

**Influencing language learning motivation in UK
MFL learners at Key Stage 3: An intervention
study inspired by Task-Based Language
Teaching**

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Abstract

In the context of the ever-growing popularity of the use of English as a lingua franca, learning languages other than English poses specific motivational challenges, particularly in post-Brexit Great Britain. In England, the uptake of modern foreign languages (MFL) has experienced a forty year continual decline. To positively impact language learner motivation and, hopefully, increase willingness among learners to continue with language study beyond the compulsory phase, it is vital to target learners whilst they are still in the compulsory phase of MFL education.

This study used a pre-post quasi experimental intervention design, whereby the pedagogical intervention was inspired by Task-Based Language Teaching, to gauge the impact on motivation in Year 7 learners in a UK state-funded secondary school. Motivation was measured through the lens of Self-Determination Theory, using a mixed-methods analysis of questionnaire data, immediate post-lesson feedback and focus groups, and compared to a control group using standard, centrally created resources. There were 56 participants in the intervention groups and 34 in the control groups.

Both quantitative and qualitative data show promising motivational gains across all motivational orientations in the intervention, but not control, group, including a small increase in boys' intention to continue language study past the compulsory stage of Key Stage 3 to the optional GCSE examination level.

The findings are of relevance for school-based foreign language teaching, language education policy and curriculum design across the anglophone world.

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Author's declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for a degree or other qualification at this University or elsewhere. All sources are acknowledged as references.

1.1 Introduction to the study

1.1.1 The UK languages crisis

The crisis of the UK's modern language education dates back forty years, and has become a staple in both academia (Lanvers & Graham, 2022) and media (Standley, 2023). In 2020, the Higher Education Policy Institute published a report on the crisis the UK faced in modern foreign language (MFL) education. The report highlighted the negative comparison in the language proficiency of the UK with the EU, its closest partners in both geography and trade. It stated that this crisis began at the school level, with negative perceptions of MFL GCSEs and A levels, a lack of alternative qualifications and demographic inequalities all contributing factors (Bowler, 2020). Each of these will be discussed in the next two chapters.

The report was repeated in 2025, and described a 'catastrophic decline' in formal language learning (Higher Education Policy Institute, 2025). This recent report details the socio-economic divide in access to MFL education, with GCSE entries twenty percentage points lower in areas of deprivation. It also highlights the low take-up at A-level of less than 3% for MFL, Classical subjects, Welsh as a second language and Irish combined, the loss of modern language degrees across 17 universities since 2014, the year-on-year decrease of enrolment in higher education language courses, and the plight of MFL teacher recruitment - the government achieved just 43% of its target in this area in 2024 (Bowler, 2025). As noted in the 2020 report, the crisis begins at the school level, and, as can be seen above, formal students of languages become fewer and fewer as the course level gets higher. The poor language capacity of the UK has created a serious economic problem (Foreman-Peck & Wang, 2014), and could pose a social problem (United Nations University, 2023).

There has been a continuous decline in GCSE uptake since Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) were changed from compulsory to optional in 2004 (British Council, 2025). Since MFL study up to GCSE level is optional in most state schools, it is crucial to examine more closely the study of MFL at the compulsory stage - currently Key Stages 2 and 3 - to ascertain what can be done to retain learners. Ofsted (2015) discovered a lack of challenge, progress and motivation among selected subjects at Key Stage 3 level, particularly MFL. The Ofsted report cited this lack of motivation as

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the main reason pupils opted out of MFL at GCSE. Several governmental efforts have been made to ‘nudge’ young people towards GCSE MFL with little success (Lanvers & Cowling, 2026). This study aims to establish what impact a classroom-based intervention can have on learner motivation at the compulsory stage, and if that can affect their decision to continue study.

1.1.2 The study: aims and objectives

This thesis is an empirical, mixed-methods intervention study which investigates if and how anglophone learners of languages other than English (LOTE) may be sufficiently motivated to continue study at the optional stage. It addresses a critical research gap in the field of language learning (LL) motivation, focusing on learners at the compulsory stage of lower secondary school. Although research into LL motivation has increased in recent years, with various theories developed through which to study it, the majority of this research is conducted with learners of English as a second language (L2; Lanvers 2024; 2025b). These theories - discussed in detail in Chapter 3 - are sometimes unsuitable for use with anglophone learners, as their motivation may be very different from those who want or need to learn the global *lingua franca* for material or pragmatic reasons.

Despite growing recognition of the motivational challenges faced by this learner demographic, relatively few empirical studies have examined targeted interventions aimed at improving motivation within this context. While some theoretical and survey-based work has explored motivational patterns (Lanvers, 2017a; Lanvers & Martin, 2021), there remains a lack of applied intervention studies that test strategies to enhance motivation in authentic classroom settings. This thesis contributes to closing that gap by implementing and evaluating a classroom-based intervention, grounded in established motivational theory, to assess its impact on learner motivation and inclination to continue study. By focusing on compulsory-stage learners - a group often overlooked or aggregated with post-compulsory students in broader motivational studies - this research provides insight into how motivation can be fostered during a critical period of LL disengagement. The findings aim to contribute to the literature on LL motivation, but also to inform pedagogical and assessment practices and policies in anglophone contexts, specifically the UK.

The research questions (RQs) are as follows -

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1. How does a Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) inspired intervention at Year 7 in an English secondary school influence
 - 1.1. learner motivation?
 - 1.2. continuation intentions?
2. Learner experience of intervention
 - 2.1. How do students report on their learning experience of the interventions and their normal classes?
 - 2.2. Do students report differently on their experience of the two interventions and their normal classes?
3. Are there any gender differences in respect of
 - 3.1. motivation for MFL and continuation intentions?
 - 3.2. learner experience of the interventions generally, and of each intervention specifically?

1.1.3 The structure of the thesis

The thesis is divided into seven chapters, as well as references and appendices. This chapter introduces the research, explaining the rationales proposed for LL in the UK and the problem an anglophone context poses to learner motivation, UK language education policies (LEPs) and pedagogical approaches over time. The impact of Brexit is then explored, considering how political discourse has influenced perceptions of LL and intercultural openness. Chapter 2 expands on the context, exploring more recent educational developments and the measures taken to combat the decline in MFL GCSE entries. Chapter 3 is a review of relevant literature into the field of Instructed Second-Language Acquisition (ISLA) including key pedagogical approaches, Self-Determination Theory as a measure of motivation, the language learning crisis in anglophone contexts and the statistics around GCSE take-up (gender imbalance, socio-economic divide and geographical limitations in access to LL), Chapter 4 details the methodology of the study and the results of the pilot, and Chapter 5 provides the study results. Chapter 6 discusses these results in detail, including their implications for teaching practice and further research, taking into account the limitations of the study. Chapter 7 gives a concise conclusion.

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1.1.4 The background of the study

I work as a teacher of MFL across Key Stage 3, 4 and 5 in a state secondary school with sixth form in the North West of England. My own observation of pupil motivation led me to conduct this study. I found it disheartening, as a passionate teacher of MFL, that many of my pupils were not 'on-board' with the idea of learning a language. Often they would tell me that they saw no point, thought it was boring, difficult or irrelevant to their lives. My first thought, as a newly qualified teacher, was to organise an overseas trip. I imagined that some of the economically disadvantaged children would have a chance to experience the wider world and see the need for languages. However, COVID-19 restrictions came into place a month before this was scheduled to take place. I was finding behaviour challenging and believed that if I could raise motivation, then both behaviour and outcomes would improve. Llewellyn-Williams (2014) identifies behaviour particularly as a barrier to L2 speaking development. I began to research methods of improving motivation and engaging pupils through different pedagogical approaches. I found that the research was dominated by studies of EFL, which, at times, did not relate to the general mentality of Anglophone learners. I also found little research and evidence-based solutions into the context of UK secondary schools. On deciding to conduct my own intervention, I found I was most enthused by project and task-based pedagogies, as these seemed, from my perspective, to elevate the students' engagement. Although my interest was in TBLT, I found this difficult to implement in its pure form in the data-driven and assessment heavy UK secondary setting, as discussed further in Chapter 6.

It made sense to perform the intervention in the school I was working at, as I planned to teach some of the classes myself. In the end, this was not possible due to my timetable for the academic year being heavily Key Stage 4-5 (I did, however, teach some of the pilot participants). I was always available to the participants' teacher to provide the intervention materials and answer any questions. I was also available to provide copies of the questionnaires and emoji plenaries used in quantitative data collection so as to minimise any extra work on their part. Conducting the study at my place of work also meant that I was able to see student data and contact parents via the school email system to offer the option of withdrawing consent.

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The rest of this chapter is devoted to the relevant background and contextual information which goes some way in explaining the reason for the current crisis of LOTE learning in the UK.

1.2 The context of global English

“There has never been in the past a language spoken as widely in the world as English is today.” (Melitz, 2016).

According to a British Council report from 2013, entitled “The English Effect”, English is spoken by a quarter of the world’s population. As of 2025, it is the world’s most spoken language, with 1.53 billion speakers of English either as a first or additional language (Galan, 2025). To put this figure into perspective, the next most spoken language is Mandarin Chinese with 1.15 billion speakers, followed by Hindi, with 609.1 million speakers, and Spanish, with 558.5 million speakers (Galan, 2025). It is an official, administrative or cultural language in 88 countries and an official language in many international organisations, including the European Union, United Nations, African Union and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. English is by far the most popular language for internet content, with 49.4% of websites in English, compared to the second-most popular language online, Spanish, with 6% (Petrosyan, 2025). In the realm of academia, over 75% of academic journals are published in English, with English-language journals growing at a rate of 3.22% per year over the last ten years, while non-English journals grew at a slower rate of 2.33% per year over the last decade (Curcic, 2023). Such is the popularity of English as an instructed second or foreign language across the world, that many anglophone countries have experienced a decline in the learning of LOTE over the last decades (Lanvers, 2025b; Churchward, 2019). In short, the phenomenon of English as a global *lingua franca* means that for many school pupils who speak English as a first language (L1), they perceive no need to learn another language (Crystal, 2003, Lanvers, 2024).

1.2.1 LOTE learning

The learning experience of LOTE encompasses emotions, engagement, relationship, meaning and accomplishment, which interact with each other throughout the learning process and influence motivation both positively and negatively (Li & Liu, 2023). Motivation to learn LOTE can have very specific and personal reasons for each

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learner, unlike learning English as a second language (L2), which is frequently due to the perceived need to learn a global *lingua franca*. The desire to learn a heritage language, for example, is often linked to ethnic or cultural identity (Huang & Chan, 2024).

The idea of L2 'selves' - how learners perceive and construct their identity in relation to the language they learn - is important. The motivation to learn LOTE can draw on an Ideal Multilingual Self: an aspirational self which is competent, fluent and confident in the L2 (Dörnyei, 2005). Conversely, learners may be motivated by an Ought-to L2 Self: an externally influenced self which the learner feels they ought to become. This Ought-to Self is commonly cited in literature on learning English as a L2 (Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017). For example, this Ideal Self was noted as a motivational construct for UK learners of French and Spanish at university level (Oakes, 2013). Lanvers (2017a) further considers the idea of selves to be best categorised on a continuum, Ought to Ideal. Lanvers also notes that for some anglophone L2 learners, motivation comes from a rebellious notion of countering negative influences, such as peer pressure or Europhobia.

In the burgeoning field on language learning (LL) motivation research, consensus has increased that motivation is influenced by many external and internal factors (Dörnyei, 2005; Gardner, 2010), and that, unlike for learners of English, motivation research on Anglophones learning LOTE is lagging behind considerably (Lanvers, 2024).

1.3 The rationales for language teaching in anglophone contexts

Rationales refer to the reasons and justifications for including LL into a curriculum or syllabus. Rationales are distinct from motivation, which is an individual desire, in that they explain logical purpose, which is usually sociopolitical. However, Lanvers (2024) notes that it is rare for rationales to be clearly communicated to learners, making a connection with their own motivations nearly impossible. England's Department for Education (DfE) gives the following definition of the purpose of Key Stage 3 MFL study

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“Learning a foreign language is a liberation from insularity and provides an opening to other cultures. A high-quality languages education should foster pupils' curiosity and deepen their understanding of the world. The teaching should enable pupils to express their ideas and thoughts in another language

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and to understand and respond to its speakers, both in speech and in writing. It should also provide opportunities for them to communicate for practical purposes, learn new ways of thinking and read great literature in the original language. Language teaching should provide the foundation for learning further languages, equipping pupils to study and work in other countries.”

(Department for Education, 2013).

These rationales can best be explained with the conceptualisation of the benefits of LL as a matrix of two dimensions: in one dimension, individual and societal benefits, and in another, material and non-material benefits, resulting in a four-boxed matrix (see Figure 1.1 below, represented with permission from Lanvers, 2024, p.38). Individual material benefits can be utilitarian: better employability, through broader opportunities and a competitive edge, the possibility of a higher salary, and increased geographic and societal mobility. Additionally, educational advancement can be seen when LL is introduced early and sustained, as it supports academic success, literacy development and a positive attitude towards learning (Fox, Corretjer & Webb, 2019). Individual non-material benefits include cross-cultural awareness, communicative competence, enhanced creativity and problem-solving skills. The cognitive benefits of LL are considerable. Language study, bilingualism and multilingualism enhance cognitive flexibility and delay the onset of dementia by raising the cognitive reserve as people age (Fox, Corretjer & Webb, 2019). Societal material benefits encompass the economy, security, defence and intelligence, which can all be improved through global communication, made easier with a multilingual workforce. Finally, societal non-material benefits incorporate a sense of global citizenship, social cohesion, tolerance and collective competence (Lanvers, 2024, p.38).

Figure 1.1

Holistic conceptualisation of rationales and motivation (Lanvers, 2024 p.38).

Individual material professional advancement educational advancement social capital	Individual non-material cultural & social enrichment intellectual and personal enrichment cognitive and health benefit leisure use
Societal material economic benefits security defence intelligence	Societal non-material global citizenship intercultural communicative competence tolerance social cohesion

Thus, the DfE's statement of purpose seeks for individual material benefit through "equipping pupils to study and work in other countries", individual non-material benefit through "new ways of thinking", "opening other cultures" and accessing literature, and societal non-material benefit through "freedom from insularity", with intercultural communication in enabling pupils to "express their ideas and thoughts in another language and to understand and respond to its speakers," (DfE, 2013) However, as we shall explore in the next section, rationales are shaped from both the top (policy makers in government) and the bottom (teachers, learners, parents and the general public). Lanvers & Cowling (2026) point out the elitist undertones in the statement of purpose, as it does not specify to what end the liberation from insularity and access to literature achieves. This is likely to leave only a minority of students who might be able to identify with these rationales. Those pupils who opt for MFL study at GCSE are capable of conceptualising their motivation in a more holistic way than those who discontinue (Coffey, 2016), therefore, we must question how well these rationales are communicated, and if enacting them differently, for example with an alternative pedagogical approach, would solve the problem of low MFL take-up.

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For speakers of LOTE, the rationales for learning English can be conceptualised more clearly - due to its status as a global *lingua franca*, it can provide easier international communication, better job prospects and wider opportunities. For speakers of English as a first language (L1), however, the question arises as to why learn another language at all. This question is difficult to answer with a purely utilitarian standpoint, as advances in technology mean that translation of written signs and menus can be done with increasing speed and accuracy. The same technology can be used orally - by speaking into translation software, one can play English sentences back in the target language, record an interlocutor's response and translate this back into English. The perceived shame of having to resort to such technology is enough for some (Lanvers, 2018: see also the qualitative results of this study), however, the utilitarian rationale is not enough to convince many. One may argue that the National Curriculum in general has a limited direct applicability - just as the need to calculate one side of a right-angled triangle in many people's day-to-day life is rare, the inclusion of the Pythagorean Theorem nevertheless aims to teach problem-solving, shape conceptualisation and logical thinking. As Bowler (2025) writes, in the age of AI, LL is better conceptualised as a 'language mindset', fostering modes of thinking which AI is incapable of, instilling a critical perspective, careful deduction, empathy, imaginative flair, creativity, and awareness of cultural nuance and geopolitics. This could be promoted in the same way as the 'mathematical mindset', which has considerable perceived value despite the prevalence of calculators.

Another factor in this argument is that the level of competence achieved during school years is not regarded as sufficient by some (Lanvers & Chambers, 2019). Our European neighbours are renowned for their superior language ability (Eurostat, 2024), leading some anglophone pupils to regard LL as a wasted effort (Coleman, Galaczi, & Astruc, 2007; Coffey, 2016). However, the level of mastery does not impact the cognitive benefits of multilingualism (Achaa-Amankwaa et al, 2023), making language study at any level worthwhile at the individual non-material measure.

If we consider England's societal problems, LL may go some way towards a solution. Less than an hour's drive away from where this study was conducted, in the North West of England, recent protests about housing asylum seekers required a police presence (Farrell, 2025). This is one of several similar protests reported in the media

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at the time of writing (James, 2025; Gordon-Farley, 2025). Protestors made the following comments -

“We stopped the Germans, why can’t we stop dinghies.”

“They’re not fleeing a war to come to Britain - they’re coming from France - they are coming because of all the benefits.”

“I’m not a racist, I’m just a concerned mum. And I don’t feel safe in my own community.”

(Farrell, 2025).

The study of languages offers opportunities to challenge engrained ways of thinking, sensitise cultural differences, enhance communication across cultures and holistically experience ‘otherness’ (Lanvers & Cowling, 2025). Crucially, it fosters curiosity and willingness to engage with difference (Lanvers, 2024). The teaching of community languages in schools has been shown to reduce sectarianism, racism and inter-religious tensions (Byram, 2008; Kirkham, 2016). Perhaps the ability to consider different perspectives would have tempered the British exceptionalism of the first commenter, or aided empathy and comprehension for the second one that British imperialism led to these asylum seekers feeling more culturally at home in a country whose language they understood. It may also have reassured the third commenter that she had no reason to fear people simply because they are from a different background. These quotes reflect a narrow, exclusionary national imagination, where only certain people are seen as belonging. LL can challenge this by expanding individuals' capacity to imagine broader, more inclusive communities beyond the nation-state (Anderson, 2006). LL disrupts the myth of a monolingual, culturally homogenous Britain. By engaging with other histories and identities, MFL students are better positioned to question nationalist narratives and develop a perspective which aligns more with human connection than rigid national boundaries. There is a societal material benefit to this too - ethnic discrimination in the workplace is estimated to cost the UK £40 billion per year (Route2, n.d.).

1.4 Language education policies in the UK

UK education is devolved to its four nations (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) and currently, all nations make LL compulsory at the lower part of secondary

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education as a minimum. In England, where 85% of UK school students reside, primary and secondary schools follow the national curriculum, which covers the taught subjects and expected standards. The national curriculum is divided into blocks called Key Stages. Key Stage 1 covers children aged 5-7 (Years 1 & 2). Key Stage 2 applies to ages 7-11 (Years 3 - 6) which mark the end of primary school. Secondary school starts with Key Stage 3 (ages 11 - 14, Years 7 - 9) and finishes with Key Stage 4 (ages 15 - 16, Years 10 & 11). Most students will finish Key Stage 4 with a formal assessment in each subject called the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) exam (DfE, n.d.).

Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) is a compulsory subject at Key Stages 2 and 3 - except in Northern Ireland, where there is no statutory provision in primary (Key Stage 2). In Wales, Welsh study is compulsory at Key Stage 4 (Welsh Government, 2020), but in all 4 countries of the UK, MFL was made an optional subject at Key Stage 4 in 2004 (Education Policy Institute, 2022).

1.4.1 Scotland

Inspired by European examples, Scotland implemented the 1+2 policy in 2013. This entitles pupils to begin L2 study in the first year of primary school and continue until the end of secondary S3 (age 14-15, or Year 10 in England). They begin learning a L3 no later than the fifth year of primary school until the seventh year of primary, and again at some point in secondary, up until S3 (Scottish Government, n.d.). The languages taught are decided by schools and local authorities, but the L2 must be a language which can be taken at national qualification level (Cantonese, French, Gaelic, German, Italian, Mandarin, Spanish or Urdu). The government's 2023 survey found that L2 provision was full in 68% of responding primary schools and partial in 31%, with French by far the most taught L2 at 82%, Spanish second at 14% and Gaelic third at 9%. L3 teaching was provided by 76% of participating primaries, with Spanish the most taught L3 at 46%. In secondary schools, 61% replied that their L2 provision was full, and 39% that it was partial. French (82%), Spanish (36%) and German (17%) were the most taught L2s. 88% of responding secondaries offered L3 provision, with the report authors speculating that since this did not need to be continuous, it was easier to implement. The most popular L3s were Spanish, French and German (Scottish Government, 2024). The 2019 survey listed the problems schools

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experienced with the policy. In primary, the main issue was competing priorities, with pressure to focus on other curricular areas leading to LL not being prioritised. This was followed by teacher confidence, as schools reported gaps in L2 provision where staff were not sufficiently trained. At secondary level, a greater variety of issues were mentioned. Many of these were centered around MFL being optional at examination level, which created a discrepancy between school policy and the entitlement and vision of the government policy (Scottish Government, 2020). The data suggests that this ambitious strategy still has some way to go before full implementation.

1.4.2 Wales

The target in Wales is for one million Welsh speakers by 2050 (Welsh Parliament, 2024). The government's aim is for Welsh to become an additional L1 rather than a L2, therefore, the plan is for a 'bilingual plus one nation' (Gorrara et al, 2019). Welsh is a compulsory subject across Key Stages 1 - 4. 26% of schools in Wales are Welsh-medium, 63% are English-medium, and others are dual stream or bilingual. The status of Welsh in the curriculum means that MFL (termed 'International Languages' in Wales) often suffers in terms of timetabling (Gorrara, 2018). From 2022, Wales' curriculum stipulates that learners will study Welsh and English from ages 3-16, as well as at least one international language in primary school (Welsh Government, 2020). However, provision in Key Stage 2 is not compulsory until Year 5 (Cardiff University, n.d.). At Key Stage 3, the most popular taught languages are French, Spanish and German. French is offered at 70% of secondary schools who responded to the 2024 Language Trends survey, but this decreases to 64% by Year 9. 67.9% of schools reported that none, or less than 10% of Year 10 pupils were studying MFL at GCSE or other Level 2 qualification, which puts Wales behind other UK nations in terms of take-up. Of the GCSE entries, French is the most popular at 77%, followed by Spanish at 47% and German at 13%. 25% of responding teachers considered the nature of Global English to be the biggest barrier to GCSE take-up in Wales (British Council, 2024).

1.4.3 Northern Ireland

As mentioned above, Northern Ireland (NI) is the only UK nation with no statutory MFL provision in primary. This means LL is compulsory only for the first three years of secondary education, the shortest period of statutory LL in Europe (Collen, 2021a).

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However, almost two thirds of primary schools who responded to the 2025 Language Trends survey do offer LL, and nearly three quarters are in favour of compulsory MFL. Irish is the most common language taught in primary schools. In Key Stage 3, Spanish is the most taught, followed by French, Irish and German (Duff & Collen, 2025). The Department of Education for Northern Ireland has a statutory duty in the provision of Irish-medium education, and this section is in development (Carruthers & Ó Mainnín, 2018). As MFL GCSE is compulsory in many selective schools, the SES divide in LL seems even more apparent in NI than the rest of the UK (Henderson & Carruthers, 2021). Similar to the situation in Wales, Irish provision affects the time available for MFL teaching, although Irish is only taught to GCSE and A level in the Catholic sector (Carruthers & Ó Mainnín, 2018). In the compulsory Key Stage 3 phase, Spanish is the most popular taught language, followed by French. Year 9 pupils who were surveyed by the British Council gave Italian as the language they would most like to learn, followed by Spanish. 64% of the Year 9s surveyed felt that, after their three or more years of learning MFL, they were unable to speak it well at all, and 89% said that they felt languages would not be useful to their future career, however, 75% enjoyed LL. The combined average of Year 11 pupils studying GCSE or other Level 2 MFL qualification across state and grammar schools in NI is estimated to be 39.5% in 2024/25 (Duff & Collen, 2025).

There is currently no government-backed centre for languages in NI, such as the National Consortium for Languages Education (NCLE) which exists in England. In March 2025, Transformed NI was announced by the Minister for Education. This is a comprehensive strategy for the transformation of teaching and learning in NI, which focuses on curriculum, assessment, qualifications, school improvement and addressing educational disadvantage. The strategy includes significant investment in high-quality teacher professional development, however, it is not yet known if primary MFL provision will be included (Duff & Collen, 2025).

1.4.4 England

In England, LL is compulsory for pupils aged 7-14 (Key Stages 2 and 3). The most common language taught in primary schools is French, with 70% of primaries who responded to the 2025 Language Trends survey offering this language, followed by Spanish (26.5%). The most frequent barrier to delivering LL mentioned by primaries

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was a lack of time, with languages not prioritised, followed by teacher subject knowledge. This finding echoes issues raised in the previous four years' surveys (British Council, 2025).

Transition between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 remains a particular area of concern (Bolster, 2009). Over this period, Courtney (2017) discovered a decrease in enjoyment and motivation, although pupils' perceptions of self-efficacy (belief in their ability to succeed in the tasks set) remained relatively stable. However, the self-efficacy of British MFL students has been found to be generally low (Graham & Macaro, 2008). Just over half of primary schools report having contact with their linked secondary schools, which often results in the transition from Key Stage 2 to 3 being poorly handled, with pupils from various primary settings grouped together at secondary with insufficient differentiation, leading to their prior knowledge not being built upon as they repeat the same learning (Ofsted, 2015; Bevis & Gregory, 2005). This lack of collaboration contributes to broader challenges at Key Stage 3, where Ofsted found that achievement in more than half of MFL classes was not judged to be good enough. Motivation is higher in pupils who are permitted to continue the same language from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3, although a fresh start in a new language can work under the right motivational conditions (Bolster, 2009).

Approximately 20% of secondary schools who responded to the Language Trends 2025 survey judged Year 7 pupils to be less prepared for Key Stage 3 study than in previous years. Continuity in language learning is rare: just 2% of secondary schools reported that all pupils continued with the same MFL from primary school, and only 11% indicated that most pupils did so. At Key Stage 3, French remains the most frequently taught language (88.1%), followed by Spanish (74.6%). An estimated average of 53% of pupils in Year 11 studied a MFL GCSE in 2024/5 (British Council, 2025).

1.4.5 Conclusion

To summarise, LEPs across the UK reflect distinct regional priorities, shaped by differing governmental frameworks and sociolinguistic contexts. Scotland's 1+2 approach aims for early and sustained LL from primary through secondary education,

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while Wales focuses on multilingualism within the framework of its new Curriculum for Wales, which targets the integration of international languages alongside Welsh and English. In Northern Ireland, MFL provision remains largely optional and varies significantly by school type, with limited central policy direction. England, by contrast, mandates language learning from ages seven to fourteen but faces persistent challenges in continuity, teacher expertise, and pupil engagement, particularly at the primary-secondary transition. Although all four nations recognise the value of LL in a globalised society, there remains considerable disparity in policy intent and policy implementation, affecting student take-up across the UK. This can be explained using Lanvers' (2024) conceptualisation of LEP as shaped by a dynamic combination of bottom-up and top-down forces. Governmental policies are top-down, prescriptive, declarative and visible statements of the political vision of the nation-state. The implemented policy, conducted in the classroom, is largely invisible, yet has a huge impact on LEP in practice. It is also co-constructed by the learners themselves, as well as other stakeholders such as parents and the general public, thus, rationales for learning are reshaped by all actors involved, making the discourse on LL integral to the LEP. Since the present study is conducted in England, the next section will focus on that country.

1.5 The problem of lack of learner engagement and motivation

1.5.1 The history of the UK's formal language education and elitism

“English is a language that will do you good in England, but past Dover it is worth nothing.”
(John Florio, 1578, no p.n)

Historically, LL in England was unburdened by the notion of ‘English is enough’, as it is today. However, early educational inequalities meant that formal LL was not a privilege applied to all. This section will explore teaching methods and practices from the Medieval period to the late 20th century, tracing the evolution of pedagogical approaches, the changing prominence of specific target languages, and to which members of society these languages were taught.

LL in medieval England was closely tied to church and cathedral schools, where Latin was the main subject taught to boys destined for clerical or legal careers (Cobban,

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1988; Parkes, 1991). Teaching involved grammatical analysis and rote memorization, reflecting the dominant trivium structure of medieval education - grammar, rhetoric and dialectic (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004). The expectation during this period was that language skill would derive from a knowledge of formal analysis via grammarians (Kelly, 1969). Learning in this time period centred around reading and understanding texts, linguistic rules and morphology, with oral proficiency a secondary concern. The link to religion and LL continued until the 20th century due to the need for missionaries to learn the languages of the areas they preached (McLelland, 2017).

The Renaissance period, particularly the 16th century, saw increased interest in classical education, including Greek and Latin. Mastery of grammar and translation, including double translation, from Latin to English and back again, were encouraged before spoken fluency. Grammar was often taught through parsing Classical texts rather than in isolation (Aschem & Aschem, 1589).

During Tudor and Stuart England, French was taught in elite households by private tutors (Lambley, 1920). Teaching methods during this time were highly structured, focusing on grammar, vocabulary lists, bilingual French-English dictionaries and literature. Immersion in France was considered a less formal style of education, and it appears that English learners who remained in England with tuition made faster progress than those who attempted immersion without direct instruction, such as merchants, soldiers and travellers, who relied on grammar guides and tutor-made resources without access to the tutors themselves (Lambley, 1920).

The exclusive nature of education historically meant that individual benefits took precedence, particularly the individual material benefit of societal advancement. Written language proficiency was a sign of elitism and often differed considerably from the spoken form, creating a clear distinction between the educated and those who could not afford such privilege. In the 16th century, Reformist Martin Luther argued for mass literacy in order for everyone to be able to read the Bible, translating the New Testament himself from Latin to German to both enhance its accessibility and create a common dialect (Gunderman, 2017). This led to the societal benefits of education more generally beginning to gain traction. The invention of the printing press enabled reading material to reach more of the people, followed by 17th and 18th century

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Enlightenment scholars such as Rousseau advocating for education for all children. Germany (then Prussia) introduced the first compulsory education system in the early 1800s, followed by the UK's Education Acts in 1870 and 1880, in which industrialist arguments in Parliament that education was vital to maintain the nation's lead in manufacturing were instrumental (UK Parliament, n.d.). Education was thus made compulsory up to age ten, but LL did not yet feature in the majority of schools - in 1851, only 3.8% of schools catering to poorer classes offered a language (McLelland, 2017).

The Industrial Revolution and its related rise of the middle classes in English society led to an increase in international travel. This, coupled with the introduction of compulsory state education and expansion of the university sector, led to an increase of interest in modern foreign languages over Classical ones, although Latin remained the unquestioned core of the curriculum (McLelland, 2017). Reformist Thomas Prendergast, who was able to acquire the Tamil and Talugu languages through his service in the East India Company, challenged the prominent Grammar-Translation method by advocating for a study of the idiomatic use of language (Prendergast, 1864). His method, termed the 'Mastery system', focused on oral proficiency through chunked input - memorisation of complete, syntactically rich model sentences, with learners later reconfiguring these to make new sentences using the same patterns of language (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004). Inspired by childhood L1 acquisition, he deemed explicit grammar instruction unnecessary, favouring repeated practice of sentence reproduction, routines and situational meaning, leading to internalised fluency without conscious analysis. He wrote guides to French, Spanish, German, Hebrew and Latin, and was the first to propose a structured syllabus with the most frequent grammatical constructions first. Although his method was designed for adults' self-study, his work was quickly adapted by others into school books, containing teacher notes and detailed lesson plans. Revised editions of his own works contained advice to schoolteachers in the introductory pages (Lorch, 2016). As the Reform movement broadened across Europe, other notable figures such as Henry Sweet were also advocating for the teaching of spoken language first, focusing much more on phonetics (Chang, 2019). Additionally, research into child psychology unearthed the importance of pictures and objects (*realia*) when introducing vocabulary, and across Europe the 'Direct Method' of teaching solely in the target language, with no use of translation, gained popularity (McLelland, 2017).

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French and German were introduced to grammar and public (fee-paying) schools in 1830, and by the late 19th century, the status of Latin had begun to diminish. In 1888, there were three times as many entrants for the Cambridge Senior School Certificate in French as there were for Latin. After the former Spanish colonies of South America gained independence in the mid-19th century, increased trade opportunities in these regions led to the addition of Spanish to Cambridge's Commercial Certificate and the Junior and Senior school examinations set by Oxford and Cambridge in the late 19th century. Despite earlier centuries' evidence of LL in merchant classes, attempts during this period to introduce commercial language study in schools were unsuccessful, pointing towards access to language teaching remaining exclusive (McLelland, 2017).

In 1921, English linguist Harold Palmer declared that LL was fundamentally habit-formation. He called for a balanced approach considering the four skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing, teaching through context and situational examples rather than abstract rules, and incremental progression of reception before production, using drills before individual output (Palmer, 1921a). He developed the 'Oral method' of language instruction, which began with listening and speaking before progression to reading and writing. He introduced vocabulary and grammar in order of frequency, and planned question and answer drills and substitution tables for use in the classroom (Palmer, 1921b). He pioneered the PPP - presentation, practice, production - methodology, a hugely successful development which influenced more recent approaches including Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Content Based Language Teaching (CBLT; Jebahi, 2022). For more on CBLT, see Chapter 3, Section 2.3.

In 1923, Palmer founded the Institute for Research in English teaching in Tokyo, later renamed the Institute for Research in Language Teaching (IRLT). The IRLT conducted empirical research into aspects of language acquisition and published the findings in its own research journal. It was here that Palmer created a core vocabulary list of the 3,000 most common English words. The IRLT established multiple lines of approach into L2 instruction, enabling individual teachers to conduct their own research and select aspects of different methodologies in designing courses for their learners. In this way, Palmer succeeded in linking research to practice, leading many to consider him a founding figure in the field of applied linguistics (Smith, 2011). Although Palmer

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focused on the teaching of English as a L2, his work was nevertheless influential in Britain as the precursor to the 'Situational method', described on the next page.

Albert Hornby, a British teacher of English as a L2 who worked with Palmer in Japan, developed Situational Language Teaching in the early 1960s (Smith & Bowers, 2012), which quickly became the dominant method across Britain (McLelland, 2017). This approach involved teaching through context-specific situations. Vocabulary and grammar were taught through gestures, actions and visual aids, and imaginary situations explored with role-play. Textbooks, formerly ordered by grammatical topic, with one grammar point per chapter, were replaced with chapters organised by situation or function of language appropriate to situations (McLelland, 2017).

By the 1970s, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) had asserted itself as a popular methodology in Britain. Nowadays CLT can be used as an umbrella term, encompassing methodologies including the one used in this study of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), described as an application of the CLT theoretical approach (Pan & Nunan, 2025). CLT places the emphasis on meaningful communicative competence and remained dominant throughout the 1980s and 1990s (Ull & Agost, 2020). The Council of Europe sponsored research into CLT, with a new syllabus eventually being created which organised language into linguistic functions such as requesting something, as well as notions like time or location (Brigham Young University, 2025). With CLT, the focus is on meaning over form of language, and grammar is either taught as it appears in context or not directly taught at all (Yousaf, Umar & Habib, 2017).

In terms of which languages were taught during this period, the commercial importance of Spanish led to expansion across the university sector in the early 20th century, leading to growth in schools. Its progress was slow, with Spanish entries for the Secondary School Certificate in 1928 about 1% of the number of French entries and 20% of those in German. By the 1960s, Spain established itself as a popular and affordable holiday destination leading to a renewed raise of interest, although in the 1980s, General Certificate Examination (GCE, the forerunner of the GCSE) Spanish entries were still around 25% of those for German (McLelland, 2017), therefore French maintained its place as the most popular taught language, followed by German.

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Perhaps the starkest and most emotive example of the established divide in access to LL was in the army. British officers usually had some LL due to their higher social status, but during World War I, ordinary soldiers, unable to speak even single words of French, were shot and killed by the French when separated from their regiment. This led to the publication of small, cheap language guides aimed at this specific audience containing French rhymes which could be sung to a marching rhythm. Examinations for officers were in German or Russian, and naval officers were permitted three months' leave to work on French, German, Italian or Spanish, although they were not always posted to areas in which they could make use of their skills. Formal LL in army institutions was often cut due to war-time pressures, despite being needed more than ever at times of active combat (McLelland, 2017) an indication of the diminishing importance of LL in Britain.

LL was introduced in schools in the 19th century, but only to those attended by the social elite - grammar and public (fee-paying) schools. Higher elementary schools were not permitted to teach MFL unless they could justify the direct value for industrial occupations, and only in the 1950s, when full comprehensivisation of schools was implemented, has a language been - at least in theory - available to all. In 1977, approximately 75% of pupils in lower secondary were studying French, and in 1987 MFL was made compulsory between the ages of 11 and 16. However, language teachers, who had previously only worked in grammar schools, were unaccustomed to teaching such a range of abilities, and had to prepare pupils in the same class for two different examinations - the General Certificate of Education (GCE), which focused on translation, and the CSE (Certificate of Secondary Education), which prioritised speaking and listening. LL was criticised as unfit for purpose by businesses, and other educationalists voiced scepticism about the value and purpose of MFL for all (Dobson, 2018). In 1993, this was altered so that pupils needed merely a 'short course' of MFL, worth half of a GCSE. In 2004, it ceased to be compulsory once more (McLelland, 2017).

In summary, as was the case in ISLA development across the Western world, models of teaching in England swung from what Krashen (1981) described as learning versus acquisition. Learned, conscious knowledge focused on accuracy - for example, of grammatical rules - over fluency, with early language teaching relatively unconcerned

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with speaking proficiency. Later teaching methods leaned more towards acquisition, similar to childhood language acquisition, which attempted to replace learned knowledge with subconscious knowledge, producing greater fluency and spontaneity in language use, often at the expense of accuracy. The field of ISLA has since developed pedagogical methods which can be classified along the spectrum of these opposing ideas, as discussed further in Chapter 3, Section 2. Thanks to research-informed practice from the 20th century onwards, ISLA's distinction from childhood L1 acquisition is clearer, although certain pedagogical aspects can be replicated, like the introduction of new vocabulary with visual aids.

Language Education Policy (LEP) has always reflected broader social, political, and ideological forces, evolving alongside shifts in access to education and changing conceptions of who LL is for and why it matters. Historically, formal language instruction was the preserve of the elite, often focused on classical languages and serving functions of intellectual prestige, religious authority, or diplomatic utility. In the UK especially, formal LL was rationalised as a way of providing aristocratic and upper class offspring with the social capital deemed necessary for their future roles (McLelland, 2017).

In this context, LEP implicitly upheld social hierarchies, with little concern for communicative competence or inclusivity. Although language learning took place as and when necessity dictated, access to language teaching remained restricted to the middle and upper-classes for much of the history summarised here. From the late Middle Ages to the 18th century, those with access to language teachers were either nobility, the emerging middle classes, or those who needed languages for their profession. Boys had access to language teaching much further back than girls, as boys who could afford to were encouraged to travel throughout the Christian world. These elite beginnings have created a perception of LL which has not been shaken to date (McLelland, 2017).

