interactions between the Czech Republic and German-speaking regions, which have traditionally influenced language preferences among Czech students.

However, the motivation underlying English language learning was driven more by external pressures than intrinsic interest. Despite the high proficiency levels, many English learners reported feeling compelled to learn the language due to societal expectations, globalization trends, and the pursuit of international language certifications. This instrumental motivation, fuelled by external factors rather than personal interest, suggests a shift towards a more utilitarian view of language learning, wherein proficiency is pursued as a means to an end. This finding resonates with the notion proposed by Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) that in contexts where English is perceived as a necessary skill, motivation may be more influenced by external pressures and societal norms rather than personal choice.

In contrast, learners of LOTEs demonstrated a stronger intrinsic motivation. Particularly notable was the case of Japanese language learners, who also exhibited a deep desire for linguistic versatility and proficiency in multiple languages. This

intrinsic motivation stemmed from a strong emphasis on the ideal Japanese and multilingual selves, highlighting a deep interest in language learning rather than external pressures or certification goals.

The correlation between language popularity and the ought-to L2 self demonstrated a stronger ought-to L2 self in English language learners. Conversely, fewer participants and less popularity of the Japanese language showed the weakest ought-to L2 self. This observation suggests that the level of external pressure correlates inversely with the popularity of the language chosen, implying that learners feel less compelled to meet societal or academic expectations when opting for less commonly taught languages. While studies on language learning have presented a mixed view of the ought-to L2 self's predictive validity compared to the ideal L2 self (Al-Hoorie, 2018, p. 737), the comparison between English and LOTEs in post-secondary courses revealed a clear correlation between language choice and the role of the ought-to L2 self.

Critiques of the L2MSS have suggested an extension of the L2 self-system to incorporate other selves, such as the anti-ought-to self (Thompson & Liu, 2021), which may be particularly relevant to learners of LOTEs. Some participants in Thompson and Liu's study chose the LOTE to react to external pressures that might otherwise dissuade them from taking up the language. It is unclear whether or not the learner of LOTEs in the sample under scrutiny here was driven by such internal force. The question remains unanswered and deserves attention in future research.

The findings of this study also underscored the critical role of teacher efficacy and the learning environment in shaping language learning experiences. While most learners acknowledged their instructors' effectiveness in motivating them, there were notable discrepancies between teaching quality and learner satisfaction. Despite high ratings for teaching quality, a significant proportion of learners expressed dissatisfaction with the learning process, suggesting a need for further investigation into the factors influencing learner satisfaction beyond teaching effectiveness alone. Doleží (2023) emphasized how emotions critically influence learning outcomes, echoing Dewaele's (2019) findings that teachers play a pivotal role in creating a supportive emotional atmosphere conducive to learning. In this regard, the role of emotions as motivational factors, as highlighted by MacIntyre et al. (2019), warrants deeper exploration, particularly with the rise of positive psychology in educational settings.

The study highlights the role of multilingualism in shaping learners' motivational profiles across diverse language experiences. The group of English learners showed a less prominent ideal multilingual selves than the learners of LOTEs. On the contrary, students of less common languages, such as Japanese, exhibited a stronger ideal multilingual self than students of the world languages. Addition-

ally, for participants studying multiple foreign languages, the concept of the ideal multilingual self played a vital role, acting as a compelling source of motivation and propelling them forward.

The observed pattern between learners of Japanese and Spanish exhibiting stronger ideal multilingual selves suggests a significant connection between language learning and the aspiration for multilingualism. This finding underscores the importance of providing support for language learning initiatives at lower levels of education, as it appears that the more languages learners engage with, the more inclined they become towards multilingualism.

Therefore, educators and policymakers must prioritize and support language learning programs, particularly those targeting less commonly taught. By offering resources, opportunities, and encouragement for language study, institutions can empower learners to pursue proficiency in multiple languages and embrace the benefits of multilingualism. Moreover, fostering a multilingual-friendly environment within educational institutions can further enhance language learning outcomes and promote a culture of linguistic diversity. This can include providing access to language resources, promoting language exchange programs, and celebrating linguistic diversity through multicultural events and activities.

7 Limitations and Further Research

One notable limitation of the study is the sample composition, as it primarily includes students who voluntarily enrolled in language schools. Such a sample may possess positive attitudes towards languages, potentially influencing the study's findings. Exploring contexts with limited free will, such as high schools or universities where language study is mandatory, may bring a more comprehensive understanding of motivation and provide insights into the impact of external factors on learners' language attitudes and engagement.

Like any quantitative study, this research is constrained by the inherent limitations of relying on numerical data. As a complex and multifaceted phenomenon, motivation may not be fully captured through numerical measurements alone. A more comprehensive exploration incorporating qualitative methods could provide a richer understanding of the motivational dynamics influencing language learners. Additionally, the evolving nature of motivation should be explored through longitudinal studies and mixed-methods approaches.

An intriguing direction for future research involves a more targeted investigation into learners acquiring an L3, given the indication from this study of the heightened influence of the ideal multilingual self among students learning additional languages beyond their L2. The present study underscored the significance of multilingualism, emphasizing the necessity to explore the intricacies of individual

learners' experiences when acquiring a specific L3, particularly in contrast to their L2 learning pursuits (Henry, 2011). Investigating how motivations vary between L2 and L3 acquisition, considering that all participants in this study had prior experience with at least one additional language, could provide valuable insights. Adopting a comparative approach between L2 and L3 motivations could enrich our understanding of the dynamics at play in multilingual language acquisition.

8 Conclusion

This study unraveled the patterns between learners of English and those engaged in LOTEs, highlighting a noteworthy aspect of the role of multilingualism, which emerged as a distinctive feature in shaping learners' motivational landscapes. Positive attitudes toward multilingualism underscored the desire to use languages beyond the classroom, emphasizing its significance in connecting with diverse linguistic communities.

Promoting the ideal multilingual self holds immense potential for enhancing language learning motivation and outcomes. By recognizing and harnessing the intrinsic motivation inherent in language study, educators and policymakers can create an environment where learners feel eager to learn languages with enthusiasm and determination, ultimately leading to higher proficiency and fluency in multiple languages.

The study contributes to the broader discourse on language acquisition motivations, the role of multilingualism, and the potential impact of diverse linguistic journeys. Finally, the study invites further exploration of multilingual motivations and their role in shaping language learning experiences.

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