1.5.2 Contemporary evidence of disengagement in UK school learners

“Pupils’ views on whether learning a language is relevant to their own lives is widely acknowledged to be a crucial factor in creating motivation to do well in the subject.”

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(Barton, 2006, p5)

As mentioned above, MFL GCSE entries have consistently declined since they were made optional, with Spanish making some gains but not enough to counter the overall reduction (British Council, 2025). Pupil motivation is known to be the key reason for discontinuing study (Ofsted, 2015) and the reasons for this are discussed below.

Firstly, the status of English. As discussed above, the unprecedented prevalence of English leads to the utility of LOTE not being universally accepted in an anglophone context (Lanvers, 2011). Secondly, the perceived difficulty of the subject. Graham, Macfadyen & Richards (2012) find that it is the perceived difficulty, rather than the global nature of English, which is the most important factor in lack of motivation. Despite the rise of pedagogical approaches discussed in the previous section, which focus on communicative competence, GCSE examination content has remained grammar-heavy (Kohl, 2019). The British Council (2019) highlighted the inaccessibility of MFL for pupils with low prior attainment and those with Special Educational Needs (SEN). Myers (2006) found that, on average, pupils score one full grade below results in other subjects when based on both individual grades. Despite recent alterations to grading, the imbalance remains (Thomson, 2024; British Academy 2024). It remains to be seen whether the 2025 redesigned GCSE will address this concern.

The demands of the exam create further problems, as - predictably - learners' subject enjoyment impacts their choices for further study (Taylor & Marsden, 2014). Many Key Stage 3 MFL classrooms still rely heavily on traditional, teacher-led approaches which can stifle engagement (Wingate & Andon, 2017), and textbooks marketed for this stage lack personal, interactional and situational authenticity (Andon & Wingate, 2013). Ofsted inspections from 1998 to 2011 consistently raised concerns over low ability in spontaneous speech, difficulty coping with the unexpected, insufficient extended or creative writing and a lack of opportunities for realistic language use (Dobson, 2018). As teachers feel unable to devote time to cultural aspects or creative activities (Claro, 2021), this unbalanced focus on grammar and technical aspects of language leads to learner boredom and disengagement in the classroom (Graham et al, 2016).

These concerns have not diminished in the years since. The Ofsted Curriculum Research Review for languages (Ofsted, 2021), and the subsequent revised GCSE

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subject content published by the DfE in 2022 prompted significant critical response from the research community, with several scholars arguing that the revised framework risked exacerbating rather than addressing existing motivational challenges. Rather than foregrounding communicative competence and authentic language use, the revised framework has been characterised by a narrowing of curriculum focus onto vocabulary, phonics and grammar as foundational building blocks - a direction that researchers argue risks further reducing opportunities for the kind of engaging, culturally rich and communicatively meaningful classroom experience that the evidence base suggests is most conducive to learner motivation (Graham, 2022; Woore, Molway & Macaro, 2022). The tension between what research supports in terms of motivating pedagogy and what the assessment and inspection framework incentivises has remained unresolved in subsequent years. Woore, Molway and Mutton (2026), responding to the DfE's Curriculum and Assessment Review interim report, have continued to call for fundamental reform of languages provision in England's national curriculum, while Marsden and Hawkes (2024) note that despite ongoing policy interventions, MFL GCSE uptake has continued to decline, perhaps only plateauing in 2024. These developments provide important and immediate context for the present study, which was conducted at a moment of considerable uncertainty and ongoing debate about the direction of MFL education in England.

Add to this that learners are also influenced by a curriculum which aligns to their goals when considering GCSE options (Ofqual, 2017), and feel that MFL lessons do not prepare them for their idea of what LL is for (Courtney, 2017; Graham et al, 2016), and it is apparent that the unclear messaging on rationales, the difficulty of the subject, and the obligation felt by teachers to squeeze in so much content due to the nature of assessment all combine to put learners off MFL as an option.

Thirdly, the socio-economic divide, well-documented in UK LL (Tinsley & Han, 2012; Board & Tinsley, 2014; Lanvers & Cowling, 2026), and explored in detail in Chapter 3 Section 5.2.1. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to continue MFL after the compulsory stage, culminating in nearly one third of university MFL students hailing from fee-paying schools (Lanvers, 2017b). This can be argued, in part, to be co-constructed by secondary school policies. Schools are judged by exam performance and measured in league tables, and as explained above, higher grades

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in GCSE MFL are more difficult to achieve than in most other subjects (He & Black, 2018). The pressure of these league tables has led some schools, particularly in socio-economically disadvantaged areas, to scale back their language provision and allow only the most academically able to pursue MFL beyond the compulsory stage (Filmer-Sankey et al, 2010; Lanvers, 2018), further perpetuating the stark social divide in opportunity to learn MFL, and the perception of it as an elitist subject (Lanvers & Cowling, 2026). For disadvantaged pupils, little or no exposure to the world outside the UK coupled with poor parental encouragement can lead to disaffection in MFL, whereas affluent parents tend to consider languages more positively, which influences their children's views (Lanvers & Martin, 2021).

Although there is evidence that primary pupils are receptive and eager learners of MFL (Graham et al, 2016) the difficult GCSE leads to tightly controlled and repetitive classroom activities (Wingate & Andon, 2017), teachers feeling unable to create more engaging tasks, and a prevailing idea of MFL as elitist. These factors combine with poor communication of rationales for LL, leading pupils to either decide against a seemingly difficult and irrelevant subject, or to have the decision made for them by their school.

1.6 Brexit

In 2016, the UK voted to leave the EU with a majority of 51.9% (BBC, n.d.). A survey conducted shortly after the Brexit referendum cited 34% of secondary schools who reported that Brexit further worsened learner attitudes to LL, predominantly in schools with below average performance and with a high percentage of disadvantaged students (Tinsley & Dolezal, 2018). The decision to leave the European Union appeared to reinforce perceptions that learning the languages of neighbouring countries was increasingly irrelevant, as the UK seemed to be turning inward and adopting a more Anglocentric stance, with Europhobia building upon the 'English is enough' mindset. While economists challenged this view, emphasising the growing importance of language skills in re-establishing international ties, the dominant discourse in the public sphere remained largely utilitarian. Notably, LL was framed almost exclusively in terms of its economic value, with little attention given to cultural, cognitive, or civic dimensions (Lanvers et al., 2018). This is likely a symptom of England's confusion around LL rationales, discussed in Section 3 of this chapter.

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Kelly (2018) predicted a drop in GCSE entries as a direct consequence of the UK's decision to leave the European Union, which appeared to come true, as in the 2019 Language Trends report, nearly 45% of state schools and 41% of independent schools reported that Brexit posed a major challenge to delivering LL. Teachers noted a decrease in pupil motivation, with schools in disadvantaged areas most affected. Some of this was said to stem from parent views of languages as less useful (British Council, 2019).

Tinsley (2018) noted the challenges for LL post-Brexit - the decrease in pupil motivation, the inequalities in access to language education across socio-economic status (SES), geographical area and gender (discussed further in Chapter 3 Section 5.2), the supply and retention of language teachers, and the decline of international immersive opportunities. The shortage of MFL teachers in the UK is widely publicised, and has indeed worsened since Brexit due to difficulties in hiring EU citizens (Kelly, 2018; Tinsley & Dolezal, 2018). In 2024, the UK House of Commons Education Committee heard that international recruitment for MFL teachers had more or less stopped (UK Parliament Education Committee, 2024). Additionally, before Brexit, schools benefitted from the EU funded Erasmus+ programme for student exchanges (European Commission, 2019). Erasmus+ is a well-established initiative which enables student and teacher mobility within the EU member states. The UK government announced the Turing scheme as a replacement in 2021. However, the Turing scheme only funds outward mobility and is not reciprocal, raising concerns over long-term sustainability, administrative burden and reduced international collaboration (Courtney, 2021; Outhwaite, 2022). Scholars and policy analysts have noted that the Turing Scheme lacks the structural coherence and multilateral infrastructure of Erasmus+, which was embedded within the Bologna Process and aligned with ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) frameworks. This led to early evaluations highlighting issues of continuity, partnership loss, and uneven access, particularly for institutions lacking international networks outside the EU (Kelly, 2022). The 2025 Language Trends survey revealed that many state secondary teachers remain unaware of the Turing scheme, and even fewer have accessed it (British Council, 2025). A welcome update since this study concluded is that the UK will rejoin the Erasmus scheme in 2027 (UK Government, 2026).

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1.7 Chapter summary

In conclusion, the global status of English today is intrinsically linked to its history of imperialism and colonialism. The sense of ‘English is enough’ exists in the Anglophone context (Lanvers, 2011; 2016b) in which learners can be reluctant to learn another language at all, and even in contexts in which English is the dominant L2, to the detriment of LOTE as a L2 or L3 (Lanvers, 2024). A socially responsible Language Education Policy (LEP) ought to challenge this attitude, and the unwillingness to engage with languages and cultures other than English (Lanvers, 2025a), an attitude which Brexit is evidence of in the UK. When designing a LEP, consideration must be given to how students themselves experience LL and what might improve this experience.

This study responds to the persistent research gap concerning motivation among UK-based LOTE learners at the compulsory stage, a group under-represented in academic research to date. This chapter situates the inquiry within the broader historical and sociopolitical landscape of language education in the UK, where LL has long been shaped by shifting pedagogical priorities and enduring structural inequalities. It examines how the rationales for LL and status of languages within the curriculum have contributed to widespread disengagement and inequitable access. This chapter explains the context of the frequent decision to discontinue, despite the relevance of LL today. Against this backdrop, mounting evidence points to a sustained decline in uptake and motivation, widely described as a language crisis, which highlights the urgent need for targeted, context-sensitive interventions aimed at re-engaging learners and redefining the value of multilingualism in anglophone societies. The long lasting UK crisis of language uptake will be discussed in the next chapter with greater specificity, detailing educational developments in England over the last four decades, and governmental and community initiatives to counter the decline.

2.1 Introduction

Understanding the wider socio-political and historical context in which MFL education operates in the UK is crucial to situating the present study. Motivation in language learning is influenced by national narratives about multilingualism, political developments, and educational policies. This chapter argues that over the past several decades, MFL teaching and learning in UK schools has been shaped by a number of intersecting factors: historically ambivalent national attitudes towards language learning, structural barriers within the education system, and a pattern of policy instability that has characterised recurring cycles of decline and attempted revitalisation. These factors are considered not only as contextual background to the present study, but because they form the broader landscape within which the participants of this research are learning Spanish at Key Stage 3 in England.

This chapter provides an overview of the key contextual factors that frame the challenges and opportunities for MFL learning, specifically at Key Stage 3 in England. It begins by examining the multilingual nature of the UK, reflecting on both indigenous and community languages, and societal attitudes towards linguistic diversity, before considering the economic and social case for greater linguistic competence among young people.

A summary of developments over the last four decades is then provided, a period characterised by both decline and revitalisation efforts amid shifting curricular priorities and public interest. This is followed by a discussion of systemic factors in the educational landscape: academisation, evolving school performance measures, specialist teacher shortages, and the role of independent schools - all of which have affected MFL provision and uptake. Governmental and professional community responses to decline are then considered together, examining the extent to which initiatives from policy makers and organisations such as the British Academy and the Association for Language Learning (ALL) have sought to address the downward trend.

Finally, the chapter assesses the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on secondary education, acknowledging the unprecedented disruption to schooling and its specific

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implications for language learning and pupil motivation, given its direct relevance to the participants of this study.

2.2 The multilingual nature of the UK

The United Kingdom is made up of four nations, each of which have authority over education; England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. English is spoken across the UK, however, other official or recognised native languages are Welsh in Wales, Gaelic and Scots in Scotland, Irish and Ulster Scots in Northern Ireland, and Cornish in Cornwall, England. These languages are more commonly heard in rural areas, and usually taught in schools as a second language (British Council, n.d.). In urban areas, one may hear many more international languages such as Polish, Romanian, Punjabi and Urdu, due to the increased ethnic diversity in cities - particularly London (Diversity UK, 2023). In the 2021 census, it was established that 7.1% of the UK population, but 20% of English schoolchildren, have a main language other than English or Welsh, yet are proficient in one of these languages (Office for National Statistics, 2022).

Adult language learners surveyed by the British Council mostly have regrets about their own school experiences of LL and believe that it is important for children to learn languages now. 66% said that MFL should be compulsory at primary school and 79% at secondary (Gough, 2020). Even though this study was conducted with adult language learners, it is still lower than the 86% of EU citizens who agree that everyone ought to be able to speak more than one language (Eurobarometer, 2024). Jaworska and Themistocleous (2018) provide insight into the discursive construction of multilingualism in the UK by combining discourse analysis with sociolinguistic survey data. Their study reveals that while UK media often frames multilingualism through both positive tropes, such as cultural enrichment and economic utility, and negative associations, particularly in relation to immigration, public attitudes appear more nuanced. Their survey responses from residents in a particularly diverse British town indicated general support for multilingual practices and a rejection of overtly xenophobic media narratives. However, if one examines the data from the 2016 Brexit vote, the more diverse areas - London, big cities and university towns - tended to vote to remain, while other, less diverse areas voted to leave (Clark, 2016). Since a xenophobic attitude can be attributed to a vote for Brexit (Golec de Zavala, Guerra & Simão, 2017), this indicates that the positive attitude towards multilingualism may not

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be representative of the nation as a whole, further supporting the discussion in the previous chapter of the UK's rationales for LL being unclear.

2.3 Economic language needs of the UK

In 2003, a survey of 150 English-speaking companies found that although 35% conducted more than half of their business with non-English speaking countries, 54% had fewer than five employees who could communicate fluently in a LOTE (Emerald Publishing, 2003). This situation does not appear to have improved, as recent analyses cite the UK as the largest single-country market for language services in Europe (Rodríguez de Céspedes, 2022). The cost of this language deficit is estimated to be 3.5% of GDP (Foreman-Peck & Wang, 2014). If there was a ten percent increase in Key Stage 3 to 4 take-up of either French or Spanish (the two languages taught at the participating school of this study), leading to students being able to use the language in a business setting, a cumulative GDP increase is estimated to be between £623 to £686 million. If the language is Mandarin or Arabic, this figure increases to up to £944 million (Ayres-Bennett et al, 2022).

During preparation to leave the EU, Tinsley & Board (2017) prepared a report for the British Council on which languages would be the most important for future UK prosperity and influence. They called on the UK government to build capacity in the teaching of Arabic and Mandarin, and for schools to prioritise LL as it does for Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects. They also recommended the UK either remain in the Erasmus+ scheme or replicate its benefits, and for further and higher education providers to develop and incentivise LL. However, the idea of a 'pecking order' of usefulness was criticised by Wei (2021) who also cautioned against the classification of 'community' languages, usually non-European, as separate from modern, foreign, or modern foreign languages, which tend to be European and included in a school or university curriculum.

Taking into account factors such as UK exports, emerging high-growth markets and the public's language interests, as well as the extent to which other countries' populations were competent in English, they ranked the ten most important languages as Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, French, Arabic, German, Italian, Dutch, Portuguese,

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Japanese and Russian. More recent market data, however, paints a slightly different picture of language needs.

Rodríguez de Céspedes (2022) conducted a survey which analysed 619 job advertisements requiring foreign language proficiency, German was the most requested language across all sectors, with 237 posts mentioning German, followed by 208 mentions of French and 96 of Spanish. The most common job sectors requiring another language were customer service/support or call centres (171 posts), sales, account management and business development (120) and education (60). In the field of translation and interpreting, French overtook German as the most requested language, whereas in education, Spanish and Mandarin Chinese were the most requested - further supporting evidence for the demise of German in schools. This is despite the strong nature of the UK-Germany relationship - the treaty of friendship and bilateral co-operation states that;

“Particular focus shall be placed on increasing exchange between young people. The Parties value bilateral school and youth exchanges, and shall facilitate such exchanges, supporting the development of relevant structures and initiatives, such as the “UK-German Connection”

(Prime Minister’s Office, 2025, article 18)

The exchange of youth from the UK to Germany could prove difficult unless there is a revival of German in schools.

A broader labour market analysis by CityLit (2024), which reviewed over 20,000 job advertisements, reinforces the above findings. Of the job advertisements which sought multilingual professionals, German, French and Spanish were the most in-demand, with German required by 25.5% of postings, French by 23.9% and Spanish by 15.6%. The survey found that language skills were most in demand in management roles, with 13.2% of available jobs, followed by recruitment with 6.1% and technology with 5.2%. In management roles, French overtook German as the most sought-after language, and in education, German was overtaken by both French and Spanish.

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Overall, the findings highlight both the continued relevance of European languages and the broader implications for language education policy in the UK. Even when accounting for legal, relational, and informational issues, language remains the dominant source of perceived cultural difficulties (Foreman-Peck & Wang, 2014). The benefit-to-cost ratio of investing into language education, specifically in Arabic, French, Mandarin or Spanish, is estimated to be at least 2:1. A full eradication of language barriers with countries which speak these languages could increase annual UK exports by about £19 billion (Ayres-Bennett et al, 2022). This is the most recent academic work on the topic and strongly underpins the argument that language competencies are an important consideration for economic growth.

2.4 A history of policy instability: language learning in England over the last four decades

In 1998, following the successive implementation of England's first National Curriculum (NC) in which MFL was a compulsory subject up to age 16, 76% of pupils took a GCSE in MFL (Tinsley & Kelley, 2018). The compulsory policy of MFL until age 16 was termed 'Languages for All'. The first NC mandated the teaching of MFL solely through the L2, which both teachers and learners struggled with, leading to disaffection and poor behaviour, high teacher turnover and the assertion that MFL lessons were the most disrupted of the curriculum (Macaro, 2008). Due to under-performance, the Nuffield Foundation, a charitable trust, commissioned an inquiry to deliver an independent view of the UK's future needs for capability in languages and the nation's readiness for them. Recommendations included designating languages as a key skill, developing a national strategy to improve capability, raising the profile of languages, LL to begin at age seven (Key Stage 2), a wider range of languages, better differentiation and use of IT in secondary schools, a range of alternative courses for ages 16-19 (Key Stage 5) and a language to be a requirement for university study (Nuffield Languages Inquiry, 2000).

Based on these recommendations, a ten-year National Language Strategy was set out in 2002, which aimed to improve learner motivation by developing language provision in primary schools and revitalising the Language Assistant programme (Dobson, 2018). It was believed that targeting secondary schools left it too late to stimulate the desire to learn another language for many pupils (Secretary of State for

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Education and Skills, 2002). The goal of all primaries providing MFL was set as 2010 (Dearing & King, 2007). This was followed by a range of centrally funded initiatives which did target secondaries, including a detailed and structured Key Stage 3 MFL framework, an alternative qualification to GCSE called 'Asset Languages', and a national 'Links into Languages' programme providing regional hubs, access to specialists and a bank of professional development resources for teachers from the Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research (CILT; Dobson, 2018).

The impact of the new Key Stage 3 MFL framework was assessed in 2009, and findings were that the explicit nature of grammar teaching had improved pupil skill in this area, almost universal approval for the principle of teaching MFL at Key Stage 2, and the regional hubs - termed Specialist Language Colleges (SLCs) - reported a strong positive impact deriving from the award of specialist status. However, the SLCs' impact was not felt at the level of classroom teaching and learning, nor was it felt by other schools (Dobson, 2018). Additionally, while the principle of MFL at primary level was well received, the promised funding did not materialise, and primary schools were not provided with the training, resources, or specialist staff members to effectively teach it. Practice was weak, and secondaries struggled to meet the needs of mixed groups in Year 7, failing to build on any prior learning (Evans & Fisher, 2009).

Seeking greater flexibility in the National Curriculum, vocational qualifications were introduced, and the argument referenced in Chapter 1 of languages being too difficult for all but those who were academically inclined resurfaced, as well as questions over how essential they were for progression or personal development (Hagger-Vaughan, 2016). In 2004 the government permitted schools to make MFL optional at Key Stage 4, stating that this would enable pupils who were unmotivated or unable to learn another language to direct their time more fruitfully (Ross, 2024). Another justification given was that, with MFL added to the Key Stage 2 curriculum, this would give pupils seven years of study before age 14, enabling them to make sufficient progress to encourage continuation - without taking into account the time it would take for primaries to provide sustained MFL (Dobson, 2018). In fact, MFL was not made compulsory at Key Stage 2 until 2014, when the National Curriculum was revised (McLelland, 2017). The effect on attitude and disaffection at Key Stage 3 was immediate and pronounced (Evans & Fisher, 2009; Coleman et al, 2007).

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Consequently, the GCSE entries for French, Spanish and German (the top three taught MFL in the UK) almost halved from 2002 to 2019 (Churchward, 2019). However, Macaro (2008) argues the optional nature of MFL was not responsible for the decline. He argues instead that it began in the 1990s with policy decisions being made with little regard for pedagogical or curriculum infrastructure, and a reductive notion of the complex processes of ISLA (evident in the instruction of teaching entirely through the L2).

With the election of a new government in 2010, the National Languages Strategy came to an abrupt end one year later, as their policy was one of minimal intervention. CILT was closed down, the 'Links into languages' programme and SLCs discontinued. Funding allocated specifically for MFL was transferred into general school budgets, which shrank due to austerity measures (Dobson, 2018). 'Asset Languages', which had examinations in 25 different languages in 2010 (although not all levels in all languages were developed), reduced to just five in 2012, when the exam board announced it would redevelop only French, German, Italian, Mandarin and Spanish (Association for Language Learning, 2012). The policy also caused the departure of the UK from the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML), an institution which initiates and co-ordinates a programme of innovative projects and training activities to combat challenges in language education (Dobson, 2018).

By 2016, fewer than half of pupils took MFL to GCSE, and good passing grades made up just a third of entries. To address the decline, and to ensure all pupils were engaged and challenged by high-quality MFL teaching, the government-run Teaching Schools Council (TSC) commissioned a MFL pedagogy review (Teaching Schools Council, 2016). This review covered evidence on current teaching and effective pedagogy in MFL at Key Stages 3 and 4. It contained 15 key recommendations on how MFL should be taught and assessed. From this, the National Centre for Excellence for Language Pedagogy (NCELP) was created in 2018 by the University of York and the Cam Academy Trust and funded by the Department for Education. NCELP created free schemes of work, complete lesson resources and teacher CPD in French, German and Spanish which acted on the recommendations in the TSC review (NCELP, n.d,a). The NCELP approach is a largely traditional 'three pillars' method of teaching (Lanvers, 2020) which involves explicit explanations of grammar, a focus on the most

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frequently encountered vocabulary and a strong emphasis on phonics. In 2023, the Department of Education funding ceased. Currently, the National Consortium for Languages Education (NCLE), run by University College London's Institute of Education and in collaboration with the British Council and Goethe-Institut, is the recipient of government funding to drive the principles of the 2016 MFL pedagogy review (NCLE, 2025). NCLE states that its aim is to develop and support a network of 25 lead hubs which each contain up to seven partner schools to re-invigorate and strengthen system-led leadership, and to improve opportunities and outcomes for pupils in England. Its mission statement also addresses the socio-economic divide and gender gap in LL (NCLE, 2025), further discussed in Chapter 3 Section 5.

Ofsted published a curriculum research review of MFL teaching in 2021 (the OCRR). It found the quality of primary languages variable, and recommended improving teachers' subject knowledge. It also found the problems around the transition from primary to secondary were still unresolved (Ofsted, 2021). When discussing the problem of low take-up, the review mentioned the existence of different motivational theories before focusing on self-efficacy (learner belief in their ability to complete set tasks). Although many researchers agree that self-efficacy is central to positive motivation, it has often been overlooked in governmental approaches and their attempts to better motivate learners (Lanvers & Graham, 2022; Graham 2022). The review positioned the difficulty of MFL, low teacher and school leader expectations and the often poorly-managed transition stage as the reasons for pupils' poor self-efficacy (Ofsted, 2021). The guiding principles of the report reject the notion of inquiry-based learning for novice learners, favouring explicit teaching of the three 'pillars' of LL introduced in the 2016 TSC review of phonics, vocabulary and grammar, and stating that curriculum plans should clearly map progress in these pillars - a recommendation criticised for putting all responsibility onto teachers and educational leaders (Koglbauer, 2022). While the review's aims of using research to inform policy and practice were lauded, similarly to its approach to motivation, its singular focus on the 'pillars' and the evidence on which they were based was condemned by several prominent researchers (Woore, Molway & Macaro, 2022; Coffey, 2022). Additionally, Porter et al (2022) criticised the OCRR's rejection of inquiry-based learning in favour of 'mastery before experimentation'. They stated that this idea places too much emphasis on the understanding of grammatical concepts through explicit instruction,

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constrained teaching practices and minimal exposure to unfamiliar language. Instead, they argue that grammar ought to support communication rather than being a concern in its own right. They also encourage the use of creativity and experimentation to secure engagement and develop freer, more creative and meaningful language use.

In 2022, following a public consultation, the government announced reforms to MFL GCSEs, with the first new examinations taking place in 2026. The aim of the new examination was for increased take-up by making the content more accessible. The reforms included a new dictation element to the exam, placing greater importance on understanding the grapheme-phoneme correspondence. Pupils will be assessed on the most frequently used vocabulary, a base of 1,200 ‘word families’ at foundation and 1,700 at higher level. The themes and topics in the exam inform the selection of this vocabulary, instead of being prescribed in the curriculum as before. To accurately assess the knowledge of vocabulary, at least 85% of the exam content is drawn from the most common 2,000 words (Department for Education, 2022). A new rationale for MFL was added;

‘To better understand relationships between the foreign language and the English language.’

(Department for Education, 2023e, p3)

However, Cazzoli (2022) worries that the quantification of subject knowledge might not prepare students well for university study, where reflection and inquiry will be required. In this manner, she argues, the socio-economic inequality in MFL study may worsen at university level.

While the 2016 TSC review laid the foundation for a more systematic and knowledge-rich approach to MFL teaching, its influence on subsequent developments has not been without debate. The OCRR (Ofsted, 2021) largely reaffirmed the TSC’s emphasis on high-frequency vocabulary, phonics, and grammar, but did so with limited engagement with broader sociocultural or communicative dimensions of LL. The reformed MFL GCSE closely aligns with these principles, embedding them into assessment structures and lexical specifications. However, this coherence may also signal a narrowing of pedagogical focus, privileging cognitive and structural aspects

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of language at the expense of spontaneous use, intercultural understanding, and learner motivation. While the reforms represent a shift towards research-informed practice, the selective use of evidence raises important questions about the balance between the linguistic rigour of the curriculum and the broader purposes of language education.

In 2025, it is estimated that an average of 53% of Year 11 pupils are taking an MFL GCSE; within this, there is great social variation, ranging from 69% in the most affluent areas to 47% in the areas of most deprivation (British Council, 2025). Spanish overtook German at GCSE for the first time in 2011 (McLelland, 2017), and became the most popular language entry in 2025 (TES, 2025).

2.5 Structural barriers within the English education system

MFL teaching in England is shaped not only by LEPs and assessment practices but also by broader structural dynamics within the education system. Among the most influential of these are the academisation of state schools, recruitment and retention of MFL teachers, the impact of school performance measures and the stratifying effects of selective and private schooling. Each of these factors contributes to unequal access to high-quality LL and have implications for both language uptake and student outcomes. These ideas will be discussed in detail below.

2.5.1 Academisation

Academisation began in the early 2000s. It is the conversion of a state-run school from local authority control to being funded directly from central government, thus no longer being governed by statutory education law. Academies are owned and run by not-for-profit companies, and are therefore subject to company law and some statutory education law (West & Wolfe, 2018). The idea of academisation was for schools to have more freedom, both over the curriculum and spending (DfE, 2023c), and the process was designed to replace schools judged to be failing by Ofsted. In 2010, the new government introduced a statutory mechanism for schools to be forced or allowed to convert to academy status (West & Wolfe, 2018). By 2023, 80% of secondary schools in England were academies, the majority belonging to a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) which oversees several academy schools. This allows under-performing schools to work with a better performing school in the same MAT, thus raising the

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standard of education through a network (DfE, 2023c). The impact of allowing more freedom over the curriculum is to the detriment of MFL, once the accountability measures explained below are considered.

2.5.2 School performance measures

In seeking to reverse the declining uptake of MFL, the government introduced the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) in 2010. This is composed of 5 GCSEs - English language or literature, maths, the sciences, geography or history and a foreign language (DfE, 2019). The EBacc was designed to encourage pupils to choose these subjects for GCSE study in a bid to improve their options post-16. Unfortunately, the educational benefits of the EBacc were unclear to both pupils and parents, as its main purpose of a performance measure for schools meant that no physical certificate was ever created for individual recipients. This meant that the EBacc did not result in the increase of MFL GCSE entries as expected (Lanvers et al, 2021). Some schools created 'pathways' - a more restrictive set of GCSE options available to certain pupils based on their likelihood of passing the EBacc subjects (Parrish & Lanvers, 2019), further fuelling the elitist perception of MFL. The 'Asset Languages' alternative qualifications mentioned above were not recognised as counting towards the EBacc, leading to their abandonment by most schools (Association for Language Learning, 2012).

A new performance measure, Progress 8, was introduced in 2015. Progress 8 considered achievement in 8 subjects – English, Maths, three subjects from the EBacc and three further qualifications. The 3 EBacc subjects are not specified, meaning that although MFL counts towards Progress 8, it can be replaced by another subject. The aim was to show pupil progress through how much 'value' secondary school had added when compared with peer data from primary schools, explaining its description as a measure of progress rather than attainment (Department for Education, 2016). Since the introduction of Progress 8, there has been an increase in uptake of all EBacc subjects at GCSE except MFL (Gill, 2022). Progress 8 is now the main accountability measure as displayed in school league tables (Sellgreen & Richardson, 2020), and even those schools with low Progress 8 scores do not try to improve these by encouraging students to take more EBacc subjects (Gill, 2022).

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The OCRR stated that:

‘A failure to secure a good GCSE grade in a language is by far the most significant obstacle to achieving the EBacc.’

(Ofsted, 2021, p.2)

In the academic year 2023/24, just 40.4% of pupils entered the EBacc (DfE, 2025c). Of the pupils who entered four out of the five EBacc components, 89% did not study a language in 2023/24 (British Council, 2025). The government expectation for secondary pupils was that 75% take a MFL GCSE by 2022, increasing to 90% by 2025 (Department for Education, 2019). Therefore, we can conclude that this measure was unsuccessful. The introduction of Progress 8 effectively undermined the EBacc and created a policy ‘tug-of-war’ in which the misunderstanding by policy-makers of the purpose and value of LL, and the heightened perception of it as for the academically inclined, only served to broaden the socio-economic divide (Parrish, 2024).

2.5.3 Specialist teacher shortages

The recruitment of MFL teachers has been a concern for over a decade. In the academic year 2024/25, 43% of the government recruitment target was met. Of the MFL applicants, 34% were non-UK-domiciled (compared to 24% of all subject applicants). Non-UK-domiciled applicants have an almost double rate of rejection than those in the UK (British Council, 2025), with international recruitment of MFL teachers significantly reduced since Brexit (UK Parliament Education Committee, 2024). Recruitment issues worsen in areas of social deprivation - 68% of schools in the poorest areas struggle with MFL, compared to 57% of schools in affluent areas (British Council, 2025). Regarding current MFL teachers, 40% are likely to leave in the next five years (UK Parliament Education Committee, 2024).

Parrish (2024) states that MFL teachers’ skills do not always match the needs of their school; as language provision narrows, it is not a given that teachers will be able to teach the languages offered. This is confirmed by the UK Parliament Education Committee, which noted in its second report of 2023/24 an assumption and expectation that MFL teachers can teach any language rather than their specific specialism, undermining the quality of teaching. Additionally, when there is a lack of subject specialists, those most qualified are deployed into higher-stakes classes, such

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as GCSE (UK Parliament Education Committee, 2024). This leaves lower subject specialism at Key Stage 3, with obvious implications for pupils' sense of progress and desire to continue. For French, the percentage of teachers with a qualification in the language is 71.7%, for German 70.5%, and for Spanish just 51.2% (UK Parliament Education Committee, 2024).

2.5.4 Independent schools

As evidenced in the Language Trends series of reports, independent schools have more pupils studying MFL, with languages still compulsory at GCSE in many. They also provide access to more languages, both in regular classes and as an enrichment option. There are usually more opportunities for international engagement; for example, language assistants are employed by 27% of state secondaries and 42% of independent schools. Although independent schools are not immune to difficulty with recruitment, this is less severe than in state schools, since the recruitment of qualified MFL teachers is an issue in two-thirds of state secondary schools compared to just over half of independent schools (British Council, 2025).

2.5.5 Conclusion

The academisation of schools in England has given school leaders increased autonomy over the curriculum, allowing them to shape subject offerings in response to the perceived needs and profiles of their student cohorts. In some cases, this has resulted in the deprioritisation of MFL, particularly where school leaders perceive that offering MFL may negatively affect overall performance outcomes (Lanvers, 2018). Given the pressure to perform well in league tables and on measures such as Progress 8, schools are often reluctant to promote subjects that are seen as difficult to score highly in. Harsh grading in MFL has persisted despite frequent calls for reform (Thomson, 2024), and as a result, some schools choose to limit language provision at Key Stage 4. This is further complicated by the national shortage of qualified MFL teachers, which makes it difficult for schools to sustain consistent, high-quality teaching in the subject. In contrast, selective grammar schools and private schools are generally better resourced and less affected by recruitment challenges. These institutions tend to maintain strong MFL departments and continue to secure high student outcomes, reinforcing the perception of LL as the preserve of more academically advantaged pupils and contributing to the wider perception of the elite

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nature of the subject (Lanvers & Cowling, 2026). The failure of the EBacc in countering the decline of MFL GCSE entries led the government to introduce other initiatives, explained in the following section.

2.6 Responses to the decline: governmental and community initiatives

The UK government launched the Mandarin Excellence Programme (MEP) in 2016. It begins in Year 7, is free, and grants schools £20,000 per year, plus extra for student retention. It provides online teaching materials and access to a hub school, online professional network and guidance from the programme co-ordinator. State-funded schools may apply if they have either a 'good' or 'outstanding' Ofsted rating, can ensure an average of eight hours study per week (a minimum of four should be face-to-face teaching, the rest is self-study and intensive study courses in the UK and China), and must have 'highly able and motivated Key Stage 3 pupils' (DfE, 2018). It is delivered by the Institute of Education (IOE) at University College London (UCL), in partnership with the British Council. The programme aims to increase Mandarin entries at GCSE and higher, to combat the 'Mandarin is too difficult' mindset by increasing effective teaching which fosters a positive attitude towards the language, to provide a sufficient supply of teachers, and to generate evidence to inform roll-out of the model for other languages (IOE, 2025).

The 2022/23 evaluation report showed a strong delivery against target outcomes, with an increase in the share of Year 7 pupils entering the programme who were economically disadvantaged. There was a 37% increase in GCSE entries from 2022 to 2023, and MEP participants made up 47% of state-school GCSE candidates without a background or heritage in Chinese. Additionally, 82% achieved a pass of Grade 5 or higher, although teachers involved in the delivery argued that the impact went far beyond grades and built confidence, resilience and critical thinking. The report recognised the main challenges in delivery were maintaining pupil motivation, timetabling, and delivering the four hours of learning outside the curriculum (IOE, 2024).

Based on the MEP's success, the Latin Excellence Programme was launched in 2022. It offered funding to increase provision of Latin, a fully resourced Key Stage 3 and 4 curriculum, enrichment activities and trips for all students, school visits from expert

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practitioners six times each year and continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers (DfE, 2023d). The then education secretary said that the scheme aimed to boost uptake among disadvantaged pupils and diminish its reputation as an elitist subject. It was to be implemented in up to 40 schools in disadvantaged areas from 2022 to 2026, where GCSE take-up was low (Belger, 2021). The programme was discontinued in 2024, following the election of a new government (Department for Education, 2025d) - a move lamented by university representatives. In an open letter, they stated that of the 5,000 pupils covered by the scheme, one third were in receipt of Free School Meals, meaning they were among the most economically disadvantaged in society. The representatives gave this figure as an indicator of the 'exceptionally well-run' nature of the programme (Edwards et al, 2025).

Some local initiatives receive government funding, such as the London Schools Excellence Fund (LSEF), which developed a professional language network based at the University of Westminster. This gave MFL teachers in the city access to professional development opportunities, but funding for this project ended in 2017 (Dobson, 2018).

Although the MEP is meeting its target of increasing GCSE entries, this success was not replicated with the same model when used with Latin. The success of one and the cancellation of the other is a symptom of the competing views on the purpose of LL in England (Wei, 2021). It could have been the case that the second programme would have matched the success of the former, however, changing governments have different priorities which affect funding allocation. It is also worth noting that one of the requirements for the MEP is highly motivated students, so cultivating motivation ought to be a priority. It can be argued that governmental, top-down strategies fail to address underlying issues such as curriculum disengagement, teacher shortages, and socio-economic disparities in access to LL. The limited impact of these measures suggests a disconnect between policy objectives and the practical realities of school environments. In contrast, the remainder of this section will examine grassroots and community-led initiatives, which offer alternative, context-sensitive approaches to revitalising MFL engagement among students.

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Firstly, The British Academy, in collaboration with the Arts and Humanities Research Council, the Association of School and College Leaders, the British Council and Universities UK, published proposals for a national language strategy in 2020 which set out short, medium and long-term actions. One long-term action recommends building on the success of the MEP and rolling this out to socio-economically deprived areas and those in which MFL uptake is lower. Another recommends the inclusion of MFL into vocational and technical qualifications where appropriate. The proposals also recognise the work required in implementing the primary curriculum and strengthening the transition period (British Academy et al, 2020). After publishing, the institutions launched 'The Languages Gateway' in 2023, a resource and advocacy site for students, teachers, researchers and policy-makers, whose mission is to help increase LL across the UK (Languages Gateway, n.d.).

The 'Linguistics in MFL' project is co-ordinated by academic staff across six universities in England. It aims to address the MFL crisis through introducing the study of linguistics in schools, with the idea that this will attract more students to LL and better prepare them for university. Currently, its focus is on A level learners, and the resources available on its website cater only for this level. However, its annual report for 2024/25 states that a new project targeting Key Stage 3 pupils has been launched (Linguistics in MFL, 2024).

Another initiative with a linguistic focus is World of Languages, Languages of the World (WOLLOW, theworldoflanguages.co.uk). This is a registered charity developed by a team of teachers which aims to address the decline by bringing the study of all languages into schools and celebrating the linguistic diversity in classrooms across the country. It teaches pupils *how* to learn a language by making the structure, grammar and linguistics more accessible. WOLLOW provides free primary and secondary resources designed to inspire a love of languages (World of Languages, 2025). This project could prove to be effective, particularly in primary, where teacher confidence in MFL is a known issue (British Council, 2025), as it does not require a language specialist to deliver. As Martin (2000) recommends, language sensitisation rather than language competence is a less intense approach and could help alleviate the transition period, where currently there is insufficient differentiation as the prior learning tends to vary, exacerbated by the lack of communication and co-ordination

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between primary and secondary (Ofsted, 2015). Language sensitisation consists of a brief introduction to the principles and techniques of learning one or more languages without the need for that language to be continued at Key Stage 3. The promotion of language competence in a single language is the current governmental expectation (Department for Education and Skills, [DfES] 2002), but the promotion of transferable language learning skills is a key aim of the Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages (DfES 2005). This language awareness teaching at Key Stage 2 is also recommended by Lanvers & Cowling (2026).

NCLE, the current recipient of government funding, works in partnership with the British Council and the Goethe-Institut on GIMAGINE, a project which supports and promotes the learning of German in the UK. It provides free resources, professional advancement for German teachers and scholarships (Goethe Institut, 2025).

While the above community efforts are all laudable initiatives dedicated to counter the decline of LL in UK schools, there is currently no available data to assess their impact. One project which has had measurable success is Languages for All (LFA), which believes that all children in state schools should have the opportunity to study languages until the age of 18 (A level). Their pilot programme is run in partnership with Royal Holloway, University of London, and provides hub school teaching in A level MFL to address the problem many schools have in not being able to afford to run the classes due to low numbers of students. A mixed-model of live lessons, both in-person and online, conducted after school hours, makes use of existing infrastructure, with fundraising making up the difference (Languages For All, n.d.). These funds are secured by LFA effectively articulating the need for MFL provision within a specific community. The hubs foster strategic partnerships between schools, universities, employers, and international cultural bodies. This collaboration helps to address the misconceptions regarding MFL and career prospects. Since its beginning in 2022, the number of schools in Hounslow, London, offering MFL has tripled, and A-level enrolment has more than doubled (Bowler, 2025). One consideration in this case is that London has a higher than national average of pupils taking MFL to GCSE (London Assembly, 2020), so this may need to be equalised before the LFA's model of A level support is rolled out in different areas.

2.7 The COVID-19 pandemic as a compounding factor

Between March 2020 and March 2021, the UK underwent three national lockdowns between four and ten weeks in duration. Around the national lockdowns were regional restrictions, which varied in length and severity. (Institute for Government Analysis, n.d.). During this time, schools were open only for the children of key workers. Most children worked from home, under their parents' supervision. Classes were a mixture of synchronous and asynchronous; live online lessons, recordings and set work to be independently completed. An independent public body, Oak National Academy, started providing recorded lessons in April 2020. For MFL these followed the recommendations of the 2016 TSC review (Oak National Academy, n.d.). GCSE and A level exams were cancelled, and grades were issued based on teacher predictions after controversy about the government's model of algorithm-based grades (Kolkman, 2020). The restrictions had an adverse effect on pupil mental health leading to increased levels of depression (Li, 2022), however, further discussion of this is beyond the scope of this work.

When schools were open, social distancing regulations meant that classes did not run as usual. Lessons given in school were often recorded so those self-isolating at home could access them. In MFL specifically, this meant vastly reduced speaking between pupils, no movement around the classroom, no singing and no interactive games (Association for Language Learning, n.d.). A research review of this period in education showed that teaching was less effective than in normal circumstances, and most pupils experienced learning losses - which were most severe in cases of disadvantage and deprivation. Since learning was online, there were disparities in who could access it and who could not (Howard, Khan & Lockyer, 2021).

In my own experience, teaching at the school which hosted the intervention, pupil participation was vastly reduced, and an international trip I had organised was cancelled. I was refused permission to organise another in 2022 and 2023 due to concerns around the pandemic reoccurring. The Language Trends survey 2021 details issues specific to MFL - that language teaching was suspended in one in five primary schools, with areas of deprivation impacted the worst. 64% of primaries and 34% of secondaries had no international activities within school, and two in five Key Stage 3 pupils did not engage with LL in the state sector, compared to one in ten in

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independent schools (Collen, 2021b). With parents responsible for their children's study, it is perhaps unsurprising that the impact was worsened in areas of deprivation, as parental attitude to LL tends to be more negative if their background is less affluent (Lanvers, 2017b). The loss of international experiences, sometimes the first chance for a disadvantaged child to experience a non-anglophone environment, could also have had a negative effect on pupil motivation.

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter outlines the sociolinguistic and educational context influencing motivation for LL in the UK. The UK's post-Brexit trade ambitions and global positioning, which have amplified the strategic value of multilingualism, means that the economic imperative for language competence continues to evolve. Educational policy changes over the last four decades provide a more complete picture of the steady decline in MFL at GCSE. Systemic factors which underpin the elite perception of languages, such as the effect of private schools, academisation and performance measures, often undermine equitable access to language education. Initiatives aimed at reversing the LL decline which stem from government are mostly ineffective, and while community-based initiatives show promise, thus far there is little evidence to measure their impact. Finally, the Covid-19 pandemic and its restrictions have been shown to amplify the social divide across education as a whole, with MFL particularly vulnerable to its effects due to the existing socio-economic divide. The next chapter will provide a review of literature, both of the UK's language learning landscape and of LL pedagogies and Self-Determination Theory, which may provide a means to rectify the crisis.

3.1 Introduction

The crisis of MFL in the UK is well documented (Bowler, 2020), and discussed further in Chapters 1 and 2. One key reason given for students discontinuing MFL after the compulsory phase is a lack of motivation (Ofsted, 2015). Many of the contextual reasons for this are explained in the previous chapter. This literature review starts by exploring a range of pedagogical methods of Instructed Second Language Acquisition (ISLA), concluding with Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), and explaining the theory behind using this method as inspiration for the study. Secondly, a brief overview of motivational theories in ISLA is given, before an in-depth explanation of Self-Determination Theory (SDT), including its potential to aid understanding of learner attitudes and motivation in MFL in the UK Key Stage 3 classroom. Thirdly, evidence of enhancing motivation is examined. Then the review discusses teaching strategies and research interventions to increase motivation before linking TBLT and SDT with the theory of change, in order to establish the conditions required for motivational shift. As one of the tasks in this study is a translation project, the theory of translation and its use in L2 teaching is explained. Next, empirical evidence on studies of teaching approaches which influence learner motivation is examined, including approaches using TBLT. Effects on motivation and learning outcomes are discussed. Finally, dependent variables in LL motivation are explored, including gender, socioeconomic status and geography, and the rationale of an intervention study which uses TBLT is justified.

The following section explains the field of ISLA, highlighting methods which emphasise learner agency. It concludes with the chosen pedagogical method for this study of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT).

3.2 Instructed Second Language Acquisition (ISLA)

ISLA is an academic field of enquiry with both a theoretical and empirical base. It can be defined as the mechanisms of learning and/or the conditions in which they occur to enable or facilitate the development or acquisition of a language other than the learner's first (Loewen, 2014). Put more simply in 1990 by Rod Ellis, it is second language acquisition which takes place in a classroom. It is classified as a subfield within the discipline of Second Language Acquisition (SLA). It is differentiable from

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SLA in that the focus is on the element of instruction, rather than the naturalistic process of exposure to the L2 leading to a varying degree of familiarity with little to no systematic effort on the part of the learner, teacher or institution - for example, through immigration or expatriation (Loewen & Sato, 2017). It is clearly distinguishable from the process of acquiring one's first language, usually done at a very young age by constant exposure, which could be deemed ineffective in adults (Krashen, 1982).

A range of theoretical models has emerged to account for the diverse processes and outcomes observed in classroom-based LL. Central to these models are variables such as curriculum design, instructional context, and the role of the teacher, each of which significantly influences the implementation and effectiveness of language instruction. The interaction among these factors leads to the adoption of varied teaching methods and pedagogical strategies across educational settings (Ellis, 2012). Consequently, ISLA is best understood not through a singular framework, but as a field shaped by contextual diversity and pedagogical complexity.

Historically, there are two contrasting approaches to ISLA. One is direct instruction, also termed explicit or intentional learning (DeKeyser, 2003). This involves a typically teacher-led lesson in which learners have an aspect of the language explained with an explicit instruction – for example, the formation of the imperfect tense. The focus in the lesson is on a linguistic form, therefore this can also be termed form-focused instruction (Long, 1991). Learners are made aware of exactly what they are learning.

The other approach is the communicative method, also referred to as implicit or incidental learning (DeKeyser, 2003). Pioneered by Krashen in 1982, this advocates that learners not be made aware of the grammar, rather that they focus on the meaning of any input over the formation of the language. For example, the learners may be exposed to examples of the imperfect tense and asked to use these as a model to form their own sentences, with no explicit instruction of when or how to use this tense. The focus is on communicating in the target language, rather than on a linguistic form, therefore this is also known as meaning-focused instruction. This has a lesser cognitive load, as the learners are acquiring the language in a more natural way, akin to their first language (Leow, 2019).

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It has been argued that the former method advances learners' accuracy, while the latter method advances their fluency (Michel, 2017). While the latter may work well in certain situations, a secondary school classroom, in which learners are subjected to regular assessments on features of the L2, lends itself more to the former type of instruction. However, learners may become disheartened with their language learning if they were to venture to a country in which the L2 is needed and find they have difficulty communicating in real-world situations. Conversely, with only meaning-focused instruction, often learners need the explicit instruction before they can convert their knowledge to implicit (DeKeyser, 2007). Therefore, ISLA has evolved to include theories which combine these two methods. For example, in a meaning-focused curriculum, it is possible to have regular interventions of form-focused instruction, to prepare learners for standardised assessment or to ensure their accuracy in productive tasks improves (Loewen & Sato, 2017).

Below I summarise some of these theoretical approaches, the first four of which are discussed in detail in Loewen & Sato (2017).

3.2.1 Concept-Based Instruction

Also known as Systemic-Theoretical Instruction, Concept-based Instruction (CBI) is rooted in the research of child psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1987), which stresses the importance of social interaction in the development of cognition. In other words, classroom-based learning is a process through which psychological development occurs. This contrasts with the view of fellow child psychologist Jean Piaget, which is that development must precede learning (Piaget, 1936). Vygotsky pioneered the theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which is the difference between what a learner can do independently and what they can do with the aid of a More Knowledgeable Other (MKO), usually a teacher or, potentially, a peer. The ZPD is the area in which instruction ought to be given, allowing the learner to develop a skill which they can later use independently.

Vygotsky's student, Piotr Gal'perin (1989) took this research further by making recommendations for implementing CBI. The aim is to foster development by presentation of conceptual knowledge connected to practical activity, in which the learner may internalise the knowledge and understand how they may deploy it in various contexts (Lantolf & Zhang, 2017). The initial phase of instruction is termed the

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orienting phase, in which knowledge is presented as a meaningful whole, that is, not simply with a verbal explanation, but with a utilitarian value for the future. In this regard, CBI encourages a focus on meaning over structure. Keeping the orientation focused on the learners' future is thought to awaken the ZPD (Haenen, 2001). In presenting this knowledge, Gal'perin advocates the use of a Schema for the Orienting Basis of Action, or SCOPA (1989). This is a visual representation, such as different coloured plates to explain word order variation (Karpova, 1977). Learners would then use the SCOPA in a practical activity, which gives an opportunity for them to internalise the knowledge. This phase could involve a task, as defined by Ellis (2003) and explained in detail further on. To cement this internalisation, the next phases of CBI are for learners to communicate their thinking, either to themselves in private speech or in explanation to a peer or teacher, and finally to deploy the concept in a range of communicative activities or tasks with relative fluency. An interesting outcome of CBI is that, as demonstrated by Zhang (2014), it can be equally effective for students assessed as having a low capacity working memory as for their peers who have a higher capacity working memory. One issue with the implementation of CBI is that it involves a high level of conceptual subject knowledge by teachers for them to create and explain SCOPAs. Lantolf & Poehner (2014) suggest that teacher training would require significant redesign to prepare for this.

3.2.2 Processing Instruction

VanPatten (2017) is the main proponent of a pedagogical intervention called Processing Instruction (PI). This provides the learner with examples of L2 before explaining grammatical concepts, which enables the learner to build up a lexicon before spotting patterns in grammar and discovering rules of language formation deductively. The focus is on meaning, and the teacher can link form with this as the learner progresses, through processing the language they are providing as a model. As an example, learners would be presented with some sentences written in the French perfect tense, with English translations. They would then be able to use this tense by repeating the sentences they have been given. After seeing these examples, they could begin to figure out the rules of the tense formation, such as the suffix *-é*, before it is taught explicitly. This aids development of mental representation of the L2. Rather than consciously noticing aspects of grammar, students attach meaning to morpho-phonological units in the input, such as the tense I have given as an example.

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One principle relevant to PI is the first noun principle. This states that learners process the first noun in a sentence as the agent and the second as the patient. This works with subject-verb-object sentences as seen in English, for example, I walked the dog, but can lead to misunderstandings with passive sentences and those with the object first, such as the Spanish *te quiero*. If this problem is approached with PI, learners could be shown sentences with L1 translations, such as *te quiero* - I love you, *le quiero* - I love him. If learners are then given further examples of these sentences and asked to match them to pictures showing who is the agent and who the patient of a sentence, there will be a greater degree of success, even without explicit instruction (VanPatten et al, 2013). VanPatten describes processing instruction as a tool for a communicative curriculum, useful when a supplemental focus on form is required (VanPatten, 1996). He is clear that it is not an approach or a method to ISLA, but a pedagogical intervention.

There is extensive research into processing instruction, centred around sentence-level processing tasks. Several studies have discerned that explicit instruction prior to PI is unnecessary, that PI can be effective long-term, and that it outperforms other interventions such as meaning-based output instruction and explanation plus practice - considered the traditional method of grammar instruction (Leeser et al, 2021). VanPatten suggests further research on aptitude tests, as this is a variable that does not affect outcomes of PI. This is likely due to standard aptitude tests having a focus on rote memorisation, whereas PI is concerned with input processing. He also suggests further study on explicit information during input processing, as the results vary by language and grammatical concept (VanPatten, 2017). Detractors of PI note that while it demonstrates gains in explicit knowledge, it does not do so in implicit knowledge, although an assumption behind PI is that learners acquire an implicit linguistic system (Leeser et al, 2021).

3.2.3 Content-Based Language Teaching and Content and Language Integrated Learning

Content-Based Language Teaching (CBLT), also known as Content-Based Instruction (CBI), is instruction of certain subjects through the medium of an additional language. It is commonly used to promote regional or indigenous languages, such as Maori in New Zealand or Breton in France, and frequently used with English as the additional

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language. A similar method is content and language integrated learning (CLIL), which differs from CBLT in that it contains a separate formal element of language not usually present in the former. CLIL is more widely used in sixth forms across Europe. It could be argued that the term CBLT is an overarching term which encompasses TBLT by definition. Certainly, Ortega (2015) writes that the two approaches may be blended, as they share many similarities such as the importance of collaboration and the focus on meaning.

These approaches have found achievement in both the language and the subjects taught using it are similar to or better than those in monolingual education (Genesee, 2004). One study demonstrates that US pupils used to receiving traditional, language only teaching responded positively to a unit on environmental issues studied in French (Cumming & Lyster, 2016). Pupils enjoyed that the content was relevant to their lives and the sense of accomplishment was a motivating factor. Similarly, with teenage learners of EFL in the Basque Country, a CLIL approach was found to raise both motivation and learning outcomes (Lasagabaster, 2011). This indicates that, theoretically, CBLT or CLIL could be implemented in the MFL classroom, if not across the curriculum as a whole. This could also prove positive for a task-based approach, if the task was sufficiently relevant enough to pupils. As an example, creating posters or leaflets about the benefits and dangers of social media in the target language may prove a more motivating project for teenagers than a series of lessons on explicit grammar instruction.

Neither CBLT nor CLIL is widely used in the UK secondary MFL classroom, although Hunt (2011) conducted a study in which CLIL was used by PGCE students in an English secondary school. Students were overwhelmingly positive about the approach, saying that the lessons were more interesting and exciting than regular MFL. They shared a sense of achievement and accomplishment through feeling able to understand and complete the work. They felt they made a lot of progress, particularly in knowledge gains, and enjoyed the feeling of learning two subjects at once, noting that they needed a greater level of concentration, but enjoying the challenge. Despite these promising findings, I decided not to use a CLIL approach due to the organisational difficulties it presented - for example, cooking a Spanish omelette was especially well-received by the pupils of Hunt's study. This would require the teacher to gain a certificate in food hygiene, as well as timetabling in the use of the

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food technology classrooms. Additionally, Hunt's study required training of the PGCE students prior to the intervention in a Languages College in which good practice in CLIL had been developed since 2001, meaning the results may not be replicated in a study without this valuable support. As Lyster (2017) notes, to implement CBLT or CLIL would require considerable pre-service teaching training, as well as continuing professional development. However, the Department of Education's 2007 Languages Review recommended CLIL as more stimulating and relevant content which may provide a motivating context while maintaining learning (Dearing & King, 2007), and a CLIL approach has been recommended for primary MFL, to make provision more satisfying, challenging and motivating (Hood & Tobutt, 2009).

3.2.4 Cognitive-Interactionist Approach

One method which ties in very closely to Task-based Language Teaching is that of the Cognitive-Interactionist approach. This focuses on the importance of interaction between learners through pair and group work, research into which is accompanied by task-based studies. There is strong evidence that learner-learner interaction is beneficial in the classroom (McDonough, 2004). This approach also stresses the importance of corrective feedback, although since no one method is deemed the most effective, a variety of feedback styles is encouraged. Research shows that learners receive more corrective feedback when working on a task with their peers (Gass & Varonis, 1990) and that they are more likely to modify their incorrect utterances when this feedback comes from their peers (Shehadeh, 2001). This is likely due to the learner-learner interactions feeling less intimidating than learner-native speaker that more output and more feedback is produced (Sato & Lyster, 2007). It should be noted, however, that peer feedback is susceptible to influence from social dynamics, and one way to avoid this is to ensure the learners are working collaboratively on a task (Yoshida, 2008). Learner outcomes are also affected by the degree of collaboration shown between the learners (Watanabe & Swain, 2007). Thus, peer interaction ought to be supported or scaffolded by the teacher (Sato, 2017). To facilitate interaction-driven learning, researchers introduced structural priming tasks to aid the production of target structures. These can include a list of sentence models containing the target structure (McDonough & Chaikitmongkol, 2010), or, even more effective, a mixture of auditory and structural priming, such as listening to the pronunciation of new words as well as being given prompt sentences (Trofimovitch et al, 2013). A recommendation

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of the cognitive-interactionist approach is that tasks are designed to encourage language use in meaningful contexts, to facilitate interaction and to engage with the target language (Kim, 2012). An increase in task complexity will encourage use of the target features and promote interactive L2 learning opportunities (Revesz, 2011). The research in this field is strongly suggestive of the benefits of a task-based approach to ISLA.

3.2.5 Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling

Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling (TPRS) was developed in the 1990s by Blaine Ray, a Spanish teacher in the USA (Ray & Seely, 2015). This method draws on the theory of the Input Hypothesis by Krashen (1985), which contains the idea of Comprehensible Input (CI). CI refers to language input that learners can mostly understand, although they don't know every word or grammatical structure. It's often described as "i+1", where "i" is the learner's current language level, and "+1" is a slightly more advanced structure or vocabulary. The theory postulates that learners acquire language when they are exposed to a vast amount of input which is just slightly above their current level but still understandable with context, visuals and tone. It should be noted that critics of the CI hypothesis argue that it is impractical in the language classroom (Gass, 2008; Payne, 2011).

TPRS seeks to engage students through interactive stories and contextualised language use. Learners are introduced to three or four high frequency structures, and use these to create spoken stories together as a class. Meaning is often derived with the aid of gestures, drawing on research by James Asher on Total Physical Response. This is the theory that involving the body in the learning experience, such as via movement related to meaning, can reinforce learning of a L2 (Asher, 1969). Grammatical explanations are referred to as 'pop-up grammar', kept brief, and taught inductively through the context rather than explicitly. Learners are then provided with reading material which incorporates the new vocabulary to reinforce retention and comprehension.

When compared with more traditional teaching methods, TPRS has been shown to improve retention of vocabulary and learner motivation, with gains in speaking and listening skills in particular (Lichtman, 2015). This method has also been proven to develop intrinsic motivation by enabling a feeling of autonomy (Printer, 2021).

3.2.6 The Lexical Approach

The Lexical Approach, first proposed by Lewis (1993), is the idea that language learning is best achieved through lexical chunks rather than words in isolation or grammatical rules. Chunks, or lexical units, are groups of words which frequently appear together in natural speech. These are considered the basic components of the language. Learners will then acquire grammar through the patterns they observe, rather than through direct instruction. Barcroft (2004) describes this approach as 'lexical-input processing', focusing on form, meaning and use, with repeated exposure to words in a range of contexts enabling learners to process them. He notes that learners can better understand and retain vocabulary when it is learned in a meaningful, communicative situation. Exposure to the lexical approach was perceived as relevant and useful by university students of English as a L2 (Tinkel, 2023). Maftoon & Ziafar (2013) suggest a contrastive lexical approach (CLA), which provides learners with these lexical units in both the L2 and L1, to use as building blocks to achieve fluency in writing. This removes what they term the 'unnecessary burden' of learners having to discover the meaning for themselves, as such lexical units are rarely provided in dictionaries. They also argue that a lexical-based linguistic approach is focused as much on learners' L1 as it is the L2. This makes a lexical approach difficult to assimilate in a class with speakers of English as a L2 in a UK MFL classroom.

However, the use of sentence-builders which contain lexical units in the L2 alongside English has been made popular, in large part due to the influence of applied linguist and teacher Giannfranco Conti (2020a). Conti describes his approach as lexicogrammatical, and his pedagogical sequencing is known as Extensive Processing Instruction (EPI). EPI uses the sentence builder or a parallel text as a modelling tool, basing receptive listening and reading exercises around it with lots of repetition. Next, learners work on the productive skills of speaking or writing, using the sentence builder increasingly less as the structures are internalised. The explicit teaching of grammar is considered optional, and in some cases, unnecessary (Conti, 2020b). In the British Council's 2022 Language Trends report, 73% of participating secondary schools reported that they used the EPI method, either regularly or occasionally, with Years 7 and 8 (British Council, 2022). In the 2025 Language Trends report, one third of responding schools reported using this approach (British Council, 2025).

3.2.7 Task-Based Language Teaching

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is, at its heart, an extension of active discovery learning through problem-solving and learning by doing (Dewey, 1938). It is not a cognitive theory of learning but a social one, putting the learner into a context in which they are able to interact socially with the world around them. It aligns with Content-Based Language Teaching (CBLT) in that it uses the language as a tool to make meaning, rather than an object to be studied. TBLT draws on the Interaction Approach (Gass & Mackey, 2007) and usage-based language learning (N. Ellis, 2005). The Interaction Approach suggests that interaction can aid 'natural' learning and communication by making input comprehensible, providing feedback and encouraging learners to modify their own output and make it more target-like. Usage-based language learning explores how language is learned from our experience of language (N. Ellis, 2017) and, unlike structural approaches to LL, views the learning process as beginning with ready-made chunks of language which can be broken down and reassembled, rule-like but not rule-based. To reflect these theories, in TBLT there is no explicit instruction on linguistic form prior to the task.

Definitions of a task vary from researcher to researcher. As the field of TBLT is dominated by two leading scholars, R. Ellis and Long, I have provided the definitions given by each -

A task is a *workplan* that requires learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriate propositional content has been conveyed.

(Ellis, 2003, p16, emphasis added).

Tasks are the *real-world activities* people think of when planning, conducting and recalling their day.

(Long, 2015, p6, emphasis added).

The difference between the two is that Long insists tasks may only be those which have a real-world purpose and are motivated by this authenticity. This is to enable learners to manage in a particular target domain (Long, 1985). For tasks to contain a high context relevance, Long believes that all language courses ought to be for specific purposes, with a needs-analysis carried out at the beginning which identifies the type

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of tasks learners will realistically need. The course syllabus should then follow the needs-analysis, rather than a linguistic syllabus. Language features should be focused on reactively at the individual's point of need (Long, 2016).

Ellis advocates a more pragmatic approach, in which, while the basis must be on meaning, tasks can be 'focused': designed in a way which predisposes learners to use a specific linguistic form. He argues that good teaching is based not just on needs, but on wants, and so to limit task definition to real-world only would disadvantage the instruction (Ellis, 2017a). Additionally, he states that as real-world tasks have a communicative focus, the learners are required to be 'language-users', and any learning which takes place is incidental. In a pedagogical task, learners' attention can switch from a meaning focus to a form focus, thus they can also act as 'language learners', with the learning becoming intentional. Ellis also states that while tasks should involve real-world processes of language use, the activity itself can be artificial, as the usefulness of the outcome is paramount (Ellis, 2003). While Ellis focuses on pedagogical feasibility, Long has stricter criteria for the task itself.

Ellis' definition above includes the *task-as-workplan*, which refers to the task materials provided and presented by the teacher. This differs from the *task-as-process*: defined by Breen (1989) as the actual performance of the task. Ellis argues that TBLT is important to develop competence in learners to use a second language easily and effectively in real-world situations. To achieve this, a focus on meaning over form is required, without neglecting form. This differentiates a task from a traditional classroom exercise, for example, a gap-filling task which has no outcome other than the completion of the exercise. A task would simulate a real-world action with a focus on communicating meaning, such as filling in a form. Learners would then be assessed as successful if they had conveyed the required information, rather than if they had used the grammar correctly. However, as mentioned above, the attention of learners can be momentarily switched to a focus on forms where necessary, to facilitate intentional learning.

A sub-form of TBLT is Task-Supported Language Teaching (TSLT), which gives attention to form in the *task-as-workplan* phase, usually by explicit instruction. TBLT differs in that the focus on form arises during the *task-as-process* phase, when a communication problem occurs or a participant draws attention to it. In TBLT, the

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primary focus is always on meaning, the secondary focus is attention to form. This means that TSLT contains more intentional learning, as learners are made aware of the linguistic forms they are supposed to learn, and TBLT contains more incidental learning, as the attention is focused on meaning. Thus, TBLT attempts to recreate the natural learning of first-language acquisition (Ellis, 2017b). This incidental learning stems from the input and interactions created by the task, as well as the attention to form which happens naturally through the *task-as-process* phase. Long (2015) dismisses this as a synthetic approach, one in which tasks are created for the classroom rather than being real-world, however, he concedes that it is worthy of consideration as a bridge between synthetic syllabi and genuine TBLT. For example, schools might be reluctant to break from the traditional PPP (Presentation, Practice, Production) method of teaching (Maftoon & Sarem, 2015), an example of which is explicit grammar instruction followed by activities which focus on form, such as gap-fills, before then moving to a writing or speaking task which encourages independent use of the taught structure. PPP usually has a form-based curriculum and has been popular, both in the UK MFL classroom and in the ELT context, since its conception in the 1970s (Anderson, 2017). PPP tends to be deductive and mostly explicit, whereas TBLT is inductive and mostly implicit, with an explicit component - the language focus - at the end (Hellström, 2016).

Ellis (2003) produced both research on TBLT and practical pedagogical guidance materials. He notes that his suggestions can be experimented with pedagogically, as the research can only guide a course designer so far, and they must consider their own circumstances and tailor accordingly. He lists the criteria of a task as follows -

1. The primary focus should be on 'meaning' (by which it is meant that learners should be mainly concerned with processing the semantic and pragmatic meaning of utterances).
2. There should be some kind of 'gap' (i.e. a need to convey information, to express an opinion or to infer meaning).
3. Learners should largely have to rely on their own resources (linguistic and non-linguistic) in order to complete the activity.
4. There is a clearly defined outcome other than the use of language: i.e. the language serves as the means for achieving the outcome, not as an end in its own right

(Ellis, 2009a).

These principles are based on Ellis' pedagogical beliefs. The 'gap' is a motivating factor – the learners must use language to close it. The outcome should be the learners' focus, so that they can really use the language, instead of displaying it for the purpose of an assessment. The outcome itself may have little pedagogical importance, as it is the cognitive and linguistic processes involved in reaching it which matter (Ellis, 2003).

Ellis' definition of a task is the one I have chosen to use for this study for several reasons. Firstly, he has written a great deal of material defending his definition against robust scrutiny (Ellis, 2009a & 2017b), describing the problems faced in the classroom and how to overcome these. Secondly, his is more practicable than Long's to introduce to UK Year 7 pupils, as he asserts that tasks can be pedagogic, that is, made for the classroom. This view is supported by Bygate (2016). Long, in contrast, writes that pedagogical consciousness-raising, or focused tasks, are a dilution of the original idea, as they draw attention to grammatical features at the expense of the purpose of the task (Long, 2015). In addition, Cameron (2001) argues that the needs-based syllabus favoured by Long is not feasible for young learners, and a recent meta-analysis on TBLT implementation revealed that most studies did not perform a needs-analysis, which indicates that many TBLT programs miss this element (Bryfonski & McKay, 2019). It is difficult to imagine the type of task learners of 11-12 years of age will need in their individual futures to conduct a needs-analysis, particularly tasks which would have the desired effect of raising their motivation, therefore I did not conduct a needs-analysis for this study. Bachman (2002) agrees that a needs-analysis is not always necessary, as situational authenticity - real-world - is less important than interactive authenticity - natural language processing in communication, such as turn-taking (Bachman & Palmer, 1996).

Finally, Ellis' definition of TBLT is more flexible than others. For example, he is alone in saying that a task may be focused - that is, designed to elicit a specific linguistic feature - or unfocused. Other researchers, including Long (2015), Skehan (1998) and Willis & Willis (2007), argue that tasks must be only unfocused. He is also alone among these researchers in his view that tasks may be both input and output based, as opposed to solely output based, that the focus on form may take place at any phase

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of the task, that group work is not an essential feature and that a modular approach to curriculum design is possible, which incorporates TBLT along with traditional PPP structures. A more restrictive view of TBLT such as Long's is difficult to accommodate in a secondary school classroom, with the pupils being prepared for standardised tests - something Long himself admits, although he is hopeful that positive research findings will allay this concern in the future (Long, 2015).

These possible difficulties incorporating TBLT are one of the reasons Ellis suggests using it alongside traditional teaching. Another suggested solution would be to use TSLT (Littlewood, 2007). Bygate (2020) supports this pragmatic approach. He writes about the survival of TBLT as a real-world project, in that it needs to address the priorities and needs of classroom stakeholders. This definition is also loyal to the landmark definition of applied linguistics, and the cornerstone of TBLT, as given by Brumfit (2001), of real-world problems in which language plays a central role. However, Bygate and others (Andon, 2018; Baralt, 2018) note that the challenge of TBLT is in moving from theory to practice. Bygate (2020) bemoans the lack of TBLT studies in the classroom with regular materials in regular classes, rather than as an experimental design. He also remarks on how much TBLT research is unconcerned with the language curriculum - that is, the phonics, vocabulary, grammar and discourse patterns which need to be planned and mapped out for each class, although a possible explanation is that it contradicts Long's belief that tasks ought not to be used with a language agenda in mind (Long, 2015).

Bygate (2016) elaborates on directions of encouraging uptake of TBLT as an approach to language pedagogy. He lists four possible methods of delivery - needs-based, a three-phase procedure of pre, on and post-task, discovery-based and project-based.

A needs-based curriculum requires a needs-analysis and is suited to specific language courses, such as an adult language for business or recently relocated migrants. The analysis would identify needs, such as ordering food, asking for directions and dealing with accommodation-related problems such as a faulty tap. These needs would then be ordered by complexity and sequenced appropriately throughout the course. As mentioned above, the needs-based approach for Year 7 pupils would not be suitable, due to their diverse interests and future plans.

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The three-phase model contains a pre-task phase in which learners are prepared for the task. They then engage in the task and complete a post-task phase of reflection in which outcomes can be assessed by the teacher and learners can respond to feedback. The first phase explores knowledge required before a task is done. This pre-task planning can be effective in raising complexity, fluency and to a lesser extent, accuracy (Ellis, 2009b), however, individual learner differences lead to planning behaviours which are more or less effective and sometimes even harmful (Pang & Skehan, 2014). Samuda (2001) adds that although a pre-task phase allows for greater performance during the task, directing attention to language features before use would imply a progression from form to meaning, which risks separating form from use. However, giving learners explicit explanations mid-way through an interactive, decision-making task can have little effect on performance (Skehan & Foster, 2005), therefore it could be beneficial to use a pre-task phase to give explanations before the task itself. The intention of a post-task phase is to induce an anticipation effect, meaning that the performance of the task is influenced by the knowledge of what follows it (Skehan, 2016). For example, in a task creating a television advertisement, the post-task phase could be performing the finished advertisement in front of the group. Knowing this phase is coming could ensure the learners take greater care over the task, as they may seek approval from their peers. The threat of a public performance in the post-task stage can lead to greater accuracy (Skehan & Foster, 1997), but in a study tasked with raising motivation, a public performance could be counter-productive, as many learners experience anxiety when speaking in a foreign language (Zheng & Cheng, 2018; Hewitt & Stephenson, 2012). An alternative is a post-task phase which consists of transcribing, which can also lead to increased accuracy and complexity (Li, 2014).

The discovery model involves learners discovering a task that they are currently unable to do, exploring ways of expressing themselves without the teacher providing a model. Learners would discover meanings for themselves before moving on to form. Lynch (1991) used listening tasks to encourage learners to ask questions. This was trialled by Samuda (2001) with university students, but the narrow scope of the study means further research is needed. This approach would perhaps be suited to more mature learners than the 11-12-year-old participants in this study. This is due to the discovery model using less explicit instruction by the teacher, which increases both

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cognitive load and the burden on working memory (Feldon et al, 2018). More advanced learners have an increased capacity working memory relative to the task due to their increased prior knowledge (Feldon, 2007). The cognitive load refers to the quantity of new information which is to be processed at a given time. The higher the cognitive load, the greater the requirement to invest mental effort for successful processing (Kalyuga, 2011). When the cognitive load imposed exceeds the working memory capacity of the learner, maximal investment of mental effort on the part of the student will not be sufficient to attain the intended learning or performance outcomes. For novice learners who require more guidance, cognitive information processing can become a burden when instruction is not provided. In a study by Likourezos and Kalyuga (2017), learners receiving fully guided instruction with worked examples reported lower perceived mental effort and task difficulty with higher levels of self-efficacy than the unguided, problem-solving group. Self-efficacy (the feeling of competence in completing a specific task) in UK school students in MFL is known to be poor (Graham, 2003; Graham & Macaro, 2008). As this study is conducted with novice learners, discovery learning would likely be unsuitable.

I have opted for project-based delivery because a medium to long term project is more straightforward to assess, due to the presence of an end product. It will also encourage learner-centredness and group work, which is a contrast to the traditional method of teaching used in the control group.

Additionally, one academic year before the pilot study, when the intervention was in the planning stage, the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) of the participating school conducted student voice focus groups with PP (pupil premium) students. These are disadvantaged students who receive free school meals. They made up 32% of the total student body that year, and SLT were focused on 'bridging the gap' between their GCSE achievement and that of their socio-economically more advantaged peers. The students surveyed overwhelmingly requested more opportunities for group tasks, projects and practical work.

3.2.8 Summary

A range of pedagogical approaches to ISLA have been proposed to address both cognitive and affective dimensions of LL. Concept-Based Instruction and Processing Instruction draw on cognitive frameworks to develop learners' form-meaning

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connections, while Content-Based Language Teaching and Content and Language Integrated Learning promote meaningful language use through academic content. The Cognitive-Interactionist Approach emphasizes the role of interaction and feedback in developing linguistic competence, whereas both Teaching Proficiency Through Reading and Storytelling and the Lexical Approach focus on input richness and vocabulary acquisition. Among these, Task-Based Language Teaching provides a particularly dynamic framework, centering language use around real-world tasks that are inherently meaningful to learners.

For these reasons, this study is inspired by TBLT as the foundation for its instructional intervention, with the aim of fostering more motivated L2 learners.

3.3 Theoretical aspects in language learning motivation

Motivation has long been recognized as a critical factor in ISLA. Theoretical approaches to LL motivation have evolved considerably over the past few decades, reflecting broader shifts in psychological theory, educational paradigms, and sociocultural understanding of learning. This section provides a summary of the key theories which have shaped the study of LL motivation, with the aim of contextualizing the present study within existing theoretical frameworks.

3.3.1 L2 motivational theories: Overview

Research into motivation in ISLA has developed considerably over time, reflecting an increasingly nuanced understanding of how and why learners engage with LL. Motivation is not a fixed construct; rather, it can vary between learners, contexts and environments, and even fluctuate within a single lesson. Early work in the field tended to conceptualise motivation in terms of relatively stable individual traits, whereas more recent approaches emphasise its dynamic, context-sensitive and socially embedded nature.

One of the most influential early frameworks is the socio-educational model (Gardner, 2017), which conceptualises motivation through constructs such as integrativeness, attitudes towards the learning situation, language anxiety and achievement. This model places particular emphasis on learners' orientation towards the target language community, and has been especially valuable in contexts where learners have meaningful contact with that community. However, this emphasis also limits its

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applicability in classroom-based studies conducted in low-exposure, predominantly monolingual contexts. In the case of the present study, where learners have little direct engagement with L2-speaking communities, a framework centred on integrativeness and long-term attitudinal dispositions is less able to account for short-term variations in classroom motivation.

A related line of research focuses on individual differences (Granena, 2019; Corder, 1967; Dörnyei et al, 2015), including factors such as personality, aptitude and motivation itself. While this perspective highlights important variation between learners, it tends to treat such differences as relatively stable. This creates tension when attempting to examine motivation as something that can be influenced by classroom practice, particularly within the timescale of a relatively short intervention. As such, although individual differences clearly play a role in shaping motivation, they offer limited explanatory power for the more immediate, situational fluctuations that this study seeks to capture.

Alongside these trait-based perspectives, a substantial body of research has explored the role of emotion in LL. Anxiety, in particular, has received considerable attention (Yashima, MacIntyre & Ikeda, 2016; MacIntyre, Noels & Clément, 1997; Clément, 1986), with findings consistently indicating that higher anxiety can negatively impact participation and perceived competence. At the same time, more recent work has highlighted the importance of positive emotions such as interest, enjoyment and pride (MacIntyre & Vincze, 2017), which are closely linked to increased motivation. Related to this is the construct of Willingness to Communicate (WTC; McCroskey & Richmond, 1987, 1991; MacIntyre et al, 1998, 2002; Cao, 2014), which captures learners' readiness to engage in interaction and is influenced by both individual and situational factors. While these approaches provide insight into the affective dimension of LL, they often remain tied to individual difference variables or focus on constructs that do not align directly with the specific focus of this study, namely learners' reported enjoyment of classroom tasks.

As the field developed, increasing attention was given to the role of context in shaping motivation. Research into motivational context (Yim et al, 2017; Gardner, 2010; Parrish & Lanvers, 2019; Lanvers & Martin, 2021) highlights the influence of factors

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such as educational policy, parental attitudes and the perceived value of LL within a given society - all factors discussed in Chapters 1 and 2. Similarly, the concept of investment (Norton, 1995, 2013; Darwin, 2017; Pavlenko & Norton, 2007) emphasises the relationship between LL, identity and access to social and cultural capital. These perspectives are particularly useful for understanding motivation in contexts where learners are negotiating membership of L2-speaking communities. However, their relevance is more limited in classroom settings where exposure to such communities is minimal, as is the case for the learners in this study.

More recent models have sought to bridge the gap between individual and contextual perspectives. The L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009; Dörnyei, Henry & Muir, 2016; Lanvers, 2016a), for example, conceptualises motivation in terms of learners' ideal and ought-to selves, alongside their experiences of the learning environment. This represents an important shift towards recognising the role of classroom processes. However, the model's emphasis on future self-guides and identity development means that it is typically realised over longer timescales, making it less sensitive to the kind of short-term, lesson-by-lesson variation explored in the present study. Similar limitations apply to Directed Motivational Currents (DMCs; Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014; Dörnyei et al, 2016; Henry, 2017), which focus on sustained, goal-directed motivational surges, and to Complex Dynamic Systems Theory (CDST; de Bot, 2008; Han & Hiver, 2018; Papi, 2018), which offers a powerful account of change over time but is less readily aligned with the measurement of immediate, lesson-specific motivational responses.

Finally, relational and sociocultural perspectives, such as Ushioda's person-in-context view (Ushioda, 2009, 2011), conceptualise motivation as something that emerges through interaction and is embedded in learners' lived experiences. These approaches provide a rich and holistic understanding of motivation, emphasising agency, identity and the social nature of LL. However, they tend to prioritise qualitative and longitudinal designs aimed at capturing developmental trajectories, rather than the systematic measurement of motivation at discrete points in time. Situational Expectancy-Value Theory (SEVT), originally termed Expectancy-Value Theory (EVT; Eccles et al, 1983; Eccles & Wigfield, 2020), offers a more classroom-oriented perspective by focusing on learners' expectancy for success and the subjective value of tasks. While this aligns

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more closely with instructional contexts, its explanatory strength lies in tracking how these perceptions develop over time, making it less directly suited to a 12-week intervention.

Taken together, these theoretical developments reflect a shift from viewing motivation as a stable, individual trait towards understanding it as dynamic, context-dependent and socially situated. However, many of the frameworks discussed either prioritise long-term developmental processes, focus on contexts with substantial L2 exposure, or are primarily oriented towards capturing broader motivational trajectories rather than immediate classroom experiences. What is required, therefore, is a framework that can account for both individual motivational orientations and the influence of the immediate classroom environment, while also allowing for the measurement of short-term, lesson-specific variation. As the following section will argue, Self-Determination Theory (SDT) provides a particularly suitable framework for meeting these requirements.

3.3.1.1 Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

Self-Determination Theory is a clinical theory with a dynamic, organismic perspective which is empirically based (Ryan & Deci, 2008). It was first put forward by psychologists Edward Deci and Richard Ryan in 1985, drawing on earlier theoretical work by Heider (1958), who argued that perception of the social environment guides both actions and behaviours. SDT posits that behavioural outcomes are most effectively changed by appealing to an individual's goals, motives or expectations, or by altering features of the social environment which prompted them.

McEown & Oga-Baldwin (2019) conducted a comprehensive theoretical review which situated SDT as a powerful macro-theory. It encompasses the six interrelated mini-theories of cognitive evaluation theory, organismic integration theory, basic psychological needs theory, goal contents theory, causality orientations theory and relationship motivation theory, each addressing different aspects of motivation and psychological integration (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Cognitive evaluation theory concerns how individuals interact with their environments and how social contexts influence intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1980). Within the classroom context, this highlights the importance of autonomy-supportive teaching

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practices, appropriate structure and personal involvement from teachers. When teachers provide meaningful choices, acknowledge learners' perspectives and offer constructive feedback, learners are more likely to experience autonomy and competence. Conversely, excessive reliance on external controls such as rewards, punishments or the dismissal of learner perspectives may shift motivation towards more externally regulated forms, discussed further later in this section.

Organismic integration theory explains the process through which externally motivated behaviours become internalised and integrated into the self (Ryan, Connell & Deci, 1985). It therefore describes how behaviours initially driven by external pressures can gradually become more autonomous as individuals internalise their value. This process corresponds to the continuum of motivational regulation illustrated in Figure 3.1.

Basic psychological needs theory focuses specifically on the role of autonomy, competence and relatedness in supporting motivation, well-being and psychological functioning (Ryan et al., 2006). It examines how social environments may either support or thwart these needs, thereby influencing both the quality of motivation and individuals' overall vitality.

Goal contents theory examines the types of goals individuals pursue and the reasons underlying them. These goals may be intrinsic, such as mastery of a skill, personal development, meaningful communication or travel, or extrinsic, such as exam performance, financial rewards or social recognition. SDT proposes that intrinsic goals tend to be more strongly associated with autonomous motivation, whereas extrinsic goals are usually suggestive of more controlled motivation (Vansteenkiste, Lens & Deci, 2006).

Causality orientations theory addresses individual differences in motivational tendencies, examining whether individuals are more likely to orient towards autonomous or controlled forms of regulation (Deci & Ryan, 1985). These orientations are understood as developmental outcomes that emerge from individuals' ongoing interactions with their social environments.

Finally, relationship motivation theory explores the role of interpersonal relationships in supporting motivation and well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2017). It highlights how high-

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quality relationships characterised by respect, care and support for autonomy can facilitate both relatedness and the internalisation of social values.

SDT encapsulates the idea that human development inherently involves proactive engagement with the environment, through which individuals assimilate information, regulate behaviour and integrate socially. In the need-supportive environments typical of early infancy, babies display intrinsic tendencies to explore and master both their inner and outer worlds, a process that continues into healthy adulthood (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Such exploratory tendencies have also been described in LL research as reflecting a broader human inclination towards curiosity and mastery of new situations (Noels, 2009). However, human nature is also experience-dependent, meaning that environments which fail to support these needs can result in diminished motivation and psychological fragmentation (Ryan & Deci, 2017). SDT therefore focuses on the circumstances required for optimal development, and how this can be compromised by context. It investigates how developmental propensities and social conditions interact to either promote or frustrate motivation and general wellness across domains, thus identifying principles which may directly inform effective social practices and guide intervention (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Central to this framework is the concept of three Basic Psychological Needs (BPNs): autonomy, relatedness and competence (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2017). The satisfaction of these needs leads to wellness, vitality and general thriving, and represents the critical psychological satisfactions necessary for the healthy development of the self as individuals engage with the world both within and around them. The BPNs are considered universal psychological needs whose satisfaction or deprivation has measurable consequences for growth and well-being. Just as a plant thrives in conditions providing water, sunlight and nutrient-rich soil, humans flourish psychologically when environments support autonomy, competence and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Autonomy, the first BPN, refers to the self-endorsement of behaviour. Autonomous behaviours are engaged in willingly and with a sense of volition, although not necessarily independently (Ryan, 1993). In classroom contexts, this distinction is important, as learners rarely exercise full independence in selecting activities but may

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nevertheless experience autonomy when they perceive their participation as personally meaningful.

Competence, the second BPN, reflects the desire to master one's environment and experience a sense of effectiveness within it (Wehmeyer & Shogren, 2018). Competence can be supported when learners encounter optimally challenging tasks which enable them to develop mastery without becoming overwhelmed.

Relatedness, the third BPN, concerns the human need to feel connected to others and to experience a sense of belonging within social groups. This need has theoretical connections to attachment theory (Cassidy & Shaver, 2016; Simpson & Rholes, 2015). Within educational contexts, relatedness may manifest through learners' relationships with teachers and peers, requiring a mutually respectful classroom environment (Niemic & Ryan, 2009). In the context of language learning, parental attitudes may also influence this dimension of motivation, as children often internalise their parents' perceptions of the value of language learning (Lanvers & Martin, 2021).

When examined together, the three BPNs help explain how environmental conditions influence both intrinsic motivation and the internalisation of extrinsic motivations (Ryan & Connell, 1989; Ryan & Deci, 2017), explained further below.

Motivational orientations (Fig 3.1), can be understood as the set of reasons which direct learners' attention and effort towards an activity (Noels et al., 2016). From a SDT perspective, motivations have different sources ranging from intrinsic to external, each associated with distinct experiences and behavioural outcomes such as persistence and performance (Ryan & Deci, 2000). These differences influence both the quality and the dynamics of behaviour. To differentiate these types of motivation, SDT places them along the autonomy-control continuum. At one end of the continuum, motivation emanates from oneself (autonomous). At the other end, motivation stems from external or internal pressure (controlled). It is important to note that individuals often display different forms of regulation simultaneously, and that the satisfaction of the BPNs energises the process of internalisation and integration (Vansteenkiste et al, 2018).

Figure 3.1

Motivational orientations and the self-determination continuum

Self Determination Theory's Taxonomy of Motivation						
Motivation	Amotivation	Extrinsic Motivation				Intrinsic Motivation
Regulatory Style		External regulation	Introjection	Identification	Integration	
		Internalisation 				
Attributes	Lack of perceived competence	External rewards or punishments	Ego involvement	Personal importance	Congruence	Interest
	Lack of value	Compliance	Focus of approval from self and others	Conscious valuing of activity	Synthesis and consistency of identifications	Enjoyment
		Reactance		Self-endorsement of goals		Inherent satisfaction

Intrinsic motivation represents the most autonomous form of motivation and occurs when individuals engage in an activity for the inherent satisfaction derived from the activity itself. For example, an intrinsically motivated language learner may experience enjoyment in mastering new vocabulary or successfully communicating in the target language. Humans arguably acquire their first language through such intrinsically motivated exploration (Oudeyer, 2015).

Intrinsic motivation can be further subdivided into three types: motivation to know, motivation towards accomplishment and motivation to experience stimulation (Vallerand, 1997). These respectively reflect the desire to acquire knowledge, achieve mastery and experience enjoyment or excitement through engaging in an activity.

While intrinsic motivation stems from the self, extrinsic motivation varies from externally imposed systems such as rewards or punishments to yielding outcomes which are valued personally, meaning extrinsic motivations can range from controlled to relatively autonomous (Ryan & Connell, 1989), as displayed in Fig 3.1. External regulation, the most controlled form, is completing an activity in order to comply with a demand or to meet others' expectations. Introjected regulation, a less controlled form of motivation, has been internalised to a degree but not fully accepted. This encompasses completing a task to avoid feelings of guilt or shame. With identified regulation, motivation has shifted from controlled to autonomous. This occurs when

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learners accept the personal relevance of the activity, helping to attain personally significant outcomes. Integrated regulation, the fullest form of internalisation, occurs when the activity is both personally meaningful and aligns with deeper values, commitments or interests of the individual. At this stage, learners feel ownership and personal endorsement of the activity as it becomes an expression of their identity (Vansteenkiste et al, 2018).

Amotivation, in turn, can also be further subcategorised into a feeling of not being able to reach an outcome, stemming from a felt lack of competence, and a feeling of disinterest, lack of relevance or value which can be present even if the feeling of competence is present. Finally, amotivation may stem from a feeling of defiance, which can be described as a motivated nonaction or oppositional behaviour rooted in the need for autonomy or relatedness feeling thwarted (Van Petegem, Soenens, Vansteenkiste & Beyers, 2015).

Social environments which support the three BPNs facilitate more autonomous forms of motivation and are associated with improved learning outcomes and psychological well-being (Niemic & Ryan, 2009). In educational contexts, autonomy-supportive teaching practices have been consistently associated with increased engagement, persistence and deeper learning (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Social contexts which do not support the three BPNs promote controlled motivation or amotivation, leading to poorer performance and wellness. Both teacher and parent approaches can be either controlling or autonomy-supportive (Niemic & Ryan, 2009). Controlling climates for learning foster external regulation, leading to more superficial and less transferable learning, which predicts greater behavioural problems and risk of drop-out or disengagement. Autonomy-supportive school environments foster self-motivation, persistence and quality of learning. A highly structured classroom increases the fulfilment of both competence and autonomy (Reeve & Halusic, 2009).

Although SDT suggests that children are intrinsically motivated to learn, the school environment is often not conducive to fostering this intrinsic motivation. Emphasis is often given to extrinsic motivators – grades, rewards, punishments and external pressure. As discussed further in this chapter, there is a wealth of evidence which demonstrates the positive effects of autonomy-supportive teaching when compared to more controlling strategies (Jang et al, 2009; Reeve, 2016; Jang, Kim & Reeve, 2016;

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Reeve & Cheon, 2021), including fostering more autonomous motivations, better performance, positive experiences and higher quality engagement (Ryan & Deci, 2017). The nature of frequent, high-stakes testing (typical in the UK Key Stage 3 and 4 classroom environment) encourages the development of performance goals over mastery goals. Since the former goals are associated with controlled motivations and the latter with autonomous motivations, this can lead to more negative outcomes (Ryan & Deci, 2017). This also has a detrimental effect on educators. When teachers feel that their autonomy and competence are supported by school leaders, they create more supportive classroom environments - whereas in a pressurised, high-stakes testing context, teacher motivation is diminished (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Therefore, SDT proposes that schools increase their attentiveness to the satisfaction of their learners' BPNs, and that the aims of education ought to be broadened from academic achievement only to inclusion of intellectual and personal flourishing of learners (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

As can be seen from the literature cited in the previous two paragraphs, the autonomous forms of motivation have traditionally been regarded as more conducive to positive educational outcomes than the controlled forms. Vansteenkiste et al. (2009), for example, characterised student profiles high in autonomous motivation and low in controlled motivation as representing "good quality" motivation, while profiles showing the reverse pattern were labelled "low quality." Ryan and Deci (2017) similarly assert the general superiority of autonomous motivation for wellbeing and performance outcomes. However, Cerasoli et al. (2014), in a large-scale meta-analysis, found that controlled motivation can be as beneficial for task performance as autonomous motivation, and in certain contexts more so - specifically where performance is assessed against a quantitative standard rather than a qualitative one. Al-Hoorie (2024) develops this position further, arguing that autonomous and controlled regulation are best understood as complementary rather than antagonistic, with each form being more or less effective depending on task characteristics. Where tasks are structured, close-ended, and evaluated against clearly defined criteria, controlled motivation may in fact be the more appropriate regulatory style; where tasks demand creativity, absorption, and open-ended engagement, autonomous motivation holds the advantage. This concept of task-motivation fit suggests that educational interventions involving varied task types may legitimately produce increases across

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both regulatory styles, and that such an outcome should not be interpreted as theoretically problematic (Al-Hoorie, 2024; Miele, Fujita & Scholer, 2024).

Since most SDT research is conducted on post-secondary students in the EFL context, this study contributes to a gap in the research (Boo, Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; McEown, Noels & Chaffee, 2014). There are several contextual challenges in developing motivation among adolescent anglophone learners, including parental attitude, socio-economic status, curricula, assessment and ideas around the global nature of English (Gayton, 2018). These factors are further discussed in Chapter 2 and illustrate the need for research into this specific learner profile.

SDT has been chosen as the motivational theory firstly due to being well validated in empirical research in LL motivation (discussed further in the following section). Secondly, it allows for many social and contextual variables to be considered, thus respecting the complexity of motivation. Thirdly, it puts the individual learner and their psychological state at the centre. Additionally, since SDT is a theory which originated in psychology rather than educational or applied linguistics, this makes it a model which can accommodate any specific learner group. This is important as motivation in LL is dominated by studies with English as the L2, so when using a theory based in linguistics, measures need to be taken to accommodate anglophone learners (Lanvers & Graham, 2022). SDT contains a focus on the learning and how it feels to engage with particular tasks rather than the language itself (Parrish & Vernon, 2022). Since SDT is rooted in BPNs and individual agency (Deci & Ryan, 2000), this makes it the most appropriate theory for anglophone MFL learners, for whom access to the target-language community is not always easy (Parrish & Vernon, 2022). Often the only exposure they have to the L2 and culture is in the classroom. When SDT is compared to Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS) with English secondary school pupils, the latter theory is deemed less suitable for evaluation of motivation due to its focus on future-oriented self concepts. When comparing the two theories of SDT and L2MSS, Chika & Seongah (2020) found that both the L2 ideal and ought self were much weaker than the L2 learning experience in predicting intended learner effort. With the low level of exposure mentioned above the standard in English classrooms, the innate psychological needs of SDT offer the best fit for the purpose of this study (Parrish & Vernon, 2022). Intervention teaching materials were thus designed with the intention of fulfilling learners' BPNs as much as possible.

3.3.1.2 Evidence on enhancing motivation in language learning

Jang et al (2009), indicate that BPN satisfaction has both universal relevance and importance, by applying the theory which originated in the West to students in the East (Korean high school students). They found that perceived teacher autonomy support was highly correlated to high levels of all three BPNs, and the fulfillment of the BPNs also predicted productive and satisfying learning experiences. Overall, they discovered the BPN theory model predicted both need satisfaction and positive school functioning even after considering significant cultural and parental influences and expectations. A later study by the same authors, again conducted with Korean high school learners, supported the findings, by recognising that perceived autonomy support predicted need satisfaction and engagement, whereas perceived teacher control predicted need frustration and disengagement (Jang, Kim & Reeve, 2016).

Autonomy-supportive teaching has emerged as a significant predictor of need satisfaction and motivation. Autonomy-supportive teaching, as defined within the SDT framework, refers to instructional behaviours that provide learners with choice, meaningful rationale for tasks, and opportunities for self-directed engagement, thereby nurturing intrinsic motivation and facilitating the internalisation of extrinsic regulation (Reeve, 2016; Reeve & Cheon, 2021). Drawing on findings from 51 autonomy-supportive teaching interventions including 38 randomised control trials, Reeve and Cheon (2021) demonstrate that autonomy-supportive teaching is both learnable and consistently beneficial across educational contexts, producing gains in students' autonomous motivation, engagement, and psychological need satisfaction. Task-based language teaching has been identified as a pedagogical approach that is structurally aligned with these principles. As a student-centred framework in which learners engage with meaningful, communicative tasks rather than teacher-directed presentation and practice, TBLT naturally foregrounds the conditions SDT identifies as need-supportive: learner agency over task processes, authentic purpose, and collaborative engagement with others (Leeming & Harris, 2022b; Reeve, 2016; Ryan & Deci, 2017). Importantly, however, the relationship between task design and autonomy is not straightforwardly linear. Research has suggested that excessive choice within tasks can in fact undermine motivation, particularly for less experienced learners, with more structured task conditions sometimes producing stronger

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engagement than open-ended ones, a finding consistent with Al-Hoorie's (2024) concept of task-motivation fit, discussed in the previous section.

The following studies provide further evidence which points towards the wide range of use and general applicability of SDT scales as an established framework in examining L2 motivation. In a review of research, Henry & Lamb (2020) found that the use of digital technology can positively affect intrinsic motivation, with relatedness impacted by the capacity to connect to others, autonomy by the use of such technology independently, and competence through the generation of linguistic self-confidence. The construct validity of SDT was examined with Saudi undergraduate learners of EFL by Alamer (2021), using advanced bifactor Exploratory Structural Equation Modelling (ESEM). The study found that SDT was a reliable scale to assess motivation, as well as a correlation between autonomous motivation and L2 performance. Similarly, SDT questionnaires were found to be valid and reliable when used with Chinese university level students of EFL (Chiang, 2024). SDT was found to be a reliable paradigm in which to situate learner engagement. It was significantly linked to achievement and absenteeism in Turkish university-level EFL learners, with structural equation modelling combining context, self, action and outcome (Dincer et al, 2019). A study in the same context of a Turkish university EFL class found that SDT orientations, particularly intrinsic motivation, correlate with classroom engagement, regulation and teacher autonomy support, with the teacher a key factor in learner motivation (Dincer & Yesilyurt, 2017). When the classroom environment is supportive of the three BPNs, learner motivation can shift from external to internal (Rubic & Matijević, 2019). Jiang, Tian & Lou (2024) found autonomous motivation and engagement to sequentially mediate the link between growth mindset and L2 achievement in high school Chinese EFL learners, providing further evidence of the impact motivation can have on outcomes. Another study conducted with high school Chinese EFL learners demonstrated that behavioural engagement was directly predictable through satisfaction of the BPNs. It was also indirectly predictable with boredom, and a link existed between needs satisfaction and lowering boredom (Liu, Wang & Wang, 2025).

3.3.1.3 Summary

SDT is adopted in this study as it offers the most appropriate framework for capturing motivation within the specific constraints of a classroom-based, low-exposure LL

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context. As outlined above, many existing models either prioritise long-term identity development, assume meaningful engagement with L2-speaking communities, or are less sensitive to short-term variation in classroom experience. In contrast, SDT provides a theoretically robust and empirically validated account of motivation that accommodates both individual psychological processes and the influence of the immediate learning environment.

A key strength of SDT lies in its focus on controlled and autonomous orientations, which allows motivation to be understood in terms of how learners experience classroom activities, rather than in relation to external communities (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Parrish & Vernon, 2022). This is particularly relevant in anglophone MFL contexts, where opportunities for meaningful engagement with the target language beyond the classroom are often limited. In such settings, motivation is more likely to be shaped by learners' immediate experiences of tasks, interactions and perceived success than by future-oriented self-concepts.

Furthermore, as a theory originating in psychology rather than applied linguistics, SDT is not tied to specific LL contexts or learner profiles, allowing it to be applied flexibly across different groups. This is an important consideration given the dominance of English as an L2 in motivation research, which can limit the transferability of linguistically grounded models to anglophone learners (Lanvers & Graham, 2022). In comparison to established frameworks such as the L2 Motivational Self System, which emphasises future self-guides and is typically realised over longer timescales, SDT offers a more immediate and context-sensitive lens through which to examine motivation as it is experienced in the classroom. For these reasons, SDT provides the most suitable framework for investigating the motivational orientations of learners in the present study.

3.3.2 Influencing motivation via teaching methods

3.3.2.1 Introduction

As discussed further in Chapter 2, there is a real need to enhance motivation in LL, particularly in the UK and more broadly in majority anglophone countries. Fortunately, as explained above, there has been an increase in motivational theories specific to

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ISLA in recent years. We know that motivation can vary between learners, contexts and environments, but now we are aware of even more nuance between learner, language and situation. Suggested teaching strategies include using humour, creating a friendly classroom environment, rewarding effort, encouraging spontaneity and creativity, frequent opportunities to speak, not correcting every mistake, giving learners a sense of progress and the use of authentic materials (Guilloteaux, 2013; Moskovsky et al, 2013; Papi & Abdollahzadeh, 2012). However, often seen teaching techniques in the UK MFL classroom are tightly controlled and repetitive exercises with an absence of creative and autonomous L2 use (Wingate & Andon, 2017).

The 2021 Ofsted Curriculum Research Review for languages cites poorly designed curricula and learner motivation as a problem and recommends improving learners' self-efficacy by ensuring they feel successful in their learning and are clear about how to make progress. Studies such as Lanvers et al (2019), Lanvers (2020), Rushton & Thomas (2020), Molway & Mutton (2020), Owen & Thomas (2021) and Thompson & Mutton (2023), demonstrate the possibility of changing LL motivation through a classroom intervention. This section examines the fit between TBLT and SDT, the motivational theories of TBLT, evidence into different methods, their link to TBLT and the impact on learner outcomes.

3.3.2.2 The fit between TBLT and SDT

The theoretical alignment between TBLT and SDT proposed in this study is supported in the literature; Leeming and Harris (2022b) explicitly argue that SDT constitutes an appropriate motivational framework for TBLT research, demonstrating how the theory's core tenets help explain the motivational benefits of task-based approaches to language learning. The BPNs of competence, relatedness and autonomy in SDT align well with the principles of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT); a student-centred approach, authenticity, task orientation, reflection and collaboration, as I have laid out in Table 3.1 below. TBLT situates learners within meaningful, goal-oriented tasks that require the use of language to achieve communicative outcomes. Such tasks can support intrinsic motivation by promoting a sense of authenticity and purpose, as learners engage with language in context rather than as decontextualised practice. This is because tasks, as defined by TBLT, contain real-world applicability, which may make it easier for learners to see how their completion will aid their proficiency. By granting learners agency in task performance such as negotiating

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meaning and solving communicative problems, TBLT can support autonomy and encourage a sense of ownership over learning. The collaborative nature of many tasks could nurture interpersonal connections, satisfying the need for relatedness. Additionally, this collaboration, coupled with the opportunity for reflection, may contribute to learners' perceived competence. Finally, the learner being able to see clearly the point of the task in the real world can have a positive impact on the relationship with the teacher and further increase motivation to learn, as rather than requiring the learner to complete an activity for its own sake, they are helping the learner to navigate the world in the target language. Thus, TBLT not only provides a practical framework for communicative language use but could also create a motivational climate conducive to sustained language development, as envisioned by SDT. These similarities make SDT the best fit theory to use in a TBLT intervention.

Table 3.1

The similarities and fit between TBLT and SDT

Principles of SDT	Competence	Relatedness	Autonomy
Principles of TBLT			
Student centered	Explicit, attainable task goals	Focus on the student can help to foster a positive teacher-student relationship	Learner feels in control of their own learning, goals become self-determined
Authenticity	Real world applicability makes the link to competence clear	Clear point to the task can aid the teacher-student relationship	Relatable content stimulates interest and desire to learn
Task orientation	Task difficulty decided by teacher to match the abilities of the learners	Working collaboratively with peers in the group	Some control in the hands of the learner
Reflection	Reflection on improvement can demonstrate visible progress and motivation for the learning journey	Peer/group reflection	Reflection on the task can aid understanding of its use and value, enhancing identified regulation
Collaboration	End goal seen as attainable with group co-operation	Relating to peers in group work	Desire to perform well with and for the group

3.3.2.3 TBLT and motivation: theories

As I have illustrated in Table 3.1, TBLT aligns closely with the motivational theory of SDT. However, Poupore (2014) notes that although there is a large amount of research on TBLT, there is little which is focused on the content and design of task characteristics in terms of their effect on motivation.

Freiermuth & Huang (2012) put forward a model of task motivation in which task attractiveness, task innovativeness, perceived need to learn the L2 and willingness to communicate (WTC) are all factors. This mirrors Dörnyei (2009), who lists interest, motivational flow and vision, the latter value relating to learners' vision of their future selves using the L2. This study also raises the issue of the task itself affecting motivation, rather than the above factors affecting participation of the task. Egbert (2003) describes the task itself as the main motivator, listing four qualities of a task, as perceived by the learner, that promote a flow experience; difficulty that matches the learner's ability, opportunity for focused attention, authentic or interesting content or format and some control in the hands of the learner. A surprising or novelty aspect of the task is beneficial in raising interest (Renninger, 2009), as is a task which references experiences outside the classroom, or one which provides learner autonomy (Freiermuth & Huang, 2012). Project-based approaches were initially centred on increasing opportunities to develop communicative competencies (Fried-Booth, 2002; Haines, 1989), and Muir's latest research (2020) suggests that the goal of developing fluency and communicative competence led students to invest a considerable amount of time and effort. Muir believed this demonstrated the presence of DMCs, which could have developed organically within the group - that is to say, it is possible that the DMCs were created by the project itself, which is hugely promising when considering the design and aim of this study. This is because the nature of tasks used in this study have a tangible end-product, encouraging learners to invest time and effort to produce something they can feel proud to deliver for teacher feedback or peer assessment. This is a contrast to more traditional classroom activities, which, by necessity, must be worked into lesson time and moved on from in a shorter period of time.

To increase the sense of achievement, the project goals need to be both difficult and explicit. The learners will demonstrate a high commitment to the goal when they perceive it as both important and attainable, ensuring competence (Dörnyei &

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Ushioda, 2011). Goals also ought to be both self-determined and self-concordant (Sheldon & Elliot, 1998, 1999), interesting and relevant (Arnold, Dörnyei & Pugliese, 2015). Project structure raises the important issue of proximal subgoals. Beckett & Slater's (2005) project framework also recommends using a project diary, as a means for learners to summarise what they have achieved and plan for what they must do next. This enables learners to take ownership of the process and become more self-determined, ensuring autonomy. As explained in Section 3.3.1.1 of this chapter, encouraging a mastery goal rather than a performance goal - that is, the completion of a tangible end-product as opposed to an exam grade – promotes intrinsic motivation (Vansteenkiste, Lens & Deci, 2006).

The benefits of projects in the L2 classroom can be said to include the development of learners' ideal L2 selves, regulation in their L2 anxiety and positive effects on L2 self-efficacy (Park & Hiver, 2017), a clearer understanding by learners of their strengths and weaknesses (Hilton-Jones, 1988), and increased autonomy and self-directed learning (Tessema, 2005; Muir, Florent & Leach, 2020). This last benefit is particularly relevant to an increase in motivation as measured by SDT. It should be noted that all four studies listed here are in the context of learners of English as the L2, just as research into LL motivation is generally dominated by the context of learning English (Boo, Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015).

However, Muir (2017) theorises that project-based work may actually be more suitable to learners of LOTE, as developing high proficiency in other languages can often be traced back to clear personal goals (Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017). Anglophone learners have a range of different motivations, each of which can be encouraged by TBLT. For those with heritage links, tasks which foster a creative use of the language will help them feel able to communicate. For those with a desire to travel, functional tasks such as ordering food will aid a feeling of competence. For those who enjoy tackling what is considered by many to be a 'tricky' subject, focused tasks which are designed to elicit a specific linguistic feature will encourage a feeling of understanding the subject. Lanvers & Graham (2022) recommend a curriculum aware of the principles of SDT, one which promotes developing fluency, spontaneity, self-expression, language awareness, facilitating cross-linguistic transfer and metacognition. These can all be achieved with well-designed TBLT.

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While projects have not always been motivational, with some English as a Second Language (ESL) learners complaining that they are not worthwhile (Beckett & Slater, 2005), evidence suggests this view is caused by insufficient structure and support and poor project design (Dupuy, 2006). Demotivating aspects of a task have been identified by Ushioda (2001) as irrelevant or boring topics, high difficulty and role-play formats, and by Leger & Storch (2009) as a lack of authenticity. If learners are unsure of the success criteria or how to achieve it, this can lead to demotivation (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2004). Regular formative feedback is essential in maintaining motivation (Voerman et al, 2012), as is the use of examples of excellence by learners (Patton, 2012) often referred to in the UK secondary sector as WAGOLLS (What A Good One Looks Like). WAGOLLS are frequently copied from a learner's book and displayed to the rest of the class. Additionally, in the specific context of anglophone L2 learners, some teaching devoted to the value of LL is recommended as, often seen in the UK MFL classroom, tightly controlled and repetitive exercises and absence of creative and autonomous use of the L2 can foster demotivation (Wingate & Andon, 2017). This is often caused by teachers feeling they need to 'teach to the test' in preparing pupils for GCSE examination (Claro, 2021).

Group work which leads to a collaborative outcome is a known motivational tool (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). Dörnyei (2002) agrees that task motivation is co-constructed by task participants. Participants in Eddy-U's 2015 study on task motivation believed that choosing their own group members led to a greater amount of participation. The study also found that the usual classroom practice of pairing strong students with weaker ones caused the stronger students' motivation and WTC to diminish, therefore, grouping a class for tasks needs careful consideration. While interest was based on aspects of the task, partners were significant influences on WTC. One recommendation is for teachers to ensure tasks are perceived positively by providing support for weaker ability students and extra challenge for the more able, so that all may contribute. Chang (2010) also finds that group cohesiveness and group norms are linked to language learning motivational processes. Dörnyei & Tseng (2009) suggest that future research should concentrate on how motivational task-processing relates to attention, including incidental and intentional learning.

3.3.2.4 Methods and their link to TBLT and learning outcomes

A pedagogical approach inspired by TBLT should aim to raise learner autonomy. Alrabai and Alamer (2024) conducted a large-scale quasi-experimental investigation involving 437 Saudi university EFL students to examine how teacher motivational practices influence L2 achievement. The teachers in the intervention group implemented a 10-week motivational programme, designed to enhance students' autonomy, intrinsic motivation, and motivational intensity. Pre- and post-intervention assessments measured the above parameters and L2 achievement across listening, speaking, grammar, and writing subtests. The results revealed that the intervention exerted both direct and indirect effects on learning outcomes, with the model accounting for approximately 87% of the variance in L2 achievement. Crucially, students' autonomy and intrinsic motivation emerged as the strongest mediators, underscoring the pivotal role of autonomy-supportive teaching in fostering intrinsic motivation and thereby enhancing L2 performance.

Similarly, Şakrak- Ekin and Balçıkanlı (2019) explored the relationship between learner autonomy and EFL proficiency among Turkish university students. Using quantitative survey methods, the study gathered data from 267 students and examined the extent to which self-reported autonomy correlated with language performance. The analysis revealed a significant positive relationship, indicating that students who exhibited higher levels of autonomy tended to achieve better academic outcomes in English. Ezzaidi (2020) conducted a quasi-experimental study in Moroccan secondary schools to investigate the effects of autonomous learning on English language proficiency and strategy use. Over the course of an academic year, the experimental group participated in a structured learner development programme designed to foster autonomy through self-directed learning tasks, while the control group continued with traditional instruction. The results indicated that students in the autonomy-supportive condition outperformed their peers in both language proficiency and the frequency of effective LL strategy use. Xie, Wang & Li (2024) employed a longitudinal design using parallel-process growth mixture modeling to examine motivational development and its relationship with EFL proficiency among 467 secondary learners in China. The study identified distinct motivational trajectories over the course of a semester, with students whose basic psychological needs were more fully satisfied displaying higher levels of autonomous motivation. These students also achieved significantly greater

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gains in English language proficiency compared to their peers with less favorable motivational profiles. These findings lend empirical support to the claim that autonomy-enhancing instructional approaches and need-supportive learning environments such as TBLT can significantly improve outcomes in LL over time, however, many studies focus on learners of English as a L2, and motivation may differ with LOTE.

3.3.2.5 Summary

This section has illustrated how TBLT-based approaches, especially when informed by SDT's emphasis on autonomy, relatedness and competence, can lead to more positive motivational and learning outcomes. It explains the mutually reinforcing relationship between the two approaches, in which TBLT offers meaningful, task-oriented pedagogy and SDT provides a theoretical framework for understanding how such tasks satisfy psychological needs. The analysis highlights the importance of pedagogical choices in shaping not only language acquisition but also learner motivation and investment in LL, along with the theories supporting the use of these methods. The tasks designed for use in the study seek to satisfy learners' BPNs and thereby support more autonomous and sustained motivation in the L2 classroom.

3.3.3 Translation in the MFL classroom

Two tasks were designed for use in this study, each spanning a half-term (six to seven weeks) of instruction. One task was based around translation of a children's story. This section will explain the use of translation in the L2 classroom and its link to motivation. Theories of translation are discussed, in particular, the opposing approaches of foreignisation and domestication, followed by an explanation of skopos theory as a non-ideological translation framework.

3.3.3.1. Introduction

In recent years, the use of translation in ISLA has experienced a rise in popularity, following decades of negativity by those who insist on the minimisation of L1 use under monolingual or communicative teaching ideologies (Shin, Dixon & Choi, 2020). Traditionally viewed as old-fashioned or ineffective, translation was once criticised for encouraging L1 dependence (Carreres, 2006). As discussed in Chapter 1, the grammar-translation method was frequently used in the classical and medieval periods, with the pedagogies of these times focusing on reading and understanding,

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often at the expense of oral proficiency. However, contemporary perspectives increasingly recognise that strategic use of the L1 can facilitate deeper cognitive processing, reduce learner anxiety, and enhance motivation, especially when learners are encouraged to engage critically and reflectively with both linguistic systems (Cook, 2010; Hall & Cook, 2012). Carreres (2006) argues for translation's potential to complement other methods and contribute to a more holistic LL experience at university level. She notes that it boosts motivation and supports grammar awareness by comparing the L1 and L2. Gultekin (2021) supports this, suggesting that this comparison can be a useful scaffold to facilitate the learning process, fostering active and meaningful participation in the classroom. Adil (2020) also found that if used sparingly, translation practice aids learner comprehension of meaning and saves lengthy grammatical explanations from the teacher. Rustamova & Mukhlisa (2025) agree that it can enhance vocabulary retention, grammatical awareness and cultural understanding. However, they caution that it may lead to over-reliance on the L1 with overly literal translations.

The renewed interest in translation aligns with broader theoretical shifts in language pedagogy, as discussed above. Sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978) emphasises the role of mediation and scaffolding in L2 development, both of which can be supported through translation practices. Similarly, translanguaging frameworks - moving between languages - challenge rigid separations between L1 and L2 use, promoting flexible language practices that leverage learners' full linguistic repertoires (Garcia & Wei, 2014). Within this context, translation can become a demanding and motivating task which fosters metalinguistic awareness and encourages deeper engagement.

Incorporating translation activities into the L2 classroom can enhance learner motivation through the SDT framework by making tasks more meaningful and accessible. When students draw upon their L1 knowledge to decode and produce L2 content, they can feel more autonomous and competent. As translation tasks also reflect real-world language use in multilingual societies, they offer increased relatedness through their authentic communicative value. The design of a translation task to fit Ellis (2009a) definition of TBLT is explained in Table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2

The conformity of translation to the definition of TBLT

Ellis' criteria	Translation
1. Focus on meaning	Communicative nature of the translation
2. The 'gap'	The need of the audience to access the text creates a problem to be solved
3. Reliance on learners' own resources	Learners use their knowledge of the L1 and look up definitions of unfamiliar L2 words
4. Clear, non-linguistic outcome	The translation as a product, with a communicative function

3.3.3.2 Theories of Translation

Translation is not merely linguistic substitution, but a complex cognitive and cultural act that involves interpretation, choice, negotiation of meaning, creation and contextual adaptation. Seemingly small choices can have a significant effect on both the translation and the reader (Bell, 2006). Leading scholar and translation theorist Lawrence Venuti coined two opposing approaches to translation - that of foreignisation and domestication. This is important to note in the pedagogical use of translation, as students ought to be aware of the prospect of many possible solutions to a translation task.

3.3.3.2.1 Foreignisation and Domestication

The difference between these approaches can be explained with the help of the below quotation by Friedrich Schleiermacher in 1813:

Either the translator leaves the author in peace, as much as possible, and moves the reader towards him (*foreignisation*); or he leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible, and moves the author towards him (*domestication*).

(Venuti, 1995, p.84, parentheses added)

Foreignising effects contribute to the feeling of the translation as 'visible', leading the translation to read as a translation (Venuti, 1993). They challenge the reader with an element of resistance, avoiding the idea of 'fluidity' in the target language, as well as the norms of the target culture. Venuti has said in an interview that he rejects the ideas of translation as 'keeping' or 'reproducing'. Rather, he describes translation as an act

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of interpretation which varies form, meaning and effect from the source text (Constantine, 2017). As Venuti notes, translations are different in intention and effect from original compositions, and should be read as a different literary work (1995). On an ethical level, foreignisation can be argued to stand against cultural narcissism, racism and imperialism, by allowing the source culture to be more authentically represented (Venuti, 1993). However, this can result in 'eccentricising' or 'exoticising' the source culture, reinforcing stereotypes held in the target culture, as was the case with Burton's translation of *The Arabian Nights* in 1885 (Shamma, 2005).

Domestication, in contrast, promotes fluency in the translation, seeking to make the translator invisible. It re-imagines the source culture as the target culture, one which the reader can better understand and relate to. Domestication can be fairly minor, for example, changing names so that they are easier to read for the target audience, or major. An extreme example is the first Brazilian translation of the George Bernard Shaw play, *Pygmalion*. The setting is changed from London to Rio de Janeiro. According to the translator, Miroel Silveira, the relocation was the only way to overcome the challenge of translating the main character's strong Cockney accent. The transposition also recreated the social critique, as maintaining the original setting would have made the play too distant from the lives of the audience (Ramos Pinto, 2020). The translation was well-received, and later published as a book which is still in circulation.

The aim of domestication is to create a smooth reading experience, with linguistic features naturalised (Venuti, 1995). Although Venuti himself concedes that all translation necessitates a degree of domestication, his criticism is focused on the requirement for fluidity (Venuti, 2001). In contrast, this feature of domestication is frequently praised by publishers and reviewers (Erdal, 2007; Gooderham, 2015; McAuley, 2015). Domestication is championed by translator and scholar Eugene Nida, who claims that the reader experience should be the same for both the source text and the translation (Nida, 1964). Nida argues that translations should be fluid and reader-oriented (Nida & Taber, 2003), in contrast to Venuti's source-text orientation. Professional translator Deborah Smith states that every translation is for the readers who are unable to access the original, and that its aim is to achieve a similar effect. As she wrote when defending her award-winning Korean to English translation of Han Kang's *The Vegetarian*:

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To put it plainly, people like to believe that they've read *War and Peace*, not 'an English translation of *War and Peace*'.

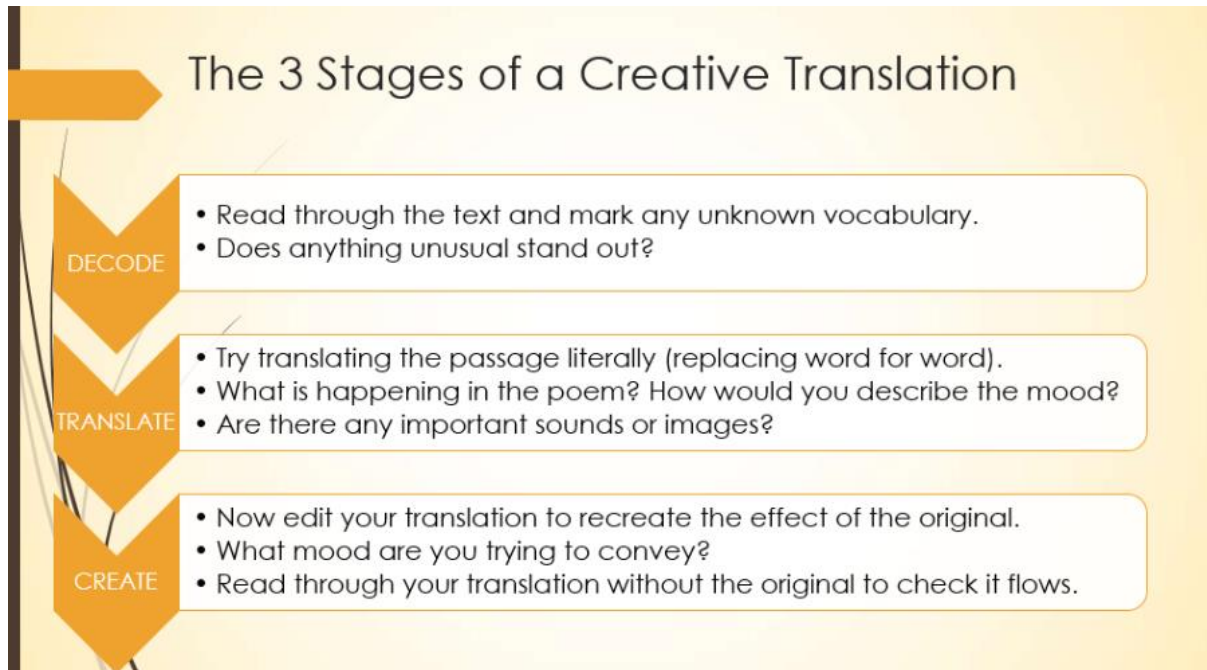
(Smith, 2018).

The idea of reproducing the effect of a translation also has its flaws. It opens up a new conversation around how different audience members experience the effect. A contemporary Russian audience will not receive *War and Peace* in the same way as 19th century Russians, just as men and women, young and old, rich and poor can all experience a text differently. However, further discussion in this area is beyond the scope of this work.

Figure 3.2 below is taken from the online resources available to secondary MFL teachers for the Anthea Bell prize for young translators. It is a free to enter competition, open to 11-18 year olds. Its aims are to promote LL across the UK and to inspire creativity in the classroom (Queen's College, 2025). These materials were used for the translation task in the pilot study, and later adapted (see Chapter 4 Section 7.6). As can be seen from the last three bullet points on the slide, the intention is to recreate the effect of the original text and to create 'flow', or fluidity, in reading. This places the materials on the side of domestication.

Figure 3.2

PowerPoint slide from sample materials for the Anthea Bell Prize for Young Translators, Queen's College Oxford (Rainey, 2022).



As Tymoczko (2000) notes, it is difficult to categorise a translation as either foreignised or domesticated, there being no clear criteria for evaluation. It is helpful, therefore, to think of these opposing ideas on a continuum. Baker (2007) agrees that each strategy may be used to varying degrees. I have summarised the difference in approaches in Table 3.3 -

Table 3.3

The comparison of foreignisation and domestication in translation theory

Aspect	Visible Translation	Invisible Translation
Key strategy	Foreignisation	Domestication
Role of the translator	Presence felt - the text reads like a translation	Disappears into the text
Cultural orientation	Source culture	Target culture
Language use	May retain source syntax, idioms or names	Adapts expressions to the norms of the target language
Reader experience	Reminded of the text's foreign origin, harder to read	Feels like reading an original target-language text
Ideological Goal	Highlight difference, resist cultural assimilation	Promote fluency, reduce friction
Examples of Application	Some literary translations, postcolonial texts, philosophy	Mainstream fiction, children's literature, marketing texts
Typical features	Loan words, cultural references, non-standard syntax	Omission, paraphrasing, localization
Criticisms	Can alienate the reader, definition is vague, difficult to use in practice	Risks erasing cultural identity of the source text
Advocated by	Lawrence Venuti	Eugene Nida, commercial publishers and reviewers

Thus, translation is best seen as a multifaceted process - linguistic, cultural, functional, and ethical - where choices made by the translator are guided by context, audience, purpose, and ideology. Translations may have foreignising or domesticating elements, or a combination of the two.

3.3.3.2.2 Skopos theory

Skopos theory is a view which is neither centred on the source text nor its target, but on the action, purpose and reception of the translation itself (Reiss & Vermeer, 2013). Skopos theory rejects the notion of faithfulness to the original and instead concentrates on the purpose of the translation - it ought to function in the target situation (Du, 2012). It is not directly associated with the ideological stances described above, rather, it empowers the translator to choose either foreignising or domesticating strategies, based on the function of the translation.

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Regarding non-literary texts, Nord (1997) states that only when the target audience is identified can the translator decide on the skopos of the translation, and that the content, form or skopos of the source text may not match the culture-specific world knowledge, expectations, or communicative needs of the target audience. The translator must also consider the needs of the translation commissioner, who should provide a statement of skopos (Vermeer, 2000). With literary texts, the skopos can be the same in both source and target texts, but the translator must consider how best to recreate this - particularly in children's literature, where the understanding of the target audience may require the domestication of the source text (Cai & Zhou, 2016). Flynn (2004) explores the applicability of skopos theory to literary translation by conducting an ethnographic study of professional literary translators in the Netherlands and Belgium. Flynn argues that skopos theory provides a valuable functionalist framework which ought to be flexibly applied to account for the cultural, stylistic, and ethical demands of literary texts. His findings suggest that literary translators often negotiate between fidelity to the source text and the communicative needs of the target audience. This study grounds theoretical discussion in translation practice, highlighting the complex decision-making processes that characterise literary translation.

The advantage of this theory in a classroom context is that it allows the same text to be translated in several different ways with fewer restrictions. It enables pupils to express creativity and think critically about their audience, the function of the source text and their translations. They may choose between accuracy in relation to the source text or changing elements to foster greater understanding in the target audience. Providing this freedom of creative choice can aid feelings of autonomy and competence in students whose MFL skills are developing. It also serves as a useful discussion when displaying the different translations and encouraging the participants to think about why certain elements differ, without one being right and another wrong. In this study, pupils were given an introduction to this idea with the teacher showing some Spanish sentences with several different English translations. All were explained as being correct, and the learners chose which they thought best fit the skopos of the original.

3.3.3.3 Summary

This section has examined the growing role of translation within the L2 classroom, particularly the fit with TBLT and its potential to raise learner motivation through the lens of SDT. Framed as meaning-focused, problem-solving tasks, translation activities can support the three basic psychological needs. Learners exercise autonomy by making lexical and stylistic choices; competence is enhanced through scaffolded challenges that require nuanced L1 output; and relatedness is fostered through engagement with culturally relevant or personally meaningful content.

This section also explored how competing ideological frameworks - foreignisation and domestication - shape learners' approaches to translation, with foreignisation preserving cultural distance and linguistic authenticity, while domestication aims for accessibility and familiarity in the target language. Though both approaches offer pedagogical value, they may limit learner agency if imposed rigidly. In contrast, skopos theory, which states that translation decisions should be guided by the communicative purpose (skopos) of the translation, offers a more flexible and learner-centered framework. By allowing students to define the goals and audiences of their translations, skopos theory aligns most closely with the motivational principles of SDT, enabling learners to make purposeful, context-sensitive choices which promote both engagement and investment.

3.4 Empirical evidence on influencing L2 motivation

This section provides an overview of approaches used thus far in motivational intervention studies. It then examines empirical evidence on teaching strategies generally, next focusing on the link between TBLT and motivation, followed by peer collaboration and similar approaches. Next, it discusses the effect TBLT has on learner outcomes, as although this study does not measure outcome, it is unlikely to be adopted in classroom practice unless some positive evidence on outcome is presented. Finally, studies on the use of translation in the L2 classroom are discussed.

3.4.1 Introduction

Theory of change makes the underlying rationale of a project specific: supporting planning, implementation and assessment of the project (Reinholz & Andrews, 2020). A theory of change refers to the academic literature, rooting an intervention in research

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findings and avoiding untested assumptions. This gives an intervention a more positive impact (Asmussen, 2020). In education there are mainly three pathways to attempt to produce change; cognitive, social and emotional. Cognitive psychological interventions target learning and intellectual processes such as self-regulation, executive control, and working memory, and have lasting effects on performance (Ritter et al, 2007). Social psychological interventions aim to improve the student's subjective experiences in school (Wilson, 2011) and emotional interventions focus on recognising, understanding, expressing and regulating emotion (Rivers & Brackett, 2010). Spitzer & Aronson (2015) conducted a review of social and emotional interventions which have seen enormous success, such as the introduction of meditation, growth mindset, possible selves and role model exposure.

For this project, the hypothesis is that a task-based curriculum can improve socio-emotional dimensions of motivation in UK Key Stage 3 pupils of MFL, and that this can be demonstrated with a 12-week intervention. The study seeks to produce change in all three pathways. Cognitively, the learners will experience a new method of LL which differs from the PPP model they are accustomed to. They will have the opportunity to use the L2 in a more creative, autonomous manner. Socially, the work is collaborative and the real-world nature of the tasks make them more relatable to their lives and experiences. Emotionally, the learners will have a greater degree of control over their learning and can reflect on the challenges and their reaction to them. I will outline here how similar interventions have effectively changed learner motivation, and how these are linked to teaching methods.

Lanvers (2020) conducted a six-session intervention which sought to change mindsets of language learners aged 13-14 in the UK secondary sector. This study promoted the idea of a growth mindset and utilised sixth-formers as mentors. The intervention resulted in a higher number of learners displaying a growth mindset belief. There was also a small equalising factor in the gender aspect of boys' tendency to demotivation. Critically, the study also discovered a greater desire among learners to select MFL as a GCSE option. Similarly, Al-Ghamdi (2020) found that an intervention focusing on growth mindset in Saudi EFL learners showed a significant difference in language mindset beliefs, attitudes towards the L2, motivational intensity, goal orientation and responses to failure situations between the intervention and control group. In the

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specific UK context, a further promising study on growth mindset in Year 9 German pupils suggested an increased willingness to opt-in at GCSE, with the most positively affected including those with the lowest prior attainment (Molway & Mutton, 2020).

Another intervention conducted by Lanvers et al (2019) was on raising motivation through the teaching of general and comparative linguistics. As noted by Wingate & Andon (2017), awareness-raising of general linguistic issues such as the benefits and ubiquity of multilingualism can aid motivation in the specific context of the UK LL crisis. Again, Lanvers et al (2019) was conducted with UK secondary school pupils, aged 12-13, over two weeks. This study is of particular interest as it targets monolingual anglophone learners, by teaching the cognitive benefits and global prevalence of multilingualism. The study found increased self-efficacy towards LL and a change in attitude towards MFL as a subject. Research conducted into LOTE learning in Italy found that learners as young as ten can be taught to make connections across languages when those languages share features (such as Romance languages) which motivates learners by fostering awareness of a plurilingual identity (Arenare, 2025).

Alrabai (2022) discovered that a 12-week pedagogical teaching intervention which integrated positive and negative emotions led to an increase in learner motivation and achievement in EFL (English as a Foreign Language). These emotional regulations included regulating anxiety and promoting motivation. The former was achieved by reducing learners' fear of negative evaluation, increasing learner self-confidence and adopting anxiety-free teaching methods, and the latter by supporting learners' independence and control over their learning, increasing learners' expectation of success and making the learning stimulating and enjoyable.

Owen & Thomas (2021) used carousels of activities as a pedagogical intervention to enhance motivation in Year 6 (10-11 year old) learners of French in the UK. SDT was used to measure motivation, and it was discovered that the nature of the carousels gave the learners the locus of control, aligning with the learner autonomy encouraged in SDT.

Lanvers & Graham (2022) discussed and evaluated the latest empirical studies to increase motivation and made policy recommendations based on these. For example,

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“Language Horizons” is a mentoring project led by Cardiff University. Using university students as ambassadors, it aligns closely with the principles of SDT by targeting learners’ sense of connectedness, competence, identity, interest and creativity. The outcome was an increased sense of competence and desire to continue study of the L2 in comparison with a control group (Rushton & Thomas, 2020). Graham & Macaro (2008) found that using strategy instruction as a scaffold led to an increase in self-efficacy, which could be argued in SDT terminology as increasing a sense of competence leading to increased autonomy. This study used UK learners of French in post-compulsory Year 12 (16-17 year olds). Lanvers & Graham (2022) conclude that the currently available UK based intervention studies reveal the potential of combining psychological insight with pedagogical creativity to foster motivation and engagement in language learners. The next section will focus on pedagogical methods.

3.4.2 Teaching methods which influence motivation

Research conducted in Austria is suggestive of learners’ intrinsic motivation decreasing between the ages of 11-15, due to a decline in the satisfaction of the BPNs (Gnambs & Hanfstingl, 2016), therefore, teachers must consider how their practice can best meet these needs. Teachers’ motivational practice, defined as “instructional interventions used by teachers to initiate and stimulate student motivation” (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008, p57), has a highly significant positive correlation with learners’ motivated behaviour. It is worth revisiting the idea of autonomy-supportive teaching in the UK context here. One recent study, which surveyed 1,775 UK secondary MFL students, demonstrated that they were more likely to report a more autonomous form of LL motivation and less autonomy frustration if they perceived their MFL teacher as autonomy-supportive. This teaching style was characterised by encouraging student choice, valuing opinions, and minimising controlling practices. Interestingly, this finding transcended year groups, and the findings were more pronounced in contexts of MFL being optional rather than compulsory (Parrish et al, 2024). This study employed a Learning Climate Questionnaire across groups of students from three different schools, analysing the data with structural equation modelling, establishing the relationship between learners’ perceptions of teacher support, psychological needs satisfaction and motivational orientation. Autonomy-supportive teaching has also been found to increase learner motivation in a non

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anglophone context, specifically, learner interest, effort, relatedness and integrated regulation (Kaur et al, 2015).

Stefanou et al (2004) suggest three autonomy supportive practices for teachers to consider; organisational, procedural and cognitive. Organisational autonomy support, such as involving learners in the decision-making process, can encourage a sense of well-being and comfort. Perceived choice has been shown to be the strongest predictor of learner autonomy (Alrabai, 2021).

Procedural autonomy support, for example, offering a choice of media in which to present ideas, may provoke initial engagement with learning tasks or activities. Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) is an example of procedural autonomy support. CALL, social media and non-traditional assessment have all been found useful in raising self-determination (Akbari et al, 2015; Alm, 2006; Zoghi & Malmeer, 2013). In adult EFL learners, digital storytelling had a positive impact on self-confidence and personal use (Hava, 2021), while the use of WhatsApp significantly improved autonomous motivation (Alamer & Al Khateeb, 2021). When combined with an element of self-regulation, the effect of CALL can be even more significant. Chen, Chen & Yang (2019) discovered a vocabulary-learning mobile app with a self-regulated learning mechanism that demonstrated a significant increase in adolescent learner motivation and performance. Self-regulated learning strategies incorporated into a web-based EFL course led to adult learners becoming more intrinsically orientated (Chang, 2005). More recently, a study with university EFL students in Thailand trialled TBLT with technological enhancement, through the use of the FlipGrid application (now known as Flip), an interactive video discussion platform. Students felt that this enabled them to become more communicative, collaborative and interactive, noting that it felt more learner-centered. This study also significantly improved writing performance, including grammatical range and accuracy (Robillos & Bustos, 2023).

Cognitive autonomy support, including learner self-evaluation of work, could foster a longer lasting investment in deep-level thinking. Kim (2017) found that one teacher's cognitive autonomy support; asking questions, supporting thoughts and interests and providing relevant topics which considered learners' cultural context, were effective in supporting intrinsic motivation when compared with a teacher who used less

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autonomy-supportive practices like teacher domination. AI chatbots such as ChatGPT enable learners to self-evaluate their progress and can respond to their current and ought-to L2 selves. This led Iranian EFL learners to dedicate more motivation to their LL in comparison with their previous, traditional classroom learning (Rahimi et al, 2024). While a similar study found no significant impact in motivation in Chinese EFL learners using Google Assistant, thematic analysis via interview found that participants perceived the benefits as being increased accessibility, interactivity and immediate pronunciation feedback. This likely fostered the development of their self-regulation and learner autonomy (Zhang, 2024). Using authentic assessments can enhance cognitive autonomy by encouraging learners to take ownership of their learning process. When two groups of Iranian EFL learners were given authentic and non-authentic assessments, the authentic group outperformed the non-authentic group in self-regulated learning, autonomy and self-efficacy (Ismail et al, 2023). Authentic assessments are classed as portfolios, teacher observation, constructed responses, demonstrations and experiments, exhibitions and projects, writing samples, retellings and oral interviews (O'Malley & Pierce, 1996). Additionally, learner attitude to the use of these authentic assessments was positive. Wang et al. (2024) examined the impact of teacher autonomy-supportive practices on Chinese EFL students' academic English speaking and motivation. The study found that when teachers supported students' cognitive autonomy by encouraging independent thinking, offering meaningful choices, and fostering a supportive learning climate, students experienced greater satisfaction of their basic psychological needs. This, in turn, led to higher classroom engagement, ultimately contributing to improved speaking performance. The findings reinforce the role of cognitively supportive teaching practices in promoting both motivation and communicative competence in second language contexts.

SDT was applied successfully by Jones et al (2009) with undergraduate LOTE learners, with observable increases in interest and enjoyment and learner self-reported gains in intrinsic motivation. The methods used included creative, kinaesthetic tasks (creating objects with Play-doh, for example), diverse review formats, sharing and discussing objects of personal significance, peer interaction, choice of differentiation and intriguing visual aids.

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Henry et al (2018) studied specific classroom activities which teachers had described as particularly motivational. They found that activities which allowed perceived authenticity, often connected to the use of authentic materials, and those which involved creativity and the use of technology were particularly motivational. They noted a link between collaboration and motivational benefit.

Muir (2017) discusses motivation in the context of project-based learning. Definitions of a project include investigative research (Kenny, 1993), problem-based learning (Savoie & Hughes, 1994) or a project-based approach (Levis & Levis, 2003). According to Park & Hiver (2017), projects must involve collaborative learning, be process oriented and result in tangible products. The intervention fits this definition, therefore projects and tasks in this context may be seen to describe the same, or very similar, sequenced activities. As can be seen from Table 3.1, TBLT shows promise in increasing motivation due to its alignment with the principles of SDT.

3.4.2.1 TBLT and motivation: empirical evidence

East (2022) remarks upon the fact that TBLT is well-grounded in theory, yet thus far lacks sufficient empirical evidence. Of the studies so far, he argues many are done under 'ideal' conditions, and may not be replicable in a real-world classroom environment. He calls for more classroom-based research, particularly in the mainstream secondary and high-stakes exam contexts. He also reflects on the difficulty in convincing teachers, who are often constrained by large class sizes, time constraints, and assessment policies. Here I summarise the most relevant empirical evidence on TBLT and its potential to impact upon motivation.

Tavakoli, Lotfi & Biria (2019) conducted an empirical study with computer-assisted language learning (CALL) mediated TBLT among Iranian EFL learners in a university setting. They found a significant positive effect on learner motivation when compared with a control group, measured with a L2MSS questionnaire. Another study on university EFL learners is by Murakami, Valvona & Broudy (2012), which found increased engagement outside the classroom when using a TBLT curriculum with a mixture of self, peer and teacher assessment.

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Chen & Wright (2017) discover that even in a supportive school environment with a long history of using TBLT, some teachers deem it unsuitable for beginner learners. Despite robust training in the implementation of TBLT, several teachers were not confident in designing and delivering contextualised tasks. They suggest teacher training which empowers teachers to develop autonomy. Regarding task design, learner-generated content has been shown to increase behavioural, social and cognitive engagement when compared to teacher-generated content (Lambert, Philp & Nakamura, 2017), perhaps not surprising when one considers the need for relatedness in SDT.

While not considering motivation directly, a recent meta-analysis of TBLT implementation found that it was positively received by learners and teachers, and more effective on a range of L2 learning outcomes when compared with non-task-based-pedagogies (Bryfonski & McKay, 2019). Similarly, TBLT resulted in a positive learner attitude when used in online learning of trainee language teachers at a Spanish university (Belda-Medina, 2021). A higher satisfaction rate among learners has also been reported when compared to traditional, grammar-based courses (González-Lloret & Nielson, 2015; McDonough & Chaikitmongkol, 2007).

3.4.2.2 Peer collaboration in TBLT and similar approaches: effect on motivation

The cognitive-interactionist approach ties in closely to TBLT. It focuses on the importance of interaction between learners through pair and group work, accompanied by task-based studies. The evidence that learner-learner interaction is beneficial in the classroom is strong, due to learners' lessened anxiety and increased confidence when speaking with peers in contrast to speaking to their teacher (McDonough, 2004).

This approach also stresses the importance of corrective feedback, although since no one method is deemed the most effective, a variety of feedback styles is encouraged. Research shows that learners receive more corrective feedback when working on a task collaboratively (Gass & Varonis, 1990) and that they are more likely to modify their incorrect utterances when spoken feedback comes from their peers (Shehadeh, 2001). It is likely that this is due to the learner-learner interactions feeling less intimidating than learner-native speaker that more output and more feedback is produced (Sato & Lyster, 2007). It should be noted, however, that peer feedback is

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susceptible to influence from social dynamics, and one way to avoid this is to ensure the learners are working collaboratively on a task (Yoshida, 2008). Gyogi (2020), supports putting learners into small groups, as discussion aids the symbolic competence of learners.

The cognitive-interactionist approach recommends that tasks are designed to encourage language use in meaningful contexts, to facilitate interaction and to engage with the target language (Kim, 2012), all of which align with TBLT. An increase in task complexity will encourage use of the target features and promote interactive L2 learning opportunities (Revesz, 2011). The research in this field suggests that the collaborative activities of LL are beneficial for motivation, which is encouraging as it is a feature of TBLT.

3.4.2.3 TBLT and learning outcomes

Shintani (2011, 2015), compares TBLT to PPP teaching and found TBLT had better results on vocabulary acquisition and incidental grammar acquisition in young Japanese learners of English as an L2. Shintani also notes that TBLT leads to opportunities for learners to initiate discourse and negotiate for both meaning and form. Hellström (2016) found that over the course of one lesson followed by an assessment, TBLT is less effective in teaching grammar than PPP. However, González-Lloret & Nielson (2015), compared an eight-week adult Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) course in Spanish for trainee border patrol agents in the USA. One trialled a TBLT approach, the other kept the traditional grammar-based course. The grammatical accuracy of the TBLT group matched that of the grammar-based group, while the former group outperformed the latter in complexity, fluency and oral accuracy. A study conducted with Iranian junior high learners of EFL found that, when TBLT is compared to traditional instruction with examples and drilling of grammar, the TBLT group significantly outperformed the traditional control group on a grammar test. The participants in the TBLT group also scored significantly higher on a motivation questionnaire (Namaziandost & Bohloulzadeh, 2017). This suggests that TBLT may be more effective in teaching grammar long-term than short-term, However, these results are not universal. When TBLT and traditional grammar instruction were compared in a Vietnamese university with EFL learners, there was no significant difference in grammar competence (Mai, 2025). The researcher in this case discusses

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how the lack of direct grammar instruction, coupled with insufficient practice of grammar concepts, led to students being unable to internalise and apply them in assessment. Ridwan et al (2024) found TBLT to be effective in EFL learners' understanding and application of tenses, but there was no control group in this study to compare approaches.

In the study by González-Lloret & Nielson mentioned above, the TBLT group outperformed the grammar-based group in complexity, fluency and oral accuracy. Additionally, Mudra (2016) writes that a TBLT approach improved both speaking skills and learner motivation in Indonesian EFL learners. In Iraqi Kurdistan, grade 10 EFL students who participated in a TBLT study demonstrated improved outcomes in speaking skills. All five proficiency measures assessed - fluency, vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and grammar pronunciation - showed improvement, with fluency particularly affected (Mohamedamin & Seyyedi, 2025). TBLT caused a significant improvement in Saudi high school EFL students' oracy (Alshahrani & Saud, 2024), more specifically, increased confidence in speaking, enhanced vocabulary usage and improved pronunciation. The positive perceptions reported by students further support the conclusion that TBLT not only improved speaking proficiency but also positively influenced learner motivation.

Keck et al (2006) conducted a meta-analysis on 14 experimental task-based interaction studies which showed the experimental groups substantially outperformed control groups in both grammar and lexis on immediate and delayed post-tests. Jabri & Fadhlaoui (2023) found that, when using TBLT with pre-service teachers of EFL in Tunisia, both teachers and students reported that TBLT helped improve learners' linguistic and communicative skills, with functional competence significantly affected.

Although this study focuses on raising motivation and not on learning outcomes, it is worth noting that research demonstrates increased motivation leads to better engagement, improving learning outcomes (Bandura, 1993, 1995), which is one reason this study is aiming to increase motivation - giving learners the opportunity to succeed.

3.4.2.4 Translation in the classroom: empirical evidence

Due to its roots in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), there has been little research historically into the use of the L1 in the TBLT classroom, necessarily heavy in translation tasks. However, this has begun to change. Carless (2008) concluded, after a study with EFL teachers and teacher educators in Hong Kong, that a balanced and flexible approach to L1 use in the TBLT classroom is needed. A study conducted with secondary school EFL students in Vietnam demonstrated that the TBLT principle of group work led to translanguaging - moving between languages - with English and Vietnamese. This led to learners feeling empowered and more confident in the task performance, with gains in L2 speaking skills. The researchers concluded that translanguaging contributes to making TBLT more socially progressive (Seals et al, 2020). There is evidence to suggest that translanguaging is an effective pedagogical practice which fosters learner cognition and LL (Sembianti & Tian, 2023) and learner engagement, interaction and inclusion (Tai & Wei, 2023). Examining U.S. secondary schools with newcomer immigrants, Garcia & Sylvan (2011) propose seven guiding principles of translanguaging; heterogeneity, collaboration, learner-centeredness, language and content integration, language use from students up, experiential learning, and local autonomy and responsibility. These combine to make students' success and confidence in using their L2 increase.

Hajmalek & Aghamohammadi (2023) proposed a model of TBLT to teach translation with six main components; authenticity and contextualisation, a balanced focus on meaning and form, process-orientedness, interactivity, learner-centeredness and reflectivity and evaluation. This approach was then applied to university students of TEFL and translation studies, and considerably improved the quality of their translations. Learner attitude was generally positive, with collaboration and student-centeredness the most frequently stated advantage. It should be noted, however, that concerns were raised by the teachers of the method being time consuming and challenging to plan and implement.

International college students in Japan used translation in their Japanese class with a communicative approach, and were able to improve both their accuracy and fluency (Saito, 2019). They translated verb forms in sentences which were contextually relevant to their everyday lives. Their choices varied depending on how they observed

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the norms of politeness, for example, a Chinese student selecting the polite form and a French student choosing the casual form, every time. This method aided learners in exploring the target culture and identity, and to reconfirm their own by comparison, since they examined their own and others' translations with those of Japanese native speakers.

Beauvais & Ryland (2021) noted a high level of self and peer motivation, as well as positive engagement, in a UK translation workshop of teacher-selected Year 9 & 10 pupils mostly working in groups. The study noted that pupils gained enjoyment from texts which could be dramatically read aloud, which encouraged me to add a performance element to the intervention.

Barnes (2018) conducted a study of translation activities with UK GCSE Spanish pupils. Participants' responses were overwhelmingly positive. They stated that translation was best delivered in a task-based pedagogy, with group work. They felt that such activities helped to develop their confidence and competence. They also felt that the real-world application made the lessons more engaging.

Encouraged by these results, I felt that a translation intervention would fit well with the principles of SDT, and the task-based inspiration of my own study.

3.4.3 Summary

The empirical evidence reviewed thus far highlights a diverse range of approaches used to enhance motivation among L2 learners, encompassing both psychological interventions and pedagogical strategies. Outreach initiatives, mindset-focused training, and identity-oriented programmes collectively demonstrate that motivation can be positively influenced through targeted efforts addressing learners' competence, relatedness, and perceptions of the value of LL. These findings provide a foundation for exploring how specific instructional frameworks may further support motivation in the L2 classroom. In the hierarchy of evidence, there is strong support which indicates that interventions can change psychological mindsets generally, there is good evidence that TBLT can influence language learner motivation and some small study qualitative evidence on positive effects of translation on MFL motivation.

3.5 Dependent variables in language learning motivation and learner engagement in England

As seen in the development of motivational theory in Section 3 of this chapter, individual and contextual variables contribute to shaping learners' L2 motivation. This section discusses the key dependent variables which have been identified as influential: gender, socioeconomic status and geographical area of the UK.

3.5.1. Gender

3.5.1.1. Gender gap in language learning uptake and outcome

The global under-achievement of boys across all subjects is widely recognised (Sutherland, 1999; Centre for Social Justice, 2025). In 2024, 70.8% of female GCSE entries achieved a grade 4 pass or above, compared to 63.1% of boys. Additionally, girls are more likely to achieve top grades, with 5.8% of girls' entries and 4.2% of boys' achieving a grade 9 (Norden, 2024). The gender gap in learners of MFL is particularly apparent (Burgess et al, 2004; Jones & Edmunds, 2005). Studies across countries, age groups and languages report discrepancies between the genders' attitude and performance (Gayton, 2011).

Examining the situation in the UK, a report by the Education Policy Institute (EPI) in 2020 notes that girls are over twice as likely to enter and achieve at least a Grade 4 in GCSE MFL. This gender gap is so pronounced, with 38% of boys taking MFL in 2018 compared to 50% of girls, that gender is a more significant barrier to both uptake and success than level of disadvantage. In 2020, the national average was 54% of girls and 40% of boys studying a GCSE in MFL as part of the Ebacc qualification (London Assembly, 2020).

Unsurprisingly, the gender imbalance continues at A level, where in 2019 the figures for the three main taught languages were as follows: French 0.7% male entries, 1.3% female, Spanish 0.8% male to 1.3% female, and German 0.3% male, 0.4% female. The proportion of female students has increased from 2017-2021, with Spanish increasing from 66% to 70% female entries (Plaister, 2021). In 2024, 54.1% of A level MFL entries were female students (British Council, 2025). This trend continues in higher education. In the academic year 2023/24, there were 58,080 female students

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enrolled onto language and area studies courses, compared to 21,305 males (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2025), meaning females outnumbered males by almost three to one.

The languages available to study in the UK are predominantly French, German and Spanish. Boys generally have a higher motivation to learn German than French, as the latter language is perceived as feminine (Williams, Burden & Lanvers, 2002; Coffey, 2025), however, a lack of exam entries coupled with difficulty recruiting German-speaking staff means German is disappearing from UK schools (Gray, 2019). Boys' disaffection in MFL increases for the three years in which it is a compulsory part of the National Curriculum, beginning for many as early as the first term of secondary school (Davies, 2004). This finding supports conducting the intervention early in the pupils' L2 learning, as many will have little or no experience from primary school.

3.5.1.2 Gender gap in motivation and attitude

Research in language education and gender studies suggests that girls' greater preference for MFL learning can be understood through several interrelated theoretical perspectives. Gender socialisation theory describes how, from early childhood, girls are encouraged to develop communication skills, empathy, and cooperative behaviors, aligning with the interpersonal and expressive nature of LL (Leaper & Robnett, 2011). Additionally, motivation and identity theories highlight that girls are often more socially motivated to engage with LL, viewing it as a means to connect with others and explore cultural identities, which fosters sustained interest and effort (Norton, 2013). Attitudinal research demonstrates that girls typically hold more positive attitudes towards LL, finding it more enjoyable and rewarding, which further enhances their participation and achievement (Pomerantz, Altermatt, & Saxon, 2002). Cognitive psychology tells us that boys implicitly focus on rule-based syntactic processing, while girls can make full use of linguistic knowledge and working memory function (Sugiura et al, 2018).

Yashima, Nishida & Mizumoto (2017) found that, when examining gender differences in the L2MSS model, female learners placed higher value on communication activities, which strengthened their L2 ideal selves: while males valued explicit grammar instruction and translation, leading to a stronger sense of ought-to self. Van de Gaer

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et al (2006) suggest that boys are more influenced by peer attitudes than girls. The importance of peer attitude is linked to self-image, as Chaffee et al (2020) discovered gender ideology and ideas around masculinity suppressed language learning motivation among men, as languages were perceived by many as a feminine subject. This is especially relevant in the perception of French in the UK, as historically, the language has been positioned as incompatible with British ideas of masculinity. This notion is so entrenched into institutional and societal narratives that it often leads boys to internalise the belief that speaking French threatens their masculine identity, leading to resistance or disengagement (Coffey, 2025). Boys are also particularly vulnerable to low motivation when exposed to parents' negative views of MFL, or a lack of parental support for MFL study (Martin, 2022). Jones and Edmunds (2005) highlight lower levels of self-efficacy amongst boys as a contributing factor to their lower motivation and achievement.

Research with college EFL learners in China showed that a mastery goal-oriented classroom - defined as students' perception of aspects of the classroom climate which highlight learning, effort and diligence - impacted positively on male learners' motivation both directly and indirectly through self-efficacy, but only indirectly with female learners. Performance classroom goal structure - defined as students' perceptions of elements of the classroom which focused on their competence and abilities relative to those of others - significantly motivated males but not females (Wang, Patterson & Long, 2024). Jones & Edmunds (2005), in collaboration with the Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research (CILT), also recommend competition and setting clear, individualised goals through 'personal best' targets to help boys track their progress and feel a sense of accomplishment. Other recommendations include focusing on strong teacher-student relationships, cultivating a supportive classroom environment where boys feel comfortable taking linguistic risks, encouraging parental involvement and the incorporation of ICT to make learning more interactive and appealing.

TBLT shows promise in aiding boys' motivation. Group work leading to a tangible end product could be presented as a competition, which boys generally respond to (Sundqvist & Sylvén 2014). Having choices, ability to contribute to the lessons and making lessons interesting and relevant are known motivating factors, particularly in

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boys (Martin, 2003), and are hallmarks of TBLT when done properly. The nature of both tasks in this study involving real-world communication could appeal to boys, as males have been observed as more willing to communicate in the L2 outside of the classroom (Baker & MacIntyre, 2000).

In the context of SDT, research indicates that boys have more extrinsic motivation while girls are more intrinsically motivated (Patrick et al, 1999; Oga-Baldwin & Fryer, 2020). Additionally, girls have been found to have a higher degree of autonomy in L2 learning (Şakrak-Ekin, & Balçıklı, 2019). When classes are planned with the principles of SDT in mind, the motivation of boys can be positively affected. In one all-boys middle school in the US, allowing more autonomy caused learners to feel more motivated. In a mixed-gender US public charter school, incorporating choice and more practical learning achieved the same. Another US high school prioritised relatedness, allowing boys to embark on real-world, experiential learning, which also caused boys' motivation to rise (Heubeck, 2025).

3.5.2 Socioeconomic status and geography

3.5.2.1. Socioeconomic gap in uptake beyond the compulsory

Gender and socioeconomic status (SES) interact in post-compulsory LL, with state educated boys from lower SES the least likely to study MFL at GCSE or beyond. Independently educated girls are the most likely, followed by girls in state schools in more affluent areas - schools with a lower percentage of pupils receiving free school meals (Lanvers, 2017b). As can be seen in Fig 3.3 on the following page, schools in more affluent areas are more likely, by over 20 percentage points, to have more pupils studying MFL.

Figure 3.3

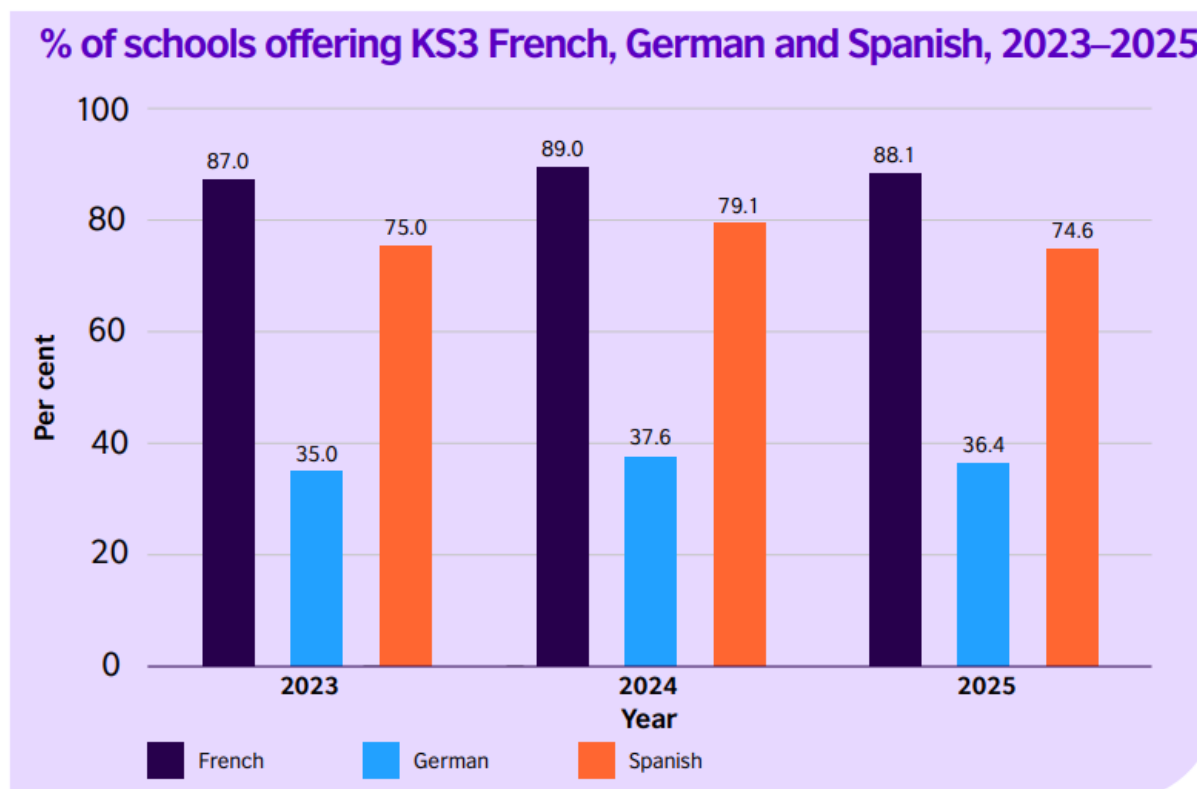
Teacher estimates on average percentage of pupils studying MFL by area of deprivation (British Council, 2025, p.26).

Quintile	Average percentage of pupils in Year 11 studying a language by teacher estimate
Quintile 1 – most affluent	69%
Quintile 2	47%
Quintile 3	46%
Quintile 4	46%
Quintile 5 – most deprived	47%

Language provision in independent schools is generally better than in state schools. The two most taught languages in independent schools are French and Spanish. Both languages are taught at Key Stages 3 and 4 in over four out of five schools who participated in the 2025 Language Trends survey. German is taught in more than half of schools surveyed throughout the key stages (British Council, 2025). When compared with the data from state schools (Fig 3.4) it is clear that both Spanish and German are more accessible to independent school pupils. Language assistants are also less likely to be employed in state secondary schools than in independent schools, either privately or through the British Council scheme, and schools in Quintile 5 (the most deprived) are the least likely to employ a language assistant (British Council, 2025), which could foster a feeling of relatedness among pupils, having someone from the target culture with whom to practise speaking.

Figure 3.4

Percentage of state secondary schools offering French, German and Spanish at Key Stage 3 over the past three years (British Council, 2025, p. 23).



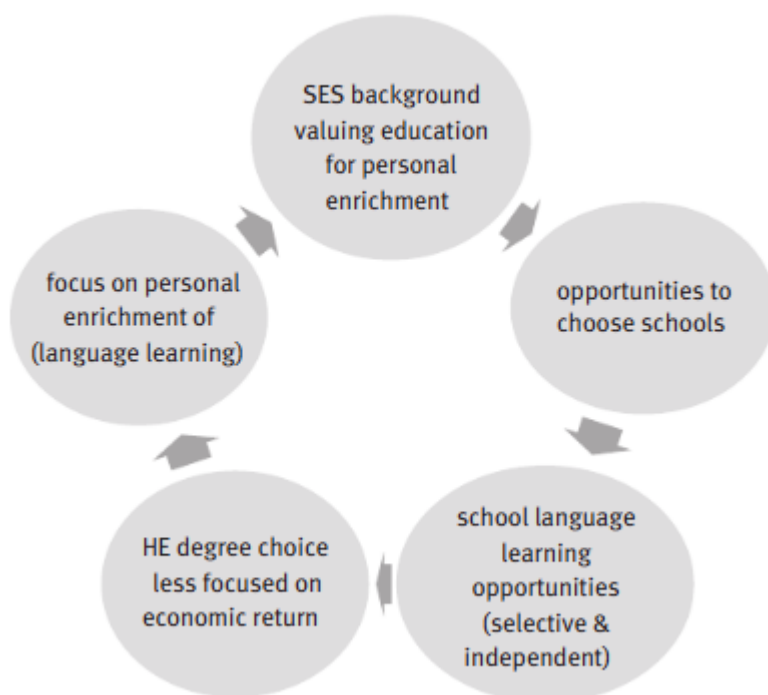
Gayton (2010) found that students from higher SES families generally exhibit stronger motivation and engagement in LL compared to those from lower SES backgrounds. Performance measures such as Progress 8 (explained in Chapter 2) have led to leadership of schools in lower SES areas to justify their poor MFL provision by referencing their cohort's low future need for languages (Lanvers, 2018) or the difficulty of grading highly in the subject (Thomson, 2024), creating a self-perpetuating cycle. Forbes (2026) discovered, in an analysis of 615 state-funded UK secondary schools, that the school-level curriculum policy is the strongest predictor of GCSE entries. This highlights the importance of schools' commitment to LL, as in the same analysis, disadvantage had no significant effect. Past GCSE, this finding becomes even more stark. Just 6% of AS and A level French or Spanish entries, and 3% of German, are students who are eligible for Free School Meals (Bowler, 2025).

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Lanvers (2017b) writes that the social divide in LL is unrivalled by any other subject, with nearly one third of university language students from fee-paying schools. In UK Higher Education, the universities with larger and more reputable language departments are also those which are less likely to have students from lower SES backgrounds (Lanvers, 2017b). This is exacerbated by the low economic return of MFL degrees, with language graduates having a lower-than-average wage return on study investment (Chowdry et al, 2012). This often leads those from lower SES backgrounds, who tend to worry more about the economic return of their degree, to choose a different subject (see Fig 3.5, which shows the cycle of SES, opportunity and motivation for languages as a degree choice). Additionally, universities offering specialist language degrees dropped by 40% from 1998-2013, with those that remain overwhelmingly in the elite, higher-entry Russell Group category, perceived as inaccessible to those from lower SES backgrounds (Bawden, 2013). In 2024, 47 out of 97 universities in England offered language degrees, with just 17 of those non-Russell Group (Muradás-Taylor, 2024).

Fig 3.5

Circle of opportunities and motivations for LL (Lanvers, 2017b, p.69).



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Lanvers (2017b) notes that LL has a perceived social capital, with students and parents from more affluent backgrounds more likely to value the personal and professional benefits associated with it, as demonstrated in Fig 3.5. She recommends that, in order to reduce the social divide, language education policy must ensure equal opportunities for LL by making it comprehensively accessible for all up to age 16. It should also offer clear rationales which embrace the full spectrum of personal enrichment and functional aspects, including the many societal benefits of language skills for everyone. These recommendations are repeated more recently (Lanvers & Cowling, 2026), as well as promoting language awareness at Key Stage 2.

3.5.2.2 Geographical distribution of uptake beyond the compulsory

Geographical location combined with SES leads to major disparities in language uptake. In Inner London in 2020, 70% of girls and 57% of boys chose to study GCSE MFL, compared to the national average of 54% and 40%, respectively (London Assembly, 2020). In 2017, 65% of pupils in Inner London took the GCSE, compared to 43% in the North East of England and just 28% in Middlesbrough (Board & Tinsley, 2017), which consistently ranks among the most deprived local authority areas in England (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2019).

The university language department closures mentioned above have led to ‘cold spots’ in the north, east and south-west of England - areas which are not reasonably commutable to a university in which languages are offered (Muradás-Taylor, 2024). This is significant, as most students attend universities close to home, with those from lower SES acutely aware of accommodation costs and so more likely to stay at home and commute.

The British Academy’s Mapping SHAPE Provision project highlights significant geographic disparities in access to SHAPE subjects (arts, humanities and social sciences), across UK universities. The interactive map and supporting data reveal the ‘cold spots’ mentioned above overlap with areas of deprivation. As non-Russell Group universities have lower tariffs, they tend to enrol higher proportions of students with lower SES. This means that the reduction or removal of language provision in these institutions disproportionately affects those with limited geographic mobility. Consequently, the growing concentration of language degrees in higher-tariff,

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geographically advantaged universities risks entrenching educational inequality, reinforcing the elitist trajectory of language study in UK higher education (British Academy, 2023).

3.5.3 Summary

This section has demonstrated how gender, socioeconomic status and geographical location affect both access to and motivation for languages past the compulsory stage of age 14. These three elements often combine, meaning that boys from areas of deprivation in schools with above average social deprivation indices are the least likely to study languages at GCSE or beyond, and independently educated girls most likely. LL in the UK is considered 'elitist' - reserved for the privileged, leaving disadvantaged students to choose other subjects, often with their economic return in mind. Recommendations to address the disparity include both improving accessibility and providing clear rationales for LL, covering personal enrichment and societal benefits, as discussed further in Chapter 1, Section 3.

3.6 Chapter Summary

As evidenced in Chapter 2, the UK is in a languages crisis. Motivation is low and entries for GCSE and A level exams decrease year on year. Despite this, research on LL motivation is dominated by studies of English as a second or foreign language. Although research on TBLT is in its infancy, an intervention with this methodology shows promise of increasing motivation at Key Stage 3, which could have an impact on the desire to continue with MFL past the compulsory stage. Additionally, motivation is one of the most significant predictors of success in LL, so by increasing motivation we can hope to raise achievement. Therefore, this study is justified in its aim of combatting the language crisis.

I have decided not to focus on the gender gap as I hope to improve motivation across the participants as a whole, however, data will be collected on gender to ascertain any difference. Additionally, I am unable to affect the social or geographical divide as the study is conducted in one participating school only.

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Although the evidence is suggestive of TBLT increasing learner motivation, thus far there is relatively little of it. This study contributes to a research gap in the specific context of the UK MFL classroom, well-documented as lacking in learner motivation.

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological approach adopted in this study, which investigates the impact of a Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) inspired classroom intervention on learner motivation among Year 7 students in an English secondary school. The study was conducted within an existing school context using intact teaching groups, and compares outcomes between an intervention group and a control group. In order to capture the complexity of classroom learning, a mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative measures of motivation with qualitative insights into learner experience. The chapter provides an overview of the research design and a detailed account of the study context, participants, intervention, and methods of data collection and analysis.

4.1.1 Overview

This study follows a quasi-experimental design to evaluate how a TBLT-inspired intervention affects learner motivation. In such designs, the researcher examines the influence of independent variables (such as the intervention group and gender) on a dependent variable (motivation). Although true experiments require the randomised allocation of participants, the use of pre-selected, intact classes in this study necessitates a quasi-experimental classification.

The chapter begins by outlining the teacher-researcher perspective which informed the design and implementation of the study. The research questions are then presented, followed by a detailed account of the study design, participants, intervention timeline, and teaching materials. A mixed-methods approach to data collection was used, as recommended for educational research by Greene (2005), due to the complex processes involved in teaching and learning and the challenges inherent in understanding them. The mixed-methods approach also helps to increase the validity of the study. Methods of data collection, analysis and reporting are explained fully. Particular attention is given to issues of intervention fidelity and the practical realities of conducting school-based intervention research.

The chapter subsequently describes the data collection instruments used to address the research questions, including questionnaires, focus groups, and immediate post-

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lesson feedback measures. Methodological and theoretical considerations underpinning the study are then discussed in relation to both ISLA research and broader educational intervention research. Finally, the chapter outlines the ethical considerations relevant to the study and presents the pilot study, including the modifications made to the research design following pilot implementation.

4.1.2 The teacher-researcher perspective

My own role as a teacher-researcher is introduced in Chapter 1, Section 1.4. Ellis wrote an updated book on TBLT in 2018, in which he makes specific reference to the lack of teacher-research into TBLT. He devotes a chapter to the systemic evaluation of a task to encourage this, including micro-evaluation. Bygate (2016) also notes that teacher-researchers are ideally placed to conduct the classroom research needed to further TBLT. In the field of affirmation interventions, those conducted by teachers have been found to have a more positive effect than those by researchers (Smith et al, 2021). Indeed, research has long held that collaboration between teachers and researchers has potential for significant pedagogical and curricular change (Tian & Shepard- Carey, 2020). This is significant because the intervention was designed by me, but carried out in collaboration with a fellow teacher, due to timetabling. Although Edwards & Burns (2016) remark how teacher-researchers become more self-confident as practitioners, there is evidence to suggest that teacher-researchers can present challenges to research integrity (Mitchell, 2019). One reason given for this was excessive workload, which was alleviated somewhat in my case due to my part-time research role. Nikkanan, a Finnish teacher-researcher, remarks that the codes of practice for teachers and researchers are much the same, extolling the positives of this dual role (Nikkanan, 2019). She asserts that teacher-researchers benefit from knowledge of the profession and the ability to follow school changes in real-time, thus can make practice and research meet more quickly and effectively. Bulterman-Bos (2008) agrees that the overlap of the two professions makes teacher-researchers ideally placed to shape curricula. Therefore, although there are issues to be considered regarding ethics, the fact that the intervention was carried out as part of the normal activities of the school, and no identifying information was collected, these ethical concerns did not hamper the study. Ethics are discussed in full in Section 6 of this chapter.

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For this study, one drawback of my role as a teacher-researcher, conducting the research in the school I worked at, is that I was known to the participants as a MFL teacher. I was concerned about the possibility of them being reluctant to share negative views of Spanish with me. I decided that the best way to minimise researcher bias in the focus group questioning was to ask a colleague to conduct this, rather than doing it myself, as would normally be expected of a researcher. As mentioned in Chapter 1 Section 1.4, I did teach some pilot participants but was unable to teach any of the study participants, as I had no control over my timetable and the allocation of classes. However, I remained in close contact with the class teacher and worked actively to reduce any extra workload by designing the intervention materials and providing all methods of quantitative data collection in advance. We also discussed the progress through the materials so that I could make changes as necessary.

4.2 Research Questions

1. How does a Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) inspired intervention at Year 7 in an English secondary school influence
 - 1.1. learner motivation?
 - 1.2. continuation intentions?
2. Experience of intervention
 - 2.1. How do students report on their learning experience of the interventions and their normal classes?
 - 2.2. Do students report differently on their experience of the two interventions and their normal classes?
3. Are there any gender differences in respect of
 - 3.1. motivation for MFL and willingness to continue with MFL (RQ1.1 and 1.2.)
 - 3.2. learner experience of the interventions generally and of each intervention specifically? (RQ 2.1. and 2.2.)

Table 4.1

Design of Research Study by RQ.

RQ	Data	Analysis	Comment
1.1 How does a Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) inspired intervention at Year 7 in an English secondary school influence learner motivation	Trait Motivation Questionnaire (Appendix A) given pre and post intervention	Quantitative analysis with SPSS - Paired samples <i>t</i> test or equivalent non-parametric test	Questionnaire distributed to both control and intervention groups and paired to individual with numbered codes.
1.2 How does a Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) inspired intervention at Year 7 in an English secondary school influence continuation intentions?	Trait Motivation Questionnaire (Appendix A), specifically, Question 22, given pre and post intervention	Paired samples <i>t</i> test or equivalent non-parametric test	as above
2.1. How do students report on their experience of the two interventions and their normal classes?	Quantitative - immediate post-lesson feedback Qualitative - Focus Group questioning	Immediate post-lesson feedback means comparison, Qualitative data coding	Post-lesson feedback in the form of a 5 point Likert scale emoji (Appendix B).
2.2. Do students report differently on their experience of the two interventions and their normal classes?	Quantitative - immediate post-lesson feedback Qualitative - focus group questioning	descriptive statistics Qualitative data coding	Focus group questions (Appendix C)
3.1. Are there any gender differences in motivation for MFL and willingness to continue with MFL	Trait motivation Questionnaire (Appendix A)	independent samples <i>t</i> test or equivalent non-parametric test	questionnaire data
3.2. Are there any gender differences in respect of learner experience of the interventions generally and of each intervention specifically?	Qualitative - focus group questioning	as 2.2.	focus group data (having ensured a balance of genders)

4.3 Study design and intervention

Permission was granted by the headteacher for the intervention to take place over the Spring term (January - March). The first half term intervention of the rescue project lasted for seven lessons, and the second half term of the translation project lasted for six.

4.3.1 Rationale for quasi-experimental design

The research was conducted in a quasi-experimental design, as the participants could not be randomly assigned to control or intervention groups. This is because the school in which the research was undertaken had grouped the students to ensure mixed gender and academic ability in the classes. There was no change in the class teacher, preserving the 'norms' of the teacher-student relationship (Ushioda & Chen, 2011). There were five classes in total, three were taught using intervention materials and two were taught using control materials.

4.3.2 Participants

Participants were almost the entire cohort of Year 7. This is the first year of secondary education in the UK, with pupils between 11-12 years old. The percentage of both disadvantaged pupils and those with SEN (Special Educational Needs) are higher than the national average (DfE, 2023a; 2023b). There were 90 participants in total, split into five classes of mixed ability and gender. Two control groups followed the standard curriculum (34 participants) and three intervention groups followed the TBLT-inspired curriculum (56 participants).

Year 7 was chosen for this study so that L2 learning was still relatively new and attitudes towards MFL learning were in the beginning stages. Research suggests that language learner motivation declines between the ages of 11-14 (Coleman et al, 2007), which is demonstrated even across Year 7 only (Graham et al, 2016), making Year 7 an opportune time to seek to affect motivation. The intervention was conducted in the second term, so that the participants had all had the same introduction to MFL in secondary school, and the intervention pupils had something to compare the experience with. The Headteacher was supportive of the research, and keen to drive uptake at GCSE due to government EBacc targets (explained in Chapter 2).

A priori power analysis was conducted using G*Power 3.1 (Faul et al., 2009) to determine the minimum required sample size for a one-way between-groups ANOVA. The analysis specified five independent groups (three intervention classes and two control classes), an alpha level of .05, and desired statistical power of .80. A medium to large effect size was anticipated based on the pilot study, corresponding to Cohen's $f = 0.40$ (equivalent to approximately $d = 0.80$ for pairwise comparisons). The analysis

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indicated that a total sample size of 80 participants would be required to achieve 80% power to detect an effect of this magnitude at the .05 significance level (critical $F = 2.49$, numerator $df = 4$, denominator $df = 75$, $\lambda = 12.80$). Accordingly, a minimum of approximately 16 participants per group was targeted to ensure sufficient statistical power for the planned analyses.

4.3.2.1 National policy context

In the first term (September-December), pupils were taught using the NCELP (National Centre for Excellence for Language Pedagogy) resources. NCELP was funded by the Department of Education and run by the University of York. It aimed to implement the recommendations made in the 2016 Teaching Schools Council (TSC) MFL pedagogy review, to establish in pupils a robust knowledge of grammar, vocabulary and phonics (NCELP, n.d.a). In 2023, NCELP became the LDP (Language-Driven Pedagogy) and was run by University College London (LDP, 2023). Each NCELP lesson involved teaching an aspect of grammar and phonics, with the expectation that pupils would learn ten new vocabulary items per week. Grammar was explicitly taught in a presentation, practice, production model perceived as more traditional MFL teaching (East, 2019). As NCELP was made with the Department of Education and provided a document exemplifying its curriculum alignment with the 2019 Ofsted framework (NCELP, n.d.b), it was launched the year before the study with Year 7 and continued throughout Key Stage 3. The decision to use NCELP was made by myself and my colleague, as the only MFL teachers at the school. As NCELP materials had been adopted by the school as standard for one year, this delivery mode counts as the control (business as usual) delivery form model.

4.3.2.2 School

All feeder primary schools taught French as a MFL, most for one hour per week. When pupils began secondary school, all were taught Spanish for one hour per week. Spanish was compulsory for all from Year 7 until Year 9, with the exception of a very small number of pupils with significant SEN. Pupils could opt to discontinue with Spanish for GCSE study in Year 10. The intervention aims to increase motivation while MFL study is compulsory, in order to persuade more to continue at this optional stage in the future.

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4.3.2.3 Gender

When completing the trait motivation questionnaire (Appendix D), participants were asked to indicate whether they identified as male, female or non-binary, to provide data to answer RQ 3.1. Non-binary was included as there were a small number of participants who openly identified as such.

4.3.3 Timeline of the intervention

Table 4.2

Study timeline

Dates	Sept - Dec	Jan – Feb	Feb - Mar	Apr-May	Jun-Jul
Term	academic term 1 (Autumn term)	academic term 2 - 1st half (Spring term)	academic term 2 - 2nd half (Spring term)	academic term 3 - 1st half (Summer term)	academic term 3 - 2nd half (Summer term)
Class content	all participants study normal curriculum materials (NCELP)	Intervention groups study intervention one (pet rescue project) Control groups continue with NCELP materials	Intervention groups study intervention two (translation project) Control groups continue with NCELP materials	Control groups study intervention one (pet rescue project) Intervention groups study NCELP materials	Control groups study intervention two (translation project) Intervention groups study NCELP materials
Data collection	no data collected	All participants complete pre-questionnaire during first lesson. Immediate post-lesson feedback collected in each lesson.	All participants complete post-questionnaire during penultimate lesson (last lesson of intervention). Immediate post-lesson feedback collected in each lesson.	FG questioning of all groups during first lesson of term.	no data collected

The pilot followed the same schedule as the final study, one year earlier.

As discussed in Section 6 of this chapter, delayed post-test questionnaire, given just before options are chosen, or comparing the school GCSE uptake when the intervention groups came to choose would increase validity, however, this was not possible due to control participants completing the intervention materials in term three.

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I decided to use the intervention materials with the control participants to minimise any negative impact on participants - this way, all pupils in the year group studied the same material, making the study more socially responsible (Ushioda, 2020). This also minimised the threat of social interaction on the study's internal validity (see Table 4.7).

4.3.4 Teaching materials

I designed all teaching materials used in the intervention with Ellis' definition of a task in mind;

“A task is a workplan that requires learners to *process language pragmatically* in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriate propositional content has been conveyed.”

(Ellis, 2003, p16, emphasis added).

The theory and design of TBLT is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, Section 2.7. The materials used in the pilot were evaluated and adapted to better encourage learner autonomy, explained in detail in Section 7.6 of this chapter. The selection of TBLT as the pedagogical framework for this intervention was not solely a practical or curricular decision but was theoretically informed by its alignment with the autonomy-supportive conditions identified within SDT. Reeve (2016) and Reeve and Cheon (2021) characterise autonomy-supportive teaching as instruction that offers learners meaningful choice, provides authentic rationale for tasks, and reduces controlling or coercive elements of the learning environment, with substantial empirical evidence demonstrating its benefits for autonomous motivation and need satisfaction across educational contexts. Both intervention tasks were designed with these principles in mind, aiming to provide an autonomy-supportive environment while retaining sufficient structure to scaffold learner engagement, a balance consistent with both TBLT principles and SDT's need-supportive teaching framework (Leeming & Harris, 2022b).

4.3.4.1 Pet rescue task

In the first half term of the intervention, students were given the task of choosing an animal to adopt and writing an email to a rescue shelter near Madrid. Below is the overview of the seven-lesson scheme of learning (Table 4.3), with one complete

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lesson plan for a detailed view (Table 4.4). The sentence builder used to support any learners who struggled to complete the task is displayed (Figure 4.1). As suggested by Beckett & Slater's project framework (2005), I included a project diary for learners to keep track of their progress and develop a feeling of ownership and autonomy.

Table 4.3

Half term one scheme of learning

Lesson number	Learning objectives	Lesson activities	Further information
1	To understand the project	Completion of the pre-test trait motivation questionnaire An explanation of the task, followed by discussion	Trait motivation introduced for the first time, needing comprehensive teacher explanation.
2	To discover key vocabulary relating to the task	Creating a list of vocabulary related to animals - male, female, friendly, nervous, etc.	Learners are encouraged to think of the words they would need themselves, followed by finding these in dictionaries and noting them into exercise books. Teacher circulating to help those struggling.
3	To define and describe an ideal pet	Using the vocabulary from the previous lesson, learners decide on the ideal pet for their circumstances. They wrote a short description of this pet in their exercise books.	Learners have access to dictionaries. When pertinent questions are asked, the teacher models some sentences on the board and encourages all learners to use and adapt these as necessary.
4	To understand authentic Spanish animal descriptions and navigate a website	Learners are given the website address and shown how to access the adoption list. They then peruse this independently, reading descriptions of the animals and choosing the one which they would like to adopt.	Learners are in the computer room for the duration of this lesson. They are permitted to use an online dictionary for translations of unfamiliar words.
5	To create a draft email to a Spanish native speaker	Learners are encouraged to think about what they would need to include in their email and begin to write their first draft.	Learners use their existing written descriptions and add these to the email. Teacher models phrases on the board based on learner questions.
6	To write an email to a Spanish native speaker	Drafts are finalised, typed up and sent from individual school email addresses.	Learners are in the computer room for the duration of this lesson.
7	To understand an authentic communication in Spanish, to reflect on the task and how they felt they had performed	Working collaboratively, those who have not completed their email do so during this lesson and send them. Those who have sent their message during the previous lesson have received a response, they also work collaboratively to read and understand their replies. Time at the end of the lesson is used for a reflective discussion, in which learners are encouraged to reflect on how successfully they have completed the task.	Learners are in the computer room for the first half of the lesson. They work in two groups, those who need to complete their emails and those who have received a reply. The end discussion is done all together in the classroom.

Table 4.4

Lesson plan - half term one, lesson five

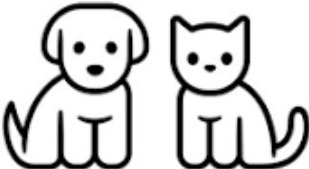
Lesson title: ¡Escribimos! (Let's write!)			
Learning Objective: To create a draft email to a Spanish native speaker			
Resources required: exercise books		Differentiation: sentence builder support for those who need them - teacher to decide and distribute as required (see Figure 4.1).	
Activity	Learner action	Teacher action	Rationale / further information
Starter	Learners to match up animal images with target-language descriptions on the board. Extension - to write a description to one further image.	Teacher to ensure exercise books are distributed and take the register.	The required format of lessons in the participating school involved a settling activity displayed on the board as students entered the classroom. This meant they could immediately engage with the lesson, which aided behaviour management.
Activity one	Discussion on what the shelter will want to see in the emails.	Facilitate discussion, model some sentence starters on the board based on student ideas.	Dictionaries available for those who require them.
Activity two	Students begin to write their emails, including the elements agreed in the discussion; description of the pet they want (completed in lesson three), how the chosen pet fits that description, what sort of home they have and how they will look after the animal.	Teacher circulates to ensure students are on task and to provide help where required. Any questions which could be useful to the group are gone through on the board.	Sentence builder differentiation aids given out here if needed (see Figure 4.1).
Plenary	Peer assessment and feedback.	Facilitate switching exercise books and encourage learners to read their peers' work from the perspective of the animal shelter.	

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Figure 4.1

Sentence builder support used in Lesson five

Voy a cuidarlo

Voy a cuidarlo	I will look after him		Todos los días	Every day
Voy a cuidarla	I will look after her		Dos veces al día	Twice a day
Voy a caminar con él	I will walk him		Tres veces al día	3 times a day
Voy a caminar con ella	I will walk her		Cuando lo necesite	Whenever he/she needs it
Voy a alimentarlo	I will feed him		Siempre	Always
Voy a alimentarla	I will feed her			

Voy a llevarlo / la al veterinario	I will take him / her to the vet		Soy responsable	I am responsible
Voy a cepillarlo / la bien	I will brush him / her		Puede confiar en mí	You can trust me
Voy a jugar con él / ella	I will play with him / her		Me encantan los animales	I love animals
Puede dormir en mi cama	He / she can sleep on my bed		Nunca lo / la abandonaría	I would never abandon him / her

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		Prefiero rescatar a los animales	I prefer to rescue animals
		Siempre digo adoptar no comprar	I always say adopt don't shop

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4.3.4.2 Translation task

In the second half term of the intervention, students were given the task of translating a rhyming story from a collection of children's bedtime stories. Below is the overview of the six-lesson scheme of learning (Table 4.5), with one complete lesson plan for a detailed view (Table 4.6). The letter given to learners from a (fictional) translation company is included (Figure 4.2).

Table 4.5

Half term two scheme of learning

Lesson number	Learning objectives	Lesson activities	Further information
1	To understand the nature of translation as a profession and as a practice, choosing different methods for different contexts	A discussion of which careers require languages, followed by a discussion around freelance work, its advantages and disadvantages. Learners begin to translate sentences, thinking about different ways to translate and which would be the most suitable.	Learners are introduced to the concepts of foreignisation and domestication and encouraged to make their own choices. Learners are in groups of their own choosing. Learners have access to dictionaries.
2	To begin translation of a complete story from Spanish into English	Learners are provided with a letter from a translation company (Figure 2). They are shown the first pages of the story, which the teacher will read aloud, using voice and gesturing to convey meaning.	The translation company letter fulfills Gatsby benchmark 5 (Gatsby Charitable Foundation, 2014). Learners have access to dictionaries.
3	To translate a story from Spanish into English	Learners are shown the next pages of the story, again read aloud by the teacher. They use the pictures on the page to help their understanding.	Learners have access to dictionaries, with a glossary for any who are struggling with the task.
4	To translate a story from Spanish into English	Learners are introduced to the last pages of the story, with the teacher reading aloud.	Learners have access to dictionaries.
5	To complete, review and send a translation	Learners review their translations and hand them in to the teacher to be sent. When complete, learners begin to rehearse for the performance of their translations next lesson.	Learners have access to dictionaries.
6	To perform their translation and provide peer feedback	Learners perform their translation to the class, with some group members acting out the story and others narrating. Discussion follows on the difference between translations. Completion of the post-test trait motivation questionnaire	Trait motivation has been completed before, but requires another teacher explanation.

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Table 4.6

Lesson plan - half term two, lesson one

Lesson title: ¿Qué es un traductor? (What is a translator?)			
Learning Objective: To understand the nature of translation as a profession and as a practice, choosing different methods for different contexts			
Resources required: exercise books, Spanish-English dictionaries		Differentiation: Spanish-English dictionaries	
Activity	Learner action	Teacher action	Rationale / further information
Starter	Learners to translate four short sentences on the board containing Spanish names (Carlos, Santiago, Enrique and Isabel) and the name of the school they attend.	Teacher to ensure exercise books are distributed and take the register. When going through the translations, teacher gives a brief description of foreignisation and domestication, asking learners which they have chosen and encouraging thinking about both methods. Teacher to explain that both methods can be 'correct'.	Settling activity. Teacher to discuss the English translation of the names (Charles, James, Henry and Elizabeth) and ask if learners kept the original forms or not. Discussion on whether to translate the name of the school into the Spanish word for school, which learners had seen during Term one.
Activity one	A discussion which begins on which careers require languages, followed by focusing on freelancing. Learners note into their exercise books their thoughts on the advantages and disadvantages of freelance work.	Teacher facilitates discussion and encourages all learners to share some ideas.	Government guidance is to link the curriculum learning with careers, in accordance with Gatsby benchmark 4 (Gatsby Charitable Foundation, 2014).
Activity two	In groups, learners look at different sentences and think about how to translate them. They translate basic sentences, idioms, rhymes and words which do not have an English equivalent.	The teacher encourages learners to share different ideas for translating the same sentences, thinking creatively. Starting with simple, instructional sentences in which meaning is important, followed by rhymes in which either meaning or rhythm could be prioritised.	Using PowerPoint slides from the Stephen Spender Trust (stephen-spender.org)
Plenary	The starter sentences are re-displayed and learners think about how many ways they could translate these.	Encourage learners to reflect on what they have just learnt by re-translating the starter sentences in different ways.	

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Figure 4.2

Translation agency letter distributed to pupils in lesson two



Maison Blanche Book Publishers

24/02/2025

Dear pupils of [school name]

We at Maison Blanche Book Publishers are delighted that you have agreed to translate a poem from “Cuentos Bonitos para Quedarse Fritos” by Begoña Oro Cuchu for us! Thanks to your

translations, children in the UK will get to experience the magic and marvels of Spanish children’s poetry...

Translation sample

Please send us a sample of a translated poem by 02/04/2025. This is so we can talk together about the translation choices you’ve made, and make sure we agree.

Deadline

For our poetry book to come out in time for Christmas, we would need the final versions of the poems to be sent to us by 30/05/2025. Let us know if this deadline will be difficult to meet for you – we know you’re very busy!

Advance and Royalties

For this job, we are offering you the following advance:

1 pound per line for poems 35 lines or longer,

OR

35 pounds for each poem shorter than 35 lines

You will also be entitled to royalties. This means you will earn a percentage of the sales of your translated book. Here is what we are offering you:

1% of all sales up to 10,000 copies sold

1.5% of all sales upwards of 10,000 copies sold

We expect the anthology to cost 10 pounds. So you will earn 10p for each copy sold, in the first instance, and then 15p once we reach 10,000 copies. The royalties might seem low to you, but they are normal for translation! The Spanish author and illustrator will share 9% of all sales.

Please let us know if you agree to these conditions,

All the best, and looking forward to hearing from you,

Clementine

4.3.5 Intervention fidelity

As I was working at the school in which the intervention took place, there is a high degree of fidelity between the intervention as designed and the intervention as

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implemented. Intervention fidelity refers to the extent to which a pedagogical intervention is implemented as intended by the researcher. Establishing fidelity is important in classroom-based research, as variation in delivery can affect the validity of any observed outcomes. In the context of the present study, where teaching was carried out by a colleague, and where specific materials and procedures were used, it is necessary to outline how consistency of implementation was supported and monitored. Van Dijk, Gage & Lane (2020) defined fidelity into five dimensions, influenced by the earlier work of Dane & Schneider (1998). I will explain how this study conforms to these dimensions below.

Adherence concerns the degree to which each element of the intervention was implemented. All class intervention materials were used, and all designed instruments were used in data collection (trait motivation questionnaire and immediate post-lesson feedback). My position as researcher-practitioner was helpful in ensuring this dimension, as I could ensure the lesson materials were readily available in the school shared resource area for my colleague, and that they conformed to the requirements of the individual school - for example, a 'Learning Intention' slide was needed at the beginning of each PowerPoint, which explained the content of the lesson and how it fit into the scheme of learning. As I did not teach the intervention myself, I spoke with my teaching colleague daily, discussing the intervention group classes to ensure a high degree of fidelity.

Dosage relates to the units of time and frequency. Each class had the same number of intervention lessons, and each class completed the trait motivation questionnaire twice. The frequency of lessons was the same (one lesson per week), and the intervention as a whole lasted twelve weeks.

Quality describes how well an aspect or combination of aspects are delivered. I designed the intervention materials and these were used in all intervention classes. A pilot study was conducted and materials were adapted based upon this. All classes, both control and intervention, were taught by the same teacher, who had already conducted the pilot and understood the nature of the study.

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Differentiation has three different aspects. Firstly, how the content or delivery differs from a second intervention. This chapter explains the study design, and the lesson materials are included in the appendices. Therefore, a second intervention could be done following the same conditions. Secondly, how the delivery of the intervention is different to the control groups. The teacher of all groups was the same, but the lesson materials were completely different. Thirdly, a measure of the adaptations provided to maximise the effect on student outcomes. Scaffolding for less able students was provided - for the first task, in the form of sentence builders, and in the second task, as glossaries.

Finally, *responsiveness* indicates students' reaction to the intervention. This was measured by the trait motivation questionnaire given pre and post intervention, and by the immediate post-lesson feedback.

4.4 Data collection instruments

This section describes the instruments used in data collection, including the trait motivation questionnaire, focus group schedule and immediate post-lesson feedback.

4.4.1 The questionnaire

4.4.1.1 Design and rationale

There are various different motivational theories of LL which are briefly discussed in Chapter 3, Section 3.1. SDT has been described as a suitable method to measure LL motivation in the specific context of English secondary schools, due to its focus on learning and how it feels to engage with particular tasks, rather than a focus on the target language community (Parrish & Vernon, 2022). It is both empirically robust and philosophically deep, having contributed aspects of positive psychology to language education (Oga-Baldwin et al 2022).

As can be seen in Fig 3.1, there is a continuum of motivational orientations within SDT - amotivation, external, introjected and identified regulation and intrinsic motivation in relation to knowledge, accomplishment and stimulation. These are explained in Chapter 3, Section 3.1.1. The justification for the use of SDT to examine motivation in this study is also given in the same section.

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The Language Learning Orientations Scale - Intrinsic Motivation, Extrinsic Motivation, and Amotivation (LLOS IEA) was created by Noels et al (2000). It is a questionnaire used with university students, and contains a seven-point Likert scale, with a high score indicating strong agreement with each item. The seven-point Likert scale has been found to be the most effective in terms of reliability and validity coefficients (Kusmaryono et al, 2022). Each motivational orientation was represented by three items and the items for each orientation were randomly ordered. The LLOS IEA has been used in similar research (Ma, 2019; Leeming & Harris, 2022a) and has been successfully adapted for younger L2 learners (Ardasheva, Tong & Tretter, 2011), with the Likert scale aiding ease of response. Ma's 2019 adaptation, the Trait Motivation Questionnaire, was used in this study (Appendix A). The suitability of this structure for the present sample was subsequently examined through exploratory factor analysis in the pilot study, which indicated that the complete range of motivational distinctions were not fully supported empirically within the present sample (see Section 7.5.1). A question was added on inclination to continue with MFL study at GCSE level to provide data for Research Question 1.2. The pilot study provided evidence that the questions were understood by the participants, although it did need a substantial amount of lesson time to explain the Likert scale and the individual questions. Examples were modelled to ensure understanding, and a question on inclination to pursue the subject at GCSE level was added to provide data for RQ1.2. Pre- and post-intervention questionnaire data were analysed to enable comparison of motivational levels before and after the intervention.

4.4.1.2 Administration of questionnaire

The pre-test questionnaire was completed at the beginning of the first lesson of term. The post-test questionnaire was completed at the beginning of the penultimate lesson of term, the lesson in which the intervention was completed. Although both were done at the beginning of the lesson in the interest of continuity, the time of day varied according to the school timetable, which may have impacted the results, as students' energy can fluctuate during the school day. The questionnaire was marked on the reverse with the number of the pupil in the register and distributed onto desks before the pupils entered the classroom, which aided in matching the pre- and post-questionnaire data. See Section 6, this chapter, for details of data storage. Once

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completed, the questionnaire data was coded with the gender of each participant, with all appropriate measures taken to ensure anonymity (Clark, 2006).

In total the first questionnaire took 20 minutes to complete, as the Likert scale was explained with a practice question before each question was talked through individually. The second questionnaire took approximately 15 minutes as the participants needed reminding of the procedure but in less detail. This explanation was given in the pilot and both myself and my teaching colleague felt this time could not be reduced due to the participants' age.

4.4.2 Focus groups

The inclusion of focus groups in data collection turned the study into a mixed-method approach, which avoided the limitations of Likert scale responses in children (Mellor & Moore, 2014).

Inevitably, there was a degree of unequal relationship to the focus groups (Jong & Jung, 2015) due to the role of the interviewer as an Assistant Headteacher in the school. However, for the interviews to be in line with national child protection policy, the interviewer had to have advanced DBS clearance. I believe this was mitigated as much as possible due to their role as a non-teaching member of staff, and due to the absence of myself and the class teacher in the interviews, which may have influenced responses. The position of the interviewer may also have helped the group dynamic, stopping the stronger personalities from dominating the conversation. There is always a concern that more timid participants will be reluctant to share their views, however, the nature of the interview in small groups meant that participants could build on each other's answers, creating a more collaborative environment (Jong & Jung, 2015). The interviews were conducted with the chairs in a circular layout, so that the interviewer could elicit a response from every participant in turn for each question.

4.4.2.1 Selection and grouping

Six pupils from each group were chosen, as research indicates an ideal group size for focus questioning is six to eight (Bloor et al, 2001). I selected pupils from each group using data from the class registers. I did this without input from the class teacher so I would not be influenced by pre-existing ideas about their motivation levels. Krueger et

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al (2001) advise including participants with the characteristics, experience or knowledge required to produce rich information. With this in mind, I attempted to create a group which contained a variety of characteristics. The criteria for the focus group was as follows -

Three male and three female participants.

The equal split of male and female participants was to aid data collection for RQ 3.2. Non-binary pupils were invited to participate as well, taking the total number of some groups to seven.

One Pupil Premium (PP) participant of each gender.

As the research shows fewer economically disadvantaged pupils opt for GCSE MFL (Tinsley & Han. 2012; Board & Tinsley, 2014, Lanvers, 2017b & 2018), I ensured one male and one female member of each group was classed as PP. The percentage of PP pupils in the school was 29.3%, so this also ensured a fair representation of the student body. Data from the class registers enabled me to identify these pupils.

One pupil identified as having Special Educational Needs (SEN)

I thought it important to include the perspective of MFL from those who may find it the most challenging. This is due to research which suggests that the perceived difficulty of MFL is the main reason for discontinuing study at GCSE (Graham, Macfadyen & Richards, 2012).

One speaker of English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Given that the spread of Global English can affect some monolingual native English speakers' attitudes towards MFL (Lanvers & Chambers, 2019; Lanvers, 2017a), I valued the opinion of EAL students, who were in the minority of the student body.

4.4.2.2 Focus group schedule

The questions can be seen in Appendix C. The first question asked the participants what they were doing in Spanish right now. The idea behind this question was to introduce the participants gently to the discussion of Spanish, to get them thinking about their last few lessons and to gain comfort in the situation before being asked for opinions. Opening questions such as these are recommended by Krueger et al (2001). Most of the following questions mirrored those in the questionnaire, in order to give the participants room to explain their feelings without the constraints of a Likert scale. They were asked what they enjoyed about lessons to ascertain if any particular element of the intervention had been deemed successful.

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Questions were added to the intervention focus groups to collect data for RQ 2.2 and 3.2. These asked for comparisons between the interventions so that opinions could be provided on which intervention participants preferred and reasons for enjoying or not enjoying these lessons.

The final question asked if there was anything more the participants would like to say about learning Spanish. This question aimed to ensure that they had had every opportunity to discuss their feelings towards the subject. Time constraints of the interviewer meant that the interview followed a more structured format, discussed further below. However, the addition of the final question made the overall format a semi-structured one. It could be argued that the questions mirroring those of the questionnaire was a limitation in data collection, as they were closed questions.

4.4.2.3 Implementation of focus group schedule

In the pursuit of a more complete picture of pupil motivation, focus group questioning was conducted by a teacher with no direct involvement in MFL teaching (an Assistant Headteacher). This member of staff was known to pupils, although in a non-teaching capacity. I provided them with a list of pupils according to the criteria given above. A substitute name was given for each selected pupil in case of absence, to ensure the criteria of the group remained the same. This is an example of purposive sampling, but it was still representative of the year group in terms of gender, socio-economic and SEN status, due to the percentages of these demographics in the school.

Although the questioning could be classified as semi-structured in the sense that participants could respond to each other and were asked for any further thoughts at the end, it would be better classified as structured, as I gave the interviewer the list of questions based on the questionnaire. Each focus group was a communicative event which differed from the last, due to the individual responses of the participants.

The focus groups were taken during Spanish class time in the first lesson of the term following the interventions. Initially, this was planned to be the last lesson of term (immediately following the intervention) but became impossible due to other commitments of the Assistant Headteacher. The questioning was done in his office, which contained a large table and chairs. Pupils were made aware they would be

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recorded and were given the option to withdraw, which none took. The recording was done on a mobile phone placed face down on the table, in the hope that pupils would not feel too intimidated by recording equipment. A group from each teaching class was questioned and each session lasted between seven and ten minutes. I did not ask the interviewer to take notes, so as to minimise their workload in relation to the task. This would have been an issue had the recording failed (Opdenakker, 2006), although fortunately this was not the case.

4.4.3 Immediate post lesson feedback

A final data type comes in the form of simplified immediate post-lesson feedback. At the end of each intervention lesson, participants were asked to indicate on a five-point Likert scale how much they had enjoyed the lesson. This was done anonymously by distributing strips of paper with emoji faces for pupils to circle the one which best fit their perception (Appendix B). These were collected face down into an envelope so the teacher did not see which image pupils had selected. This data was used to answer RQ 2.1, 2.2 and 3.1. Due to the anonymised method of distribution and collection, this data was not attributable to gender.

The use of emojis with neurotypical learners has been identified as a potential issue (Hand et al, 2022; Peuravaara, 2021) due to their different interpretations of these images. However, all students at the school were familiar with the five specific emojis used in the Likert scale, as they were used across the school for differentiation purposes. It has also been shown that the use of visual aids such as emojis increase comprehension and engagement when collecting Likert scale data with children (Catalán-Gregori, 2025).

4.5 Methodological and theoretical considerations

4.5.1 Theoretical foundations of the study design

The aim of this research is to increase learner motivation with a task-based approach to language teaching. It is concerned with answering the real-world problem of how to increase MFL uptake at GCSE in the UK (discussed further in Chapter 1), using tasks designed to satisfy, as much as practicable, learners' BPNs. There are two research paradigms which the study could fall into. It could be classified as interpretivist, as the

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research attempts to capture different perspectives on language learning and compare individual learner beliefs before and after the intervention (Shannon-Baker, 2016). It also gives the participants the space to explain their opinions in their own words with focus group questioning. However, my approach to solving this problem is based on the 'pragmatic paradigm' (Cresswell, 2003), in which the problem is most important, and all approaches are used to understand it. This is why I have used a mixed method design of qualitative and quantitative analysis to best answer the RQs. The mixed-method approach increases validity, and has been used in similar research by Bailey (2017), Bachtiar (2022) and Huang & Hew (2017). This study could, therefore, be described as multi-paradigmatic, due to this similarity to both Interpretivism and Pragmatism (Clemente et al, 2020).

Guba and Lincoln (1994) classify research into three paradigms; methodological, ontological and epistemological. The use of the mixed-methods approach to data collection concerns the methodological aspect of the research. The ontological aspect looks pragmatically at the problem and analyses an approach to solve it, in this case, the intervention. What I aimed to discover was learners' motivation and if/how it could be affected by this intervention. The epistemological aspect deals with the researcher's values on the process and results. I elicited student data on motivation both via questionnaire (quantitative data) and open response focus groups (qualitative data).

Quantitative data was collected by pre and post questionnaire and immediate post-lesson feedback, and qualitative via focus group sessions. Questionnaires were given pre-test to ensure a baseline of motivation from which to assess any changes. The post-test questionnaire was identical. Focus groups were conducted to ascertain how the pupils felt about their motivation in their own words, outside the constraints of the questionnaire wording and Likert scale responses. The aim of the focus groups was to increase our epistemological understanding of learners' individual beliefs and motivations behind MFL study.

The immediate post-lesson feedback added a spontaneous, emotion-based response. The use of such data, analysed with percentage favourable rating or interpolated median, is recommended by Zumrawi & Macfadyen (2023).

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As I was researching TBLT, I had several ideas of ways in which I could incorporate the principles into my teaching practice to best affect motivation. I had used translation resources from the Stephen Spender Trust before, and found that pupils enjoyed them. I was inspired by similar translation workshops such as Beauvais & Ryland (2021). However, since I was given a term for the intervention, which is split into two by a half-term break, I decided to try two different projects and collect data on which participants preferred. I wanted to include a task which involved real-world communication with the target language community and incorporated the participants' interest (pets are always a popular subject to teach). I believe this approach contributes to making the research more applicable to real life, as teachers or future researchers may choose to recreate the task which has the more significant impact on motivation, or the task which is more easily incorporated into their curriculum.

4.5.2 ISLA intervention studies in UK secondary contexts

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) recommends, when planning an intervention, to examine the fit and feasibility in the school context (EEF, 2019). Feasibility in this case meant limiting the intervention to one term (12 weeks) in which the learners had 18 hours of contact time. One term was chosen as the length of this study due to timetabling constraints in the participating school, and the need to prepare students for standardised tests. The possibility of changing LL motivation through relatively small-scale classroom intervention is demonstrated by Molway & Mutton (2020), in a staggered five-lesson growth mindset intervention in Year 9 German pupils. Data suggested an increased desire to continue to GCSE study. Lanvers (2019 & 2020) has also successfully impacted UK LL motivation in interventions which lasted for 6 sessions and two weeks, respectively. Although not strictly a motivational study, Thompson & Mutton (2023) were able to improve attitudes to speaking German in a selective, all-boys UK secondary school with 12 hours of explicit strategy-based instruction, in both Year 7 and Year 10 students.

4.5.3 Implementation challenges in educational intervention research

Shadish et al (2002), building on earlier research by Campbell et al (1963) and Cook & Campbell (1979) listed the factors which can threaten internal and external validity. I have referenced these below, in Tables 4.7 and 4.8, with the measures I was able to take, where possible, to mitigate these threats.

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Internal validity may be affected by the factors listed and explained in Table 4.7, below.

Table 4.7

Factors which can threaten internal validity

Factor	Explanation	Mitigation
History	The events which occur between the pre- and post-test	The presence of a control group helps to minimise this variable
Maturation	The maturing of the participants over time	The study took place over 12 weeks instead of a full academic year, or the entirety of Key Stage 3 (three academic years), which minimised this factor as much as possible
Testing	The effect of taking the pre-test on the outcome of the post-test	The potential for a pre-test effect was acknowledged; however, this was mitigated through the time interval between administrations, consistent testing procedures, and the absence of access to previous responses.
Instrumentation	Changes to the instruments or observer which can provoke a change in outcome	The instruments did not change during the study, and I did not interact with or observe the participants directly in the classroom
Statistical regression	The threat of regression towards the mean (RTM) is caused by the selection of participants with extreme pre-test scores, who make smaller gains in post-test scores	Participants were not selected according to pre-test scores, although some RTM may be present
Selection of participants	This carries a threat of researcher bias in selection of comparison groups.	To increase the internal validity, I recruited as many participants as possible, with a participation rate of 95%. I have also avoided vague or complex RQs
Attrition	The loss of participants during the study	This was unavoidable, although the relatively short length of the study meant that it was minimal. One pupil left the school midway through the intervention and another moved groups from an intervention group into a control group. Data from both was discarded as it was incomplete
Social interaction	The control group feeling resentful of the intervention group, or vice-versa	When pupils in the control group asked about the difference in lesson content, it was explained to them that they would cover the same materials in the last term of the academic year, once the study was complete. However, this meant that a delayed post-test was not possible
John Henry / Hawthorne effect	The observer effect leading participants to change their behavior	This may have affected the results

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Regarding the selection of participants, my decision to conduct the study in the school I worked at means that the sample can be classed as a non-probability sample. It can be further categorised as convenience sampling, as I announced the study to my selected participants and gave the option of withdrawing consent. This means my sample selection was less objective than if I had used a probability technique to assign participants, and it could contain motivation bias. It also makes it impossible to apply the results of the study to the general population, as one cannot generalise empirical association or causation in a non-probability based study (Stratton, 2021). The factors which can jeopardise external validity are displayed in Table 4.8, below.

Table 4.8

Factors which can threaten external validity

Factor	Explanation	Mitigation
Reactive / interaction effect of testing	The existence of the pre-test affecting the participants' response to the post-test.	As mentioned in Table 4.1, participants completed the trait motivation questionnaire pre-test and post-test. There was no possibility of mitigating this, as both responses were required for data analysis.
Reactive effects of experimental arrangements	The difficulty in generalising the findings to a non-research setting.	I hope that by explaining the methodology and providing the resources that the intervention is replicable in a standard classroom context
Sampling bias	The participants not being representative of the population	Although the RQs relate to UK secondary learners of MFL, the participants all attended the same school, and lived in the same geographical region of the UK. There was, however, a mix of pupil premium, SEN and EAL learners, typical of most UK state school classrooms

Additionally, the pragmatic paradigm used in this research has been criticised for being a 'paradigm of convenience' which takes a consequentialist view of the truth (stating something is true because it works), and of the research (the risk of rejecting findings which do not meet the desired consequences, or of unexpected but valid results being

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rejected as a failure of the methodology), (Hampson & McKinley, 2023). Despite this, Brierley (2017) defends the pragmatic paradigm in psychological and behavioural research.

4.6 Ethics

Ethical approval was obtained from the University of York before the study commenced. Permission was gained from the pupils who participated in the study (Appendix D) and the headteacher of the school (Appendix E). Research was explained to the participants and consent forms were provided and signed in lesson one. Parents were notified of the study taking place and were given the option of withdrawing consent for their child's data to be used, which one parent acted on (Appendix F). Participants, parents and the Headteacher were all given contact details of the researcher and supervisor. Two pupils did not consent, and no data was gathered from these.

In addition to institutional ethical approval, this study engaged with broader ethical considerations associated with classroom-based and insider research. As previously discussed, the researcher was a teacher at the participating school, so particular attention was paid to issues of power imbalance and the voluntary nature of participation (Mercer, 2007). Students were clearly informed that participation was optional and that their responses would not affect their academic standing, in line with established ethical guidance (British Educational Research Association, 2018).

The questionnaire was marked on the reverse with the number of the pupil in the register and distributed onto desks before the pupils entered the classroom, which aided in matching the pre- and post-questionnaire data. The names of participants which corresponded to each number were kept in a laptop which was locked via password. Once the post-data questionnaire was completed and the values entered, the document containing names was permanently deleted. The paper copies of questionnaires were kept in a locked office in the school. Once completed, data was entered into the laptop within 24 hours and the questionnaires were shredded. These steps ensured anonymity as defined by Clark (2006), as taking appropriate measures to protect the identity of the research participants.

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In order for there to be no effect on the education provided to either the intervention or control group, the control groups completed the intervention work in the final term of Year 7, when this study had concluded. This meant all pupils across the year group studied the same material across the year. The ethics described here apply to both the pilot and main study.

In this chapter I have explained my position as a researcher-practitioner and the RQs which guided the study. I have illustrated the study design and rationale, so that the research may be replicated in the future. The next section will present the results of the pilot.

4.7 Pilot study

This section explains the pilot study, the participants and data collection, and the changes made to the final study once the pilot was complete.

4.7.1 Participants

The pilot study was carried out in the same school with the same year group one academic year before the final study. Participants were in five teaching groups, assigned by the school to include a mixture of genders, prior attainment data and levels of SEN. As with the final study, three groups were assigned the intervention tasks and the remaining two were control groups covering 'business as usual' materials (the NCELP curriculum). The control groups studied the intervention materials once the pilot had concluded in the summer term. Four pupils refused consent, and were not part of any data collection. There were 44 participants in total across two control groups and 66 participants in total across the intervention groups. Due to low numbers compromising anonymity, no results on non-binary participants are reported.

4.7.2 Lesson materials

The NCELP materials used in the final study were used in the pilot study as control group teaching materials. These were the standard, 'business-as-usual' teaching materials of the school.

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Chapter 3, Section 2.7 explains the principles, definitions and limitations of the TBLT-inspired intervention material. The difficulties of implementing a TBLT intervention in its pure form are discussed, and the suggestion of Bygate (2020) to use a pragmatic approach in adapting TBLT for the needs and priorities of each classroom. For example, Ellis (2017a) concedes that it can be used alongside traditional teaching, and Littlewood (2007) suggests adapting to TSLT (Task-Supported Language Teaching). The materials I designed are described below, and although they are inspired by TBLT, they could not be classified as 'purely' TBLT. Chapter 3 Section 3.1.1 explains SDT, and Table 3.1 in this section displays the similarities between aspects of TBLT and SDT. This table indicates the TBLT elements I have attempted to include in the teaching materials to positively affect learner motivation, as measured through SDT. The materials were designed with satisfaction of the BPNs in mind.

For the first intervention, I wrote several emails to animal shelters in Spain asking for their participation. One in Madrid graciously agreed to reply to emails. I then designed a booklet of activities with PowerPoints for each lesson, in which the participants would learn aspects of the email. Participants began with introducing themselves and giving details on their homes and families, then described the animal they had chosen with their reasons why. Finally, they described how responsible they were and why the shelter should entrust them with the animal. Each lesson concentrated on a different section of the email, and sentence builders were used to help the participants write. Sentence builders are a commonly-used tool for supporting writing or speaking (Conti, 2020a) - for more information on these, see Chapter 3 Section 2.6. In the middle of the intervention, we spent time in the computer room so they could browse the shelter website and choose an animal.

The second intervention was a translation project. The theory behind this is explained in Chapter 3, Section 4.2.4, including links to motivation. I included materials from the Stephen Spender Trust website (stephen-spender.org), which introduced the topic of translation and gave sample texts with glossaries. I used my own story from a compilation for young children (the same story used in the final study) and made a glossary which conformed with the style of material on the website. The materials encouraged the pupils to look up each individual word using the glossaries and to

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come up with a literal translation. They were then encouraged to be more creative with the text and write a refined translation which sounded natural in English.

The school followed statutory guidance on careers (Gatsby Charitable Foundation, 2014). This meant that we were obliged to provide evidence on inspection of fulfilling the “Gatsby benchmarks” of good career guidance. As the second intervention focused on a piece of translation, I was able to evidence benchmark four, linking curriculum learning to careers. I did this by introducing translation as a career and the nature of freelance work. I simulated the concept of receiving an offer of work with a proposed fee and deadline by providing the participants with a letter from a fictional translation company.

4.7.3 Reliability

To assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire data used to address RQ1, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated for each theoretically defined motivational construct using SPSS. Analyses were conducted separately for the control group ($n = 44$) and the intervention group ($n = 66$). Results are as follows –

Control group Cronbach's alpha per construct

The Cronbach's alpha scores were between .91 and .99, indicating a high degree of reliability. Amotivation - $\alpha = .99$, External regulation - $\alpha = .91$, Introjected regulation - $\alpha = .97$, Identified regulation - $\alpha = .95$, Intrinsic Motivation (knowledge) - $\alpha = .99$, Intrinsic Motivation (accomplishment) - $\alpha = .97$, Intrinsic Motivation (stimulation) - $\alpha = .97$ and Inclination to continue MFL study at GCSE - $\alpha = .97$.

Intervention group Cronbach's alpha per construct

The Cronbach's alpha scores were between .9 and .97, indicating a high degree of reliability. Amotivation - $\alpha = .93$, External regulation - $\alpha = .95$, Introjected regulation - $\alpha = .9$, Identified regulation - $\alpha = .97$, Intrinsic Motivation (knowledge) - $\alpha = .96$, Intrinsic Motivation (accomplishment) - $\alpha = .96$, Intrinsic Motivation (stimulation) - $\alpha = .97$ and Inclination to continue MFL study at GCSE - $\alpha = .94$.

While these results indicate strong internal consistency within each set of items, internal reliability does not confirm the distinctiveness of the underlying constructs.

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The dimensional structure of the questionnaire was therefore further examined through exploratory factor analysis (see Section 7.5.1).

4.7.4 Data collection

Questionnaire data collection in the pilot study was identical to that described in Section 4.1.2 of this chapter.

Post-lesson feedback was collected in the first five lessons of both control and intervention lessons. However, these were not distributed in the following five lessons due to error. Therefore, the results of the post-lesson reporting of lesson enjoyment are incomplete.

Focus group questioning was done on the intervention groups but not on control groups due to timetabling problems with the participating member of staff, again, this data was incomplete.

4.7.5 Pilot Results

4.7.5.1 Exploratory factor analysis

An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted on the pre-intervention questionnaire data to examine whether the items grouped according to the theoretically defined motivational orientations. Principal axis factoring with oblimin rotation was employed, as correlations between motivational constructs were assumed.

The suitability of the data for factor analysis was confirmed. Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($\chi^2(231) = 1396$, $p < .001$), indicating that the correlation matrix was not an identity matrix. The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was high (KMO = .898), exceeding the recommended threshold of .60.

The analysis yielded a three-factor solution. The first factor accounted for the majority of variance and included items originally intended to measure intrinsic motivation (knowledge, accomplishment, and stimulation) as well as identified regulation, suggesting a broader underlying orientation of autonomous motivation.

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The second factor consisted of items corresponding to amotivation, which formed a distinct and coherent factor.

The third factor comprised items associated with external and introjected regulation, indicating a controlled form of motivation.

Overall, the results did not support the distinction between the multiple subtypes proposed in the original scale. Instead, the findings suggest that motivation in this sample is more appropriately represented by three broader dimensions: autonomous motivation, controlled motivation, and amotivation. When empirical data suggests broader factors than theorised subscales, it is important to discuss these transparently and interpret results with caution (Borgstede, 2019), as done in this study.

These findings suggest that learners at this stage may not clearly differentiate between specific subtypes of motivation, particularly within intrinsic motivation, where knowledge, accomplishment, and stimulation appeared to form a single construct. While the original scale has demonstrated clear differentiation between motivational subtypes in older learner populations (Noels et al., 2000), the factor analysis in this study is consistent with previous research indicating that younger learners tend to experience motivation in more global terms, such as Ryan & Deci (2000), who suggest that internalisation develops over time, and Dörnyei (2005) and Lamb (2017), who argue that motivation is less clearly defined in younger learners due to its developmental nature.

4.7.5.2 Wilcoxon Signed Rank test results

RQ1 How does a TBLT inspired intervention at Year 7 in an English secondary school influence learner motivation?

I intended to run a paired sample t test to review data as it compares two measurements taken from the same individual. However, once Royston, Henze-Zirkler, Mardia Skewness and Mardia Kurtosis multivariate normality tests were conducted, the data was revealed to be not normally distributed. The below results are the non-parametric alternative - the Wilcoxon Signed Rank test. The analyses reported in this section are based on the theoretically defined motivational subscales. However, as discussed in Section 4.7.5.1, exploratory factor analysis of the pilot data suggested

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a more consolidated factor structure in this sample. The results presented here should therefore be interpreted with this in mind.

4.7.5.3 Results for the control group See Appendix G for tables

I expected that there would be no significant change from pre-test to post-test in motivation of the control group.

The level of amotivation increased from pre-to post-test - pre test = (M = 9.32, SD = 5.92), post-test = (M = 9.89, SD = 6.27) $z = -2.59$, $p = .010$, which was not as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.49$, indicating a small effect.

There was no significant difference between the level of external regulation pre-test (M = 11.89, SD = 4.38) and post-test (M = 11.73, SD = 3.8) $z = -1.27$, $p = .206$, as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.07$, indicating a negligible effect.

The level of introjected regulation decreased from pre- to post-test - pre test = (M = 8.73, SD = 4.05) post-test = (M = 7.79, SD = 3.79) $z = -2.9$, $p = .004$, not as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.74$, indicating a medium effect.

There was no significant difference in the level of identified regulation pre-test = (M = 12.68, SD = 4.19), and post-test = (M = 11.77, SD = 4.4) $z = -1.62$, $p = .105$, as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = .49$, indicating a small effect.

The level of intrinsic motivation in relation to knowledge decreased from pre- to post-test - pre-test (M = 12.7, SD = 5.45) and post-test (M = 12.27, SD = 5.18) $z = -1.98$, $p = .047$, not as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = .39$, indicating a small effect.

There was no significant difference in the level of intrinsic motivation in relation to accomplishment pre-test (M = 12.77, SD = 5.23) and post-test (M = 12.3, SD = 4.9) $z = -.99$, $p = .321$, as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = .28$, indicating a small effect.

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There was no significant difference in the level of intrinsic motivation in relation to stimulation pre-test ($M = 11.61$, $SD = 5.1$) and post-test ($M = 11.52$, $SD = 4.92$) $z = -.84$, $p = .403$, as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = .06$, indicating a negligible effect.

There was no significant difference in the level of inclination to continue Spanish at GCSE from pre- to post-test - pre-test ($M = 3.07$, $SD = 2.04$), post-test ($M = 2.86$, $SD = 1.95$) $z = -1.51$, $p = .132$, as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = .3$, indicating a small effect.

The results above indicate some evidence of decline but mostly no change, as expected.

4.7.5.4 Results for the intervention group See Appendix H for tables.

I expected that the level of amotivation would decrease, and that the levels of motivation in other areas would increase.

The level of amotivation decreased from pre-test to post-test - pre-test ($M = 9.17$, $SD = 5.4$), post-test ($M = 7.55$, $SD = 5.07$) $z = -4.56$, $p = <.001$, as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = .62$, indicating a medium effect.

The level of external regulation increased from pre-test to post-test - pre-test ($M = 11.73$, $SD = 5.01$), post-test ($M = 13.38$, $SD = 4.69$) $z = -4.96$, $p = <.001$, as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.77$, indicating a medium effect.

The level of introjected regulation increased from pre-test to post-test - pre-test ($M = 9.64$, $SD = 4.28$), post-test ($M = 11.17$, $SD = 4.15$) $z = -4.34$, $p = <.001$, as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.6$, indicating a medium effect.

The level of identified regulation increased from pre-test to post-test - pre-test ($M = 11.44$, $SD = 5.37$), post-test ($M = 12.76$, $SD = 4.97$) $z = -5.0$, $p = <.001$, as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.71$, indicating a medium effect.

The level of intrinsic motivation in relation to knowledge increased from pre-test to post-test - pre-test ($M = 11.58$, $SD = 5.06$), post-test ($M = 13.2$, $SD = 4.7$) $z = -5.52$, p

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= <.001, as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.87$, indicating a large effect.

The level of intrinsic motivation in relation to accomplishment increased from pre-test to post-test - pre-test ($M = 12.12$, $SD = 5.13$), post-test ($M = 13.64$, $SD = 4.82$) $z = -5.16$, $p = <.001$, as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.74$, indicating a medium effect.

The level of intrinsic motivation in relation to stimulation increased from pre-test to post-test - pre-test ($M = 10.52$, $SD = 5.35$), post-test ($M = 11.83$, $SD = 5.18$) $z = -4.87$, $p = <.001$, as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.76$, indicating a medium effect.

The level of inclination to continue Spanish at GCSE increased from pre-test to post-test - pre-test ($M = 3.21$, $SD = 2.23$), post-test ($M = 3.95$, $SD = 2.04$) $z = -4.7$, $p = <.001$, as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.71$, indicating a medium effect.

The above results indicate a decrease in amotivation and an increase in all other motivational orientations, as expected. However, in light of the exploratory factor analysis conducted on the pilot data, these findings should be interpreted with caution. The factor analysis indicated that the distinction between multiple motivational subtypes, particularly within intrinsic motivation, was not clearly supported in this sample. Instead, motivation appeared to cluster into broader dimensions. As such, changes observed across individual subscales may reflect shifts in more general motivational orientations rather than discrete subtypes.

4.7.5.5 Results concerning gender

RQ3.1 Are there any gender differences in respect of motivation for MFL and continuation intentions?

Due to the data failing the normality tests, I ran a Mann-Whitney U, the non-parametric equivalent to an independent samples t test, with SPSS. I compared male and female data pre- and post-intervention, with both control and intervention groups. Non binary syntax was not included due to low numbers. There were 23 male participants and 36

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female participants in the intervention groups, and 20 male and 23 female participants in the control groups.

I expected a higher level of motivation among female participants in the pre-test questionnaires, and no significant difference between genders in the post-test results of the intervention groups. As with the previous analyses, these comparisons are based on theoretically defined subscales and should be interpreted with consideration of the identified factor structure in Section 4.7.5.1.

4.7.5.6 Control group

Pre-questionnaire results see Appendix I for tables

There was no significant difference in amotivation between males ($M = 9.25$, $SD = 5.2$) and females ($M = 9.65$, $SD = 6.57$) $z = -.07$, $p = .941$, not as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.07$, indicating a negligible effect.

There was no significant difference in external regulation between males ($M = 11.9$, $SD = 4.61$) and females ($M = 11.83$, $SD = 4.38$) $z = .01$, $p = .990$, not as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = .02$, indicating a negligible effect.

There was no significant difference in introjected regulation between males ($M = 9$, $SD = 4.5$) and females ($M = 8.48$, $SD = 3.8$) $z = .24$, $p = .807$, not as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = .13$, indicating a negligible effect.

There was no significant difference in identified regulation between males ($M = 12.65$, $SD = 4.07$) and females ($M = 12.57$, $SD = 4.4$) $z = -.012$, $p = .990$, not as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = .02$, indicating a negligible effect.

There was no significant difference in intrinsic motivation (knowledge) between males ($M = 12.5$, $SD = 5.24$) and females ($M = 12.78$, $SD = 5.85$) $z = -.09$, $p = .932$, not as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.05$, indicating a negligible effect.

There was no significant difference in intrinsic motivation (achievement) between males ($M = 12.8$, $SD = 5.4$) and females ($M = 12.7$, $SD = 5.32$) $z = -.2$, $p = .85$, not as

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expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = .02$, indicating a negligible effect.

There was no significant difference in intrinsic motivation (stimulation) between males ($M = 12.6$, $SD = 5.19$) and females ($M = 10.7$, $SD = 5.08$) $z = -1.25$, $p = .211$, not as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = .37$, indicating a small effect.

There was no significant difference in intention for GCSE study between males ($M = 2.6$, $SD = 1.64$) and females ($M = 3.4$, $SD = 2.25$) $z = -1.2$, $p = .231$, not as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.42$, indicating a small effect.

These results are overall against expectation and current literature.

Post questionnaire results see Appendix J for tables

There was no significant difference in amotivation between males ($M = 9.85$, $SD = 5.58$) and females ($M = 10.22$, $SD = 6.9$) $z = .00$, $p = 1.000$, not as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.06$, indicating a negligible effect.

There was no significant difference in external regulation between males ($M = 11.45$, $SD = 3.8$) and females ($M = 11.96$, $SD = 3.95$) $z = -.37$, $p = .713$, not as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.13$, indicating a negligible effect.

There was no significant difference in introjected regulation between males ($M = 7.9$, $SD = 4$) and females ($M = 7.7$, $SD = 3.77$) $z = .18$, $p = .854$, not as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = .05$, indicating a negligible effect.

There was no significant difference in identified regulation between males ($M = 12$, $SD = 4.4$) and females ($M = 11.43$, $SD = 4.52$) $z = -.43$, $p = .669$, not as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = .13$, indicating a negligible effect.

There was no significant difference in intrinsic motivation (knowledge) between males ($M = 12$, $SD = 5.12$) and females ($M = 12.35$, $SD = 5.39$) $z = -.24$, $p = .807$, not as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.07$, indicating a negligible effect.

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There was no significant difference in intrinsic motivation (achievement) between males ($M = 12.4$, $SD = 5.04$) and females ($M = 12.17$, $SD = 4.97$) $z = -.56$, $p = .574$, not as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = .05$, indicating a negligible effect.

There was no significant difference in intrinsic motivation (stimulation) between males ($M = 12.5$, $SD = 5.03$) and females ($M = 10.6$, $SD = 4.85$) $z = -1.25$, $p = .213$, not as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = .38$, indicating a small effect.

There was no significant difference in intention for GCSE study between males ($M = 2.3$, $SD = 1.42$) and females ($M = 3.17$, $SD = 2.12$) $z = -1.26$, $p = .207$, not as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.48$, indicating a small effect.

The above results indicate no change in motivation between pre- and post-test, which is as expected. However, the similarity between male and female participants' level of motivation was not as expected.

4.7.5.7 Intervention group

Pre-questionnaire results see Appendix K for tables

There was no significant difference in amotivation between males ($M = 8.65$, $SD = 5.18$) and females ($M = 9.11$, $SD = 5.56$) $z = -.21$, $p = .832$, not as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.08$, indicating a negligible effect.

There was no significant difference in external regulation between males ($M = 11.30$, $SD = 5.1$) and females ($M = 11.83$, $SD = 5.29$) $z = -.49$, $p = .623$, not as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.1$, indicating a negligible effect.

There was no significant difference in introjected regulation between males ($M = 9.65$, $SD = 4.55$) and females ($M = 9.56$, $SD = 4.42$) $z = -.27$, $p = .785$, not as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = .02$, indicating a negligible effect.

There was no significant difference in identified regulation between males ($M = 11.30$, $SD = 5.65$) and females ($M = 12.08$, $SD = 5.26$) $z = -.4$, $p = .685$, not as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.14$, indicating a negligible effect.

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There was no significant difference in intrinsic motivation (knowledge) between males ($M = 11.57$, $SD = 4.61$) and females ($M = 11.67$, $SD = 5.63$) $z = .02$, $p = .988$, not as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.02$, indicating a negligible effect.

There was no significant difference in intrinsic motivation (achievement) between males ($M = 11.57$, $SD = 4.61$) and females ($M = 12.94$, $SD = 5.28$) $z = -1.53$, $p = .127$, not as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.37$, indicating a small effect.

There was no significant difference in intrinsic motivation (stimulation) between males ($M = 9.39$, $SD = 4.99$) and females ($M = 11.69$, $SD = 5.6$) $z = -1.65$, $p = .100$, not as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.43$, indicating a small effect.

The level of intention to continue to GCSE study was lower in males ($M = 2.39$, $SD = 2.1$) than in females ($M = 3.92$, $SD = 2.2$) $z = -2.74$, $p = .006$, as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.7$, indicating a medium effect.

Post-questionnaire results see Appendix L for tables

There was no significant difference in amotivation between males ($M = 7.7$, $SD = 5.41$) and females ($M = 7.5$, $SD = 5.12$) $z = -.23$, $p = .818$, not as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = .04$, indicating a negligible effect.

There was no significant difference in external regulation between males ($M = 12.83$, $SD = 4.65$) and females ($M = 13.44$, $SD = 4.95$) $z = -.66$, $p = .508$, not as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.13$, indicating a negligible effect.

There was no significant difference in introjected regulation between males ($M = 10.57$, $SD = 4.7$) and females ($M = 11.28$, $SD = 4.02$) $z = -.4$, $p = .691$, not as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.17$, indicating a negligible effect.

There was no significant difference in identified regulation between males ($M = 12.43$, $SD = 5.28$) and females ($M = 13.07$, $SD = 5.1$) $z = -.34$, $p = .53$, not as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.732$, indicating a negligible effect.

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There was no significant difference in intrinsic motivation (knowledge) between males ($M = 13.17$, $SD = 4.22$) and females ($M = 13.19$, $SD = 5.26$) $z = -.09$, $p = .23$, not as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.004$, indicating a negligible effect.

There was no significant difference in intrinsic motivation (achievement) between males ($M = 12.57$, $SD = 4.47$) and females ($M = 14.33$, $SD = 5.15$) $z = -1.49$, $p = .136$, not as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.36$, indicating a small effect.

There was no significant difference in intrinsic motivation (stimulation) between males ($M = 10.48$, $SD = 5.12$) and females ($M = 12.94$, $SD = 5.38$) $z = -1.72$, $p = .085$, not as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.47$, indicating a small effect.

The level of intention to continue to GCSE study was lower in males ($M = 3.13$, $SD = 2.0$) than females ($M = 4.47$, $SD = 2.06$) $z = -2.53$, $p = .011$, not as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.66$, indicating a medium effect.

The above results indicate there was no significant difference between motivation and gender, either before or after the interventions, which was not as expected. However, there was a slightly lower intention to continue Spanish to GCSE level among males, which did not change after the intervention.

4.7.5.8 Lesson enjoyment data

Likert scale data was collected anonymously during the pilot study for lessons 1-5 (Appendix B). However, distribution in subsequent lessons was forgotten by the teacher. Some responses had to be discarded due to unclear indications. Due to anonymous collection, it was impossible to correct these responses, as the teacher did not see them. I assigned each emoji a number in the order they appeared on the strip of paper. Thus, enjoyment of the lesson was a numerical value of four or five, and not enjoying the lesson was one or two.

In lesson one, the mean score for lesson enjoyment was 5.0 in the control groups and 3.8 in the intervention groups, indicating that the control lesson was enjoyed more.

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In lesson two, the mean score for lesson enjoyment was 4.0 in the control groups and 4.1 in the intervention groups, indicating that the intervention lesson was enjoyed more.

In lesson three, the mean score for lesson enjoyment was 4.5 in the control groups and 3.9 in the intervention groups, indicating that the control lesson was enjoyed more.

In lesson four, the mean score for lesson enjoyment was 4.5 in the control groups and 4.1 in the intervention groups, indicating that the control lesson was enjoyed more.

In lesson five, the mean score for lesson enjoyment was 4.5 in the control groups and 4.1 in the intervention groups, indicating that the control lesson was enjoyed more.

These results demonstrate that, with one exception, lesson enjoyment was higher in the control lessons, which was not as expected. Focus group qualitative analysis may reveal the reason for these findings.

4.7.5.9 Qualitative data analysis

As explained above, some qualitative data was incomplete. However, coding on the focus groups was undertaken using the same method described in Chapter 5, section 3. The codes which emerged from the data are explained in table 4.9, below

Table 4.9

Pilot study code descriptions

Theme	Sub theme	Code	Definition	Example
Sense of agency and control	Positive sense of agency	Choice	Feeling an element of control over decisions	"I chose my own dog"
		Independence	Feeling a sense of independence from the teacher	"We knew what to do so when we came in we just got started"
Social and relational motivation	Personal links	Family links	Having family in a Spanish speaking country	"My step-mum's family lives in Mallorca"
		Imagining future self	Relating to an imagined future	"I could definitely see myself with the dog. I asked my parents even."
	Engagement with others	Openness to others	Being able to speak to more people	"There are people who don't know English"
		Empathy for non-English speakers	Understanding that not everyone speaks English, making things easier for Spanish speakers	"Its harder for them because English is one of the hardest ones. So you have to think about how to help them"
	External and social pressure	Significant others' expectations		"They [parents] go through our reports"
		Wishing to avoid consequence	Feeling of being forced by the teacher / school	"You can't just not do the exercise in class because then you'll have to do it at lunch time"

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Perceptions of capability and progress	Intrinsic motivation - Knowledge	Valuing cognitive stimulation of language learning	Enjoying learning something new	"None of my family can do it so I can explain to them"
		Valuing future language learning	Feeling able to learn other languages	"The more you know the more [sic] easier it is to learn others"
	Intrinsic motivation	Accomplishment	Feeling a sense of achievement	"I mean I didn't know at the start but then now I do know so I can use it"
	Negative perceptions of capability	Confusion	Feeling unable to understand Spanish	"Its scary when its real life"
Amotivation and disengagement	Sense of pointlessness	English is enough	No desire to learn LOTE	"I don't really need it"
		Difficulty	Spanish is too difficult	"Its definitely one of the hardest subjects"
		Predicted technological advancement	AI will render LL pointless	"Soon they will have this thing where you just speak and it translates into any language"

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Codes were then counted and arranged according to frequency, as shown in Table 4.10, below. I was unable to determine two utterances in relation to gender, so these were left out of the frequency count.

Table 4.10

Pilot code frequencies

Code	Frequency females	Frequency males	Frequency non binary
Openness to others	4	3	1
Valuing cognitive stimulation of language learning	2	3	1
Empathy for non-English speakers	3	2	1
Accomplishment	1	2	1
Family links	2	2	0
Valuing future language learning	2	1	1
Choice	2	0	1
Significant others expectations	1	1	1
Independence	1	1	0
Confusion	1	1	0
English is enough	0	1	1
Imagining future self	2	0	0
Difficulty	1	0	0
Predicted technological advancement	1	0	0
Wishing to avoid consequence	0	1	0

As can be seen above, the first and third most frequent codes came under the theme of social and relational motivation, while the second and fourth came under perceptions of capability and progress, meaning these two themes appear more or less equally important. Below I discuss each code with examples, in order of frequency.

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4.7.5.9.1 Openness to others

The most frequent code. Participants seemed aware of the wider, non-anglophone world, and keen to interact with it. One participant said –

“There are people who don’t know English.” (FG2, M).

Another participant, who had English as a second language, agreed, saying:

“Yes, like my family. I have to translate so really its good that I have learned English. I can speak to you and I can speak to them, but they can’t speak to you and you can’t to them.” (FG2, M).

The presence of this participant encouraged the others to reflect on this, with another replying –

“Oh so you have to translate for your parents and stuff? That's really cool. Maybe if we were in Spain that’s what I would do for my parents because they don’t speak any.” (FG2, F).

This last utterance was dual coded with imagining future self.

4.7.5.9.2 Valuing cognitive stimulation of language learning

Participants seemed proud of their knowledge and aware of their advancement. This seemed especially true of those with monolingual parents. One participant said:

“None of my family can do it so I can explain it to them.” (FG3, NB).

Others responded enthusiastically, with one agreeing -

“Yes me too! I like to just talk to them but then replace any Spanish word I know into the sentence. So then they have to ask me, what are you saying?” ((FG3, F).

4.7.5.9.3 Empathy for non-English speakers

Another frequent code, particularly in the groups which contained EAL participants.

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When asked why they thought learning Spanish was important, one responded -

“Its harder for them because English is one of the hardest ones. So you have to think about how to help them.” (FG2, M).

Others built on this by adding –

“Yeah, like, we all have to speak one other than our own, so when we meet, we have more chance of being able to communicate. It's not fair to just expect them to do it because English is so popular.” (FG2, NB).

Another said:

“Definitely. I think that's what a lot of English people do. It's probably really annoying for them.” (FG2, F).

4.7.5.9.4 Accomplishment

Participants enjoyed a sense of accomplishment on completion of the two tasks. When asked if they enjoyed difficult tasks in Spanish, one participant responded:

“The translation, at first, I mean, you have all the words there. So it seems easy. But then they don't make sense, and you have to think about how to make them make sense. And you have to do that for a whole story. So that's quite hard. But then when it's finished, you've written a whole story. So thats a good feeling.” (FG1, M).

The same sentiment was expressed upon writing the email in the pet rescue task, as this participant explained:

“We wrote an email and got a reply. So that was more than you would think [we] can do in our first year of it. And clearly it was good because they replied, they understood what we were saying.” (FG3, NB).

4.7.5.9.5 Family links

As could be expected, participants with links to Spanish speakers found this to be a

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motivating factor. When asked who they learnt Spanish for, one participant said;

“My step-mum’s family lives in Mallorca.” (FG1, F).

This feeling did not need to be linked to someone in a hispanophone country, or to a high level speaker, as another said-

“Well my big brother, he did it to GCSE. So he can help me and I think he likes that I can do it ... he encourages me.” (FG2, M).

4.7.5.9.6 Valuing future language learning

Participants shared the following idea:

“The more you know the more [sic] easier it is to learn others” (FG1, F).

They were aware of the Latin roots of Spanish, adding:

“It’s all from the same language. So Italian, Spanish, others. They get easier the more of one you know.” (FG2, F).

4.7.5.9.7 Choice

The idea of choice stemmed from the free choice of pet in the first task, with comments such as;

““I chose my own dog” (FG1, F).

4.7.5.9.8 Significant others’ expectations

Some participants felt the pressure of parental expectations. When asked if they learnt Spanish for themselves, their parents or their teachers, there were responses such as-

“They [parents] go through our reports.” (FG3, NB).

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4.7.5.9.9 Independence

There was one comment relating to the pet rescue task and one to the translation task such as the below, in which participants enjoyed feeling a reduced input from the teacher:

“We knew what to do so when we came in we just got started.” (FG2, M).

4.7.5.9.10 Confusion

When asked if they enjoyed hearing Spanish spoken, some participants felt aware of the difference between the recordings usually used in class, in which they are required to identify an element of information such as someone’s age, and authentic Spanish, often faster and with less clear intonation. One example is the utterance below -

“It’s scary when it’s real life.” (FG1, F).

4.7.5.9.11 English is Enough

This code appeared twice, both times in answer to the question “Why do you think learning Spanish is important?” One participant responded;

“I don’t really need it.” (FG3, M).

4.7.5.9.12 Imagining future self

The relatedness of the pet rescue project prompted one participant to imagine a future self with the animal she chose, saying:

“I could definitely see myself with the dog. I asked my parents even.” (FG2, F).

4.7.5.9.13 Difficulty

This code appeared once, in answer to “Do you feel any satisfaction when completing difficult tasks in Spanish?” This participant responded with -

“It’s definitely one of the hardest subjects.” (FG2, F).

4.7.5.9.14 Predicted technological advancement

Another code which appeared only once, the idea of future technologies, rather than readily available ones such as Google Translate, was mentioned by this participant -

“Soon they will have this thing where you just speak and it translates into any language” (FG3, F).

4.7.5.9.15 Wishing to avoid consequence

When asked if they learned Spanish for themselves, parents or teachers, one participant referenced the school’s sanction policy, replying with:

“You can’t just not do the exercise in class because then you’ll have to do it at lunch time” (FG1, M).

Overall, the intervention tasks appear to have fostered a sense of community between anglophones and hispanophones, likely brought about by the real-world element of both tasks. Negative emotions pointing towards amotivation and disengagement were infrequent. However, with no control group qualitative data to compare these with, conclusions cannot be drawn as to the effectiveness of intervention against control materials.

4.7.6 Changes made after pilot

After the academic year of the pilot study, the school changed the curriculum of Key Stage 3 and reduced teaching time of Spanish from three hours per fortnight to two. The NCELP materials were used for the control groups in both the pilot and the final study, although less material was covered in the final study due to the reduction in teaching time. These materials were the standard used by the school and represented ‘business as usual’.

My teaching colleague and I noted in the pilot that a significant amount of time was needed to explain the questionnaire for the first time to participants, and we planned for this to take around 20 minutes in the final study.

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I noted that some groups took longer to get through the teaching material than others during the pilot, and with the reduction in contact hours, the materials used in the final study needed some refinement. On reading further into translation theory, I redesigned the teaching materials for the translation project. I decided that the Skopos method would be more suited to a motivational intervention, as discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, Section 3.3.2.2. The materials used in the pilot were adapted from translation resources available from the websites of the Stephen Spender Trust and the Anthea Bell Prize for Young Translators, run by Queen's College, Oxford. These projects aim to promote language learning in the UK and to inspire creativity in the classroom. They also hope to motivate learners to study MFL throughout their time at school and beyond (Queen's College, Oxford, n.d.). The resources encouraged checking that the translations were faithful to the original text, and that the meaning was conveyed. The process of translation was accomplished using glossaries containing all the words in the text. Students would first complete a word-for-word literal translation, then polish it to sound natural while retaining the meaning of the original (see Figure 3.2).

Despite the aims of the institutions above matching the purpose of this study, a few elements of the materials were changed to encourage the BPN fulfilment of SDT. In order for students to feel autonomous, participants were encouraged to elicit the meaning of unfamiliar words. To nurture feelings of competence, the teacher read each page aloud in sections, using the pictures in the book, exaggerated pronunciation and body language to help convey the meaning. This helped with understanding, even when words were unfamiliar. The technique has been successful with younger learners with no prior knowledge of the target language (Beauvais, 2023). I chose a story which contained elements of several nursery rhymes or stories that the students would be familiar with (Little Red Riding Hood, Peter and the Wolf, and The Three Little Pigs).

This made the approach one of autonomy support, or supportive teaching, which better fosters feelings of student autonomy (Oga-Baldwin & Nakata, 2015). The glossaries were kept as a differentiated support for SEN students, if they struggled to get their ideas down after group reading and discussion, in an effort to create a needs-supporting classroom environment which has been linked to learners' self-determined

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motivation (Noels, 2013). A performance element was added at the end of the translation, which Beauvais & Ryland (2021) argue is a key factor in maintaining motivation.

The pet rescue project was similarly adapted, with the removal of the sentence builders except as a scaffold for those who struggled. Instead of relying on these, pupils were encouraged to think about what they wanted to write, what they knew how to say and where to find the phrases they needed. The teacher worked as a facilitator to the group, asking pupils to recall prior knowledge before working through phrases on the board. This helped to make the project more autonomy supportive for learners.

Focus group questioning was amended to include a question on how the interventions compared - which project the participants enjoyed more and what in particular they liked or disliked about the lessons. This was done to provide more data on which of the interventions was most effective in altering motivation. Due to a scheduling error, there were no focus groups in the control groups, so the pilot data was incomplete. The scheduling of these sessions was arranged further in advance in the final study to avoid this outcome.

To avoid this error of immediate post-lesson feedback data collection made in the pilot, care was taken to ensure all photocopies of the slips of paper were provided in advance for the final study, sorted into labelled envelopes in the classroom. A final slide in the PowerPoint of each lesson was added to aid the teacher in remembering to distribute them.

4.8 Summary

This study employed an experimental design, with a control and an intervention group. The TBLT-based interventions consisted of two different types, both custom-developed for the purpose of influencing learner motivation in the very specific cohort of learners I teach. Pre-post questionnaires were distributed to both groups, and focus groups were undertaken. Immediate lesson feedback data was also collected from participants in the intervention group. The pilot study revealed that intervention materials and pre-post instruments were suited to achieve the aims of the study, and minor adaptations to the materials and instruments were made to enhance feasibility

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of delivery for the school context. Data was analysed for intervention/control group differences as well as gender differences. Analysis consisted of comparative statistics (Wilcoxon Signed Rank tests and Mann-Whitney U tests) and qualitative coding. Pilot results showed results that overall aligned with expectations.

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present the quantitative results which answer RQ1 (how does a Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) inspired intervention at Year 7 in an English secondary school influence learner motivation and continuation intentions), and RQ3.1 (are there any gender differences in respect of motivation for MFL and willingness to continue with MFL). I make a note on the non-binary participants' data, which is not enough to be subjected to comparative quantitative analysis due to low participant numbers. I examine how the immediate post-lesson feedback demonstrated lesson enjoyment, and provide analysis of the focus groups' qualitative data. The chapter concludes with a summary of all the data collected, both quantitative and qualitative.

5.2 Quantitative Data

5.2.1 RQ1 - How does a Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) inspired intervention at Year 7 in an English secondary school influence

1.1. learner motivation?

1.2. continuation intentions?

The participants filled in the trait motivation questionnaire before and after intervention (Appendix A). The questionnaire contained 22 items, grouped into eight theoretically defined scales, discussed in Chapter 4 Section 5.1.1.

While these groupings are grounded in SDT and the original instrument design, exploratory factor analysis conducted on the pilot data (see Chapter 4 Section 7.5.1) suggested a more consolidated factor structure in this sample. The analyses presented in this chapter are therefore based on the theoretical subscales but are interpreted with this consideration in mind.

Royston, Henze-Zirkler, Mardia Skewness and Mardia Kurtosis multivariate normality tests were conducted on all data. Control data failed the Royston and Henze-Zirkler tests. Intervention data failed the Royston, Mardia Skewness and Mardia Kurtosis tests. Therefore, the data cannot be said to be normally distributed. For this reason, Wilcoxon Signed Rank tests were run instead of paired sample t tests to review data

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of pre- and post-test questionnaire data, and Mann-Whitney U tests were run to distinguish gender differences, instead of independent samples t tests.

5.2.1.1 Results for the control groups

I expected that the control group data would show no significant difference in any motivational construct before and after the intervention. I have opted to report effect size for non-significant results, as suggested by Visentin, Cleary & Hunt (2020). A Wilcoxon Signed Rank test was performed to compare results of each motivational construct at the beginning and end of the term. See Appendix M for tables. As noted in Chapter 4 Section 7.5.1, these analyses are based on theoretically defined subscales, although the pilot factor analysis suggested a more consolidated motivational structure in this sample.

There was no significant difference between the level of amotivation pre-test ($M = 9.0$, $SD = 4.72$) and post-test ($M = 9.35$, $SD = 5.1$) $z = -1.754$, $p = .071$, as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = .12$, indicating a negligible effect.

There was no significant difference between the level of external regulation pre-test ($M = 11.5$, $SD = 4.37$) and post-test ($M = 11.26$, $SD = 3.94$) $z = -1.034$, $p = .301$, as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = .59$, indicating a medium effect.

The level of introjected regulation decreased from pre-test to post-test - pre-test ($M = 9.26$, $SD = 4.32$) and post-test ($M = 8.38$, $SD = 4.09$) $z = -2.984$, $p = .003$, not as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = .59$, indicating a medium effect.

The level of identified regulation decreased from pre-test to post-test - pre-test ($M = 12.24$, $SD = 4.16$) and post-test ($M = 11.5$, $SD = 4.24$) $z = -2.585$, $p = .010$, not as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = .39$, indicating a small effect.

The level of intrinsic motivation in relation to knowledge decreased from pre-test to post-test - pre-test ($M = 12.29$, $SD = 4.74$) and post-test ($M = 11.82$, $SD = 4.73$) $z = -2.385$, $p = .017$, not as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = .45$, indicating a small effect.

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There was no significant difference in the level of intrinsic motivation in relation to accomplishment pre-test ($M = 12.41$, $SD = 4.72$) and post-test ($M = 12.15$, $SD = 4.54$) $z = .866$, $p = .386$, as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = .16$, indicating a negligible effect.

There was no significant difference in the level of intrinsic motivation in relation to stimulation pre-test ($M = 12.32$, $SD = 4.63$) and post-test ($M = 12.18$, $SD = 4.5$) $z = -1.260$, $p = .208$, as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = .11$, indicating a negligible effect.

There was no significant difference in the level of inclination to continue Spanish at GCSE pre-test ($M = 3.35$, $SD = 1.8$) and post-test ($M = 3.18$, $SD = 1.87$) $z = -1.414$, $p = .157$, as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = .25$, indicating a small effect.

The results above indicate some decline in introjected regulation, identified regulation and intrinsic motivation in relation to knowledge. It is interesting to note that the three motivational orientations which demonstrated a decrease in motivation varied from extrinsic to intrinsic. This could potentially be attributed to study fatigue as the term progressed. However, given the factor analysis findings, these changes may reflect small fluctuations within broader motivational orientations rather than distinct shifts between specific subtypes. Overall, however, there was no change, as expected.

5.2.1.2 Results for the intervention groups

I expected that the intervention would decrease amotivation and increase all other motivational orientations. As with the control group analysis, results are reported according to the theoretically defined subscales, while recognising that these may represent broader underlying motivational dimensions. See Appendix N for tables.

The level of amotivation decreased from pre-test to post-test - pre-test ($M = 8.79$, $SD = 5.29$), post-test ($M = 6.96$, $SD = 4.72$) $z = -4.467$, $p < .001$, as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = .66$, indicating a medium effect.

The level of external regulation increased from pre-test to post test - pre-test ($M = 12.2$, $SD = 4.75$), post-test ($M = 13.96$, $SD = 4.29$) $z = -4.737$, $p < .001$, as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.8$, indicating a large effect.

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The level of introjected regulation increased from pre-test to post test - pre-test ($M = 9.88$, $SD = 4.24$), post-test ($M = 11.48$, $SD = 3.99$) $z = -4.226$, $p = <.001$, as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.62$, indicating a medium effect.

The level of identified regulation increased from pre-test to post test - pre-test ($M = 12.05$, $SD = 5.05$), post-test ($M = 13.43$, $SD = 4.54$) $z = -5.015$, $p = <.001$, as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.76$, indicating a medium effect.

The level of intrinsic motivation in relation to knowledge increased from pre-test to post test - pre-test ($M = 12.05$, $SD = 4.94$), post-test ($M = 13.82$, $SD = 4.34$) $z = -5.460$, $p = <.001$, as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.96$, indicating a large effect.

The level of intrinsic motivation in relation to accomplishment increased from pre-test to post test - pre-test ($M = 12.77$, $SD = 4.9$), post-test ($M = 14.34$, $SD = 4.51$) $z = -4.719$, $p = <.001$, as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.72$, indicating a medium effect.

The level of intrinsic motivation in relation to stimulation increased from pre-test to post test - pre-test ($M = 11.1$, $SD = 5.15$), post-test ($M = 12.48$, $SD = 4.88$) $z = -4.693$, $p = <.001$, as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.79$, indicating a medium effect.

The level of inclination to continue Spanish at GCSE increased from pre-test to post test - pre-test ($M = 3.3$, $SD = 2.2$), post-test ($M = 4.13$, $SD = 1.94$) $z = -4.607$, $p = <.001$, as expected. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.76$, indicating a medium effect.

As expected, the intervention decreased amotivation and increased all other motivational orientations, including the inclination to study MFL at GCSE. I believe that the pedagogical approach of real-world task usage, which considers the need to fulfil the BPNs of autonomy, competence and relatedness among learners, led to these results. These findings are promising and suggest that this pedagogical approach may contribute to addressing the decline in MFL uptake at post-compulsory level.

The pre- and post-intervention questionnaire data was paired to the same participant by a number marked on the back, explained in Chapter 4 Section 5.1.2.

5.2.2 RQ3.1 - Are there any gender differences in respect of motivation for MFL and willingness to continue with MFL?

To test for gender difference, I undertook the following Mann-Whitney U tests for all nine independent variables in these 4 groups:

- Pre-test Intervention: gender differences
- Post-test intervention: gender differences
- Pre-test control: gender differences
- Post-test control: gender differences

As with previous analyses, results are presented according to theoretically defined subscales and should be interpreted with consideration of the broader motivational dimensions identified in the pilot study. A non-binary category was included in the questionnaire responses. These cases were not included in statistical analyses due to low numbers; instead their results are reported descriptively (Section 2.3). There were 19 male and 15 female participants in the control groups. There were 20 male and 30 female participants in the intervention groups.

5.2.2.1 Pre-test intervention: gender differences see Appendix O for tables

I expected higher motivation in females than males.

There was no significant difference between the level of amotivation in males ($M = 8.2$, $SD = 4.95$) and females ($M = 8.77$, $SD = 5.46$) $z = -.28$, $p = .779$. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.1$, indicating a negligible effect.

There was no significant difference between the level of external regulation in males ($M = 12.1$, $SD = 5$) and females ($M = 12.27$, $SD = 4.92$) $z = -.3$, $p = .766$. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.03$, indicating a negligible effect.

There was no significant difference between the level of introjected regulation in males ($M = 10$, $SD = 4.7$) and females ($M = 9.8$, $SD = 4.24$) $z = -.2$, $p = .842$. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.05$, indicating a negligible effect.

There was no significant difference between the level of identified regulation in males ($M = 11.8$, $SD = 5.63$) and females ($M = 13.03$, $SD = 4.37$) $z = -.64$, $p = .525$. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.25$, indicating a small effect.

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There was no significant difference between the level of intrinsic motivation in relation to knowledge in males ($M = 11.85$, $SD = 4.87$) and females ($M = 12.43$, $SD = 5.23$) $z = -.39$, $p = .699$. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.12$, indicating a negligible effect.

There was no significant difference between the level of intrinsic motivation in relation to accomplishment in males ($M = 11.65$, $SD = 4.72$) and females ($M = 13.9$, $SD = 4.69$) $z = -1.87$, $p = .062$. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.48$, indicating a small effect.

There was no significant difference between the level of intrinsic motivation in relation to stimulation in males ($M = 10$, $SD = 5.02$) and females ($M = 12.5$, $SD = 5.06$) $z = -1.76$, $p = .079$. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.5$, indicating a medium effect.

The level of inclination to continue Spanish at GCSE was lower in males ($M = 2.3$, $SD = 1.95$) than females ($M = 4.23$, $SD = 2.08$) $z = -3.17$, $p = .002$. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.95$, indicating a large effect.

These results suggest that, although there was no significant difference in the motivational orientations there was a lower inclination among males than females to continue with Spanish to GCSE level before the intervention. A larger difference in motivation levels between genders was expected, in line with current research. The lower inclination of males to continue to GCSE was anticipated, due to long-standing statistics of GCSE entries.

5.2.2.2 Post-test intervention: gender differences see Appendix P for tables

I did not expect any significant gender difference in motivation post-test, nor the intention to study Spanish at GCSE level.

There was no significant difference between the level of amotivation in males ($M = 7.2$, $SD = 5.15$) and females ($M = 6.83$, $SD = 4.63$) $z = -.33$, $p = .738$. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.08$, indicating a negligible effect.

There was no significant difference between the level of external regulation in males ($M = 13.5$, $SD = 4.56$) and females ($M = 14.2$, $SD = 4.33$) $z = -.67$, $p = .505$. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.16$, indicating a negligible effect.

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There was no significant difference between the level of introjected regulation in males ($M = 11$, $SD = 4.62$) and females ($M = 11.6$, $SD = 3.77$) $z = -.37$, $p = .713$. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.15$, indicating a negligible effect.

There was no significant difference between the level of identified regulation in males ($M = 12.9$, $SD = 5.16$) and females ($M = 14.23$, $SD = 4.23$) $z = -.75$, $p = .455$. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.29$, indicating a small effect.

There was no significant difference between the level of intrinsic motivation in relation to knowledge in males ($M = 13.5$, $SD = 4.36$) and females ($M = 14.13$, $SD = 4.54$) $z = -.3$, $p = .766$. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.14$, indicating a negligible effect.

The level of intrinsic motivation in relation to accomplishment was lower in males ($M = 13.05$, $SD = 4.47$) than females ($M = 15.4$, $SD = 4.45$) $z = -1.96$, $p = .05$. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.53$, indicating a small effect.

There was no significant difference between the level of intrinsic motivation in relation to stimulation in males ($M = 11$, $SD = 5.19$) and females ($M = 13.87$, $SD = 4.61$) $z = -1.9$, $p = .058$. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.59$, indicating a medium effect.

The level of inclination to continue Spanish at GCSE was lower in males ($M = 3.15$, $SD = 1.84$) than females ($M = 4.83$, $SD = 1.86$) $z = -3.16$, $p = .002$. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.9$, indicating a large effect.

These results suggest that there was no difference in genders and motivation following the intervention, apart from in the construct of intrinsic motivation in relation to accomplishment, in which females scored higher - perhaps due to gender differences in societal expectations. The inclination to continue with Spanish at GCSE remained higher in females, as in the pre-test findings, which is supported by exam entry statistics (EPI, 2020). However, there was a slight increase in males' inclination to continue Spanish at GCSE from pre-test to post-test in the intervention groups, which is promising.

It is interesting to note that the inclination to continue study was lower among males despite there being no discernible difference in motivation between genders. This finding highlights the complexity of GCSE options for young people. Although

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motivation can be a key component of the decision, other societal factors such as career choice, parental pressure and wider cultural and social perceptions of the subject may prove ultimately more important for the decision to continue with language study than motivation alone. This finding is an important consideration for future efforts to increase MFL GCSE uptake.

5.2.2.3 Pre-test control: gender differences see Appendix Q for tables

I expected higher motivation in females than males.

The level of amotivation was higher in males ($M = 11.16$, $SD = 4.78$) than in females ($M = 6.27$, $SD = 2.96$) $z = -3.0$, $p = .003$. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = 1.2$, indicating a large effect.

The level of external regulation was lower in males ($M = 9.9$, $SD = 3.83$) than females ($M = 13.53$, $SD = 4.27$) $z = -2.2$, $p = .028$. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.9$, indicating a large effect.

The level of introjected regulation was lower in males ($M = 7.26$, $SD = 3.45$) than females ($M = 11.8$, $SD = 4.06$) $z = -3.13$, $p = .002$. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -1.2$, indicating a large effect.

The level of identified regulation was lower in males ($M = 10.3$, $SD = 3.91$) than females ($M = 14.67$, $SD = 3.13$) $z = -2.68$, $p = .007$. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -1.2$, indicating a large effect.

The level of intrinsic motivation in relation to knowledge was lower in males ($M = 10.05$, $SD = 4.27$) than females ($M = 15.13$, $SD = 3.74$) $z = -3.29$, $p = <.001$. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -1.26$, indicating a large effect.

The level of intrinsic motivation in relation to accomplishment was lower in males ($M = 10.37$, $SD = 4.49$) than females ($M = 15$, $SD = 3.72$) $z = -2.74$, $p = .006$. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -1.11$, indicating a large effect.

The level of intrinsic motivation in relation to stimulation was lower in males ($M = 10.16$, $SD = 4.14$) than females ($M = 15.07$, $SD = 3.75$) $z = -3.29$, $p = .001$. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -1.24$, indicating a large effect.

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There was no significant difference in the level of inclination to continue Spanish at GCSE between males ($M = 2.95$, $SD = 1.78$) and females ($M = 3.87$, $SD = 1.77$) $z = -1.52$, $p = .127$. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.52$, indicating a medium effect.

These results suggest that motivation in all categories was lower in males than females, however, there was no significant difference in inclination to continue study at GCSE level. Once again, a slight difference is demonstrated between motivation and inclination for GCSE, although in this group, males behaved more as expected according to literature. This can be explained by the random constitution of the control group, with the small group sizes also a possible factor.

5.2.2.4 Post-test control: gender differences see Appendix R for tables

I expected overall higher motivation in females, in line with pre-test findings.

The level of amotivation was higher in males ($M = 11.53$, $SD = 5.28$) than in females ($M = 6.6$, $SD = 3.31$) $z = -2.63$, $p = .008$. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = 1.09$, indicating a large effect.

The level of external regulation was lower in males ($M = 9.53$, $SD = 3.15$) than females ($M = 13.47$, $SD = 3.81$) $z = -2.92$, $p = .003$. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -1.14$, indicating a large effect.

The level of introjected regulation was lower in males ($M = 6.32$, $SD = 3.75$) than females ($M = 11$, $SD = 4.07$) $z = -3.28$, $p = .001$. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -1.4$, indicating a large effect.

The level of identified regulation was lower in males ($M = 9.58$, $SD = 4.18$) than females ($M = 13.93$, $SD = 2.92$) $z = -2.88$, $p = .004$. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -1.18$, indicating a large effect.

The level of intrinsic motivation in relation to knowledge was lower in males ($M = 9.89$, $SD = 4.47$) than females ($M = 14.27$, $SD = 3.94$) $z = -2.29$, $p = .005$. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -1.03$, indicating a large effect.

The level of intrinsic motivation in relation to accomplishment was lower in males ($M = 10.32$, $SD = 4.38$) than females ($M = 14.47$, $SD = 3.68$) $z = -2.84$, $p = .004$. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -1.01$, indicating a large effect.

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The level of intrinsic motivation in relation to stimulation was lower in males ($M = 10.1$, $SD = 4.15$) than females ($M = 14.8$, $SD = 3.55$) $z = -3.17$, $p = .002$. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -1.2$, indicating a large effect.

There was no significant difference in the level of inclination to continue Spanish at GCSE between males ($M = 2.95$, $SD = 1.93$) and females ($M = 3.47$, $SD = 1.81$) $z = -.94$, $p = .349$. The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , was $d = -.28$, indicating a small effect.

These results indicate that motivation in all categories was lower in males than females, and as with the pre-test data, there was no significant difference in inclination to continue study at GCSE level. This means that there was no change in the overall patterns observed between pre and post-intervention, in line with control group predictions.

5.2.3 Note on non-binary participants' data

There were six pupils who identified as non-binary, who were all taught in the intervention groups. The placing of these participants was beyond the control of this study. Although too few to report results, I have compared the means of each group (male, female and non-binary) below.

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Table 5.1

Non binary quantitative data

Gender	No	amotivation	external regulation	introjected regulation	identified regulation	intrinsic motivation - knowledge	intrinsic motivation - accomplishment	intrinsic motivation - stimulation	intention for GCSE study
M	20	pre 8.2 post 7.2	pre 12.1 post 13.5	pre 10 post 11	pre 11.8 post 12.9	pre 11.85 post 13.5	pre 11.65 post 13.05	pre 10 post 11	pre 2.3 post 3.15
F	30	pre 8.77 post 8.77	pre 12.27 post 14.2	pre 9.8 post 11.6	pre 13.03 post 14.23	pre 12.43 post 14.13	pre 13.9 post 15.4	pre 12.5 post 13.87	pre 3.47 post 4.83
NB	6	pre 10.83 post 6.83	pre 12.17 post 14.3	pre 9.83 post 12.5	pre 8 post 11.17	pre 10.83 post 13.33	pre 10.83 post 13.33	pre 7.83 post 10.5	pre 2 post 3.83

The descriptive data above suggests that non-binary participants who exhibited amotivation at the pre-test phase were especially receptive to the intervention. Their level of amotivation, external and introjected regulation were also higher than the other two gender groups pre-test. However, the intrinsic orientations and willingness to continue to GCSE did not quite reach the other genders' means.

5.2.4 Immediate post-lesson feedback

As in the pilot, Likert scale data was collected anonymously and analysed by calculating the mean enjoyment score of each lesson (see Chapter 4 Section 5.3). The Likert scale was in the form of five emoji faces (Appendix B), each face assigned a number from one to five. Some responses had to be discarded due to unclear indications. Enjoyment of the lesson was a numerical value of four or five, and not enjoying the lesson was one or two.

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Table 5.2

Half term one: pet rescue project immediate post-lesson feedback

Lesson number	Control group mean	Intervention group mean
1	4.8	4.5
2	4.5	4.5
3	4.8	4.3
4	4.3	4.6
5	4.7	4.4
6	5.0	4.7
7	4.8	4.9
Overall mean	4.7	4.56

This data suggests that overall, students reported slightly higher enjoyment of the control lessons, although some lesson-to-lesson fluctuation exists, and the overall differences were minimal.

Table 5.3

Half term two: translation project immediate post-lesson feedback

Lesson number	Control group	Intervention group
1	4.6	4.6
2	4.7	4.8
3	4.4	4.2
4	4.2	4.7
5	4.5	4.5
6	4.4	4.7
Overall mean	4.47	4.58

The data suggests that overall, students reported more enjoyment of the intervention lessons, again with some lesson-by-lesson fluctuation, and with minimal differences

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only. The results of the two interventions combined show a greater level of enjoyment of the translation project than the pet rescue project, contributing to answering RQ 2.2.

I would suggest that if enjoyment of the control lessons was high overall, students might have enjoyed the regular routine of the classes, these being ‘business as usual’ for them. The qualitative data, presented in the next section, gives a deeper insight into the students’ experience of the intervention and control lessons, respectively.

5.3 Qualitative Data

Qualitative data was collected to answer RQ2 on learner experience of motivation

2.1. How do students report on their learning experience of the interventions and their normal classes?

2.2. Do students report differently on their experience of the two interventions and their normal classes?

All focus group sessions were manually transcribed to ensure accuracy. As only audio recording was done, I had no way of examining non-verbal cues. See Appendix C for the focus group schedule.

Braun and Clarke (2021) draw an important distinction between codebook approaches to thematic analysis, in which a predetermined framework is applied systematically to data, and reflexive thematic analysis, in which the researcher's active engagement with the data drives the analytical process. This study adopts the latter approach: while theoretical familiarity with SDT informed initial engagement with the data, the coding framework was not predetermined by that theory, and themes were constructed through iterative engagement with the data itself.

The analysis of qualitative data followed a process of Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021), broadly structured around the six phases outlined in their framework: familiarisation with the data, generating initial codes, constructing themes, reviewing and refining themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final analysis. While the starting point was theoretically informed, the analytical process evolved iteratively, and the approach is best characterised as a hybrid of deductive and inductive coding.

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Initial engagement with the data was shaped by theoretical sensitisation to SDT, which had underpinned the design of the questionnaire. This meant that a preliminary set of codes was brought to the data, corresponding to the motivational orientations explored in the questionnaire items. However, consistent with the emphasis on the researcher as an active agent in meaning-making, these initial codes were treated as a starting framework that remained open to revision. As Braun and Clarke (2021) argue, reflexive thematic analysis resists the imposition of a predetermined structure, instead requiring the researcher to remain responsive to what the data itself yields.

As the coding process progressed across both intervention tasks, corresponding to RQ2.2, which examined how students reported their experience of the two projects, inductive codes began to emerge. For example, a code for general enjoyment was developed to capture instances where participants expressed positive orientation towards Spanish without attributing it to a specific motivational source. Equally, some deductive codes required sub-categorisation to reflect the nuance present in the data: motivation relating to advancement, for instance, was split into separate codes for grades and careers, as participants drew a clear distinction between these. The code relating to engagement with Spanish speakers was further sub-coded into openness towards others, a sense of obligation, and empathy for non-English speakers, distinctions that arose from the data rather than from the theoretical framework.

During the coding process, it became apparent that some utterances resisted straightforward single coding. For example, comments around engaging with others could be assigned to both openness to others (expressing a desire to communicate) and empathy for non-English speakers (reflecting an awareness that English may not be universally understood). Similarly, some speakers expressed accomplishment alongside a valuing of the cognitive processes of language learning, for example:

"I feel like if I do it, then I'll feel better about myself because I know that I've done it. Even if the actual learning bit is hard, but once I've done it, I know how to speak Spanish, and it's just an achievement."

Where utterances could plausibly be classified into two categories, or where I was unable to determine the dominant orientation, I employed multiple coding, assigning the utterance to both. This decision reflects Braun and Clarke's (2021) acknowledgement that data is rarely reducible to discrete, mutually exclusive

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categories, and that the researcher's interpretive judgement is itself part of the analytical process.

Once initial coding was complete, codes were grouped into broader themes. In keeping with Braun and Clarke's (2021) guidance that theme names should be analytical and reflective of the data rather than simply descriptive labels or reproductions of theoretical constructs, themes were named to capture the nature of participants' expressed experience. The resulting themes: Sense of agency and control, Social and relational motivation, Perceptions of capability and progress, Amotivation and disengagement, and General enjoyment, alongside themes specific to each intervention task, were derived from patterns across the coded data. Where SDT concepts had informed initial coding, the language of those concepts was retained at code level where appropriate, but was not used to name or organise themes, ensuring that the thematic structure reflects the data rather than the theoretical framework imposed upon it.

Responses specific to each intervention task were recorded separately, as these utterances related to a specific context rather than representing broader motivational themes. This allowed for direct comparison of student responses to the two tasks in addressing RQ2.2, while keeping the main thematic framework grounded in patterns across the full dataset.

Gender of speakers was noted to address RQ3.2, enabling comparison of responses across gender groups. Throughout the process, codes and emerging themes were discussed with both my supervisor and teaching colleague, providing an external perspective that supported reflexive awareness and helped to ensure that analytical decisions were examined critically. This iterative dialogue between the researcher, the data, and supervisory feedback is consistent with Braun and Clarke's (2021) understanding of reflexivity as an ongoing, active process rather than a procedural concern. The final codes are displayed in Table 5.4 on the following pages.

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Table 5.4

Code descriptions

Theme	Sub theme	Code	Definition	Example
Sense of agency and control	Positive sense of agency	Choice	Feeling an element of control over decisions	"It was nice to go through all the animals and choose one"
		Independence	Feeling a sense of independence from the teacher	"We got to sit in our groups and we just did it ourselves"
Social and relational motivation	Personal links	Family links	Having family in a Spanish speaking country	"I wanna [sic] speak to my cousins in Spanish"
	Engagement with others	Openness to others (travelling)	Being able to speak to more people	"You can speak to more people not just like [sic] one group"
		Sense of obligation	Moral obligation because others are able to speak our language,	"It'll be weird if you just pull out your phone and start using a translator"
		Empathy for non English speakers	Understanding that not everyone speaks English, making things easier for Spanish speakers	"It would make it so much easier for them if they knew that we could understand them"
	External and social pressure	Significant others expectations		"My parents want to hear at parents' evening that I am doing well"
		Wishing to avoid consequence	Feeling of being forced by the teacher / school	"You'll get a detention if you don't go to Spanish"
Perceptions of capability and	Intrinsic motivation - Knowledge	Valuing cognitive stimulation of language	Enjoying learning something new	"It's good to know at least one more than English"

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progress		learning		
		Valuing future language learning	Feeling able to learn other languages	“Spanish also helps you learn French and Italian”
	Intrinsic motivation - Accomplishment	Accomplishment	Enjoying difficult tasks, feeling a sense of achievement	“When she tells you you have got it right it makes you feel like you are good at it and that's so cool because you know everyone knows that it is hard”
	Extrinsic: advancement	Grades	Getting a qualification	“If you get a GCSE, you get more points”
		Careers	Envisioning future possibilities	“If I need just to translate it. For example, if you're like in a job like for example like archaeologist or like a journalist ...”
	Negative perceptions of capability	Confusion	Feeling unable to understand Spanish	“Sometimes they speak too fast”
Amotivation and disengagement	Sense of pointlessness	English is enough	No desire to learn LOTE	“I'll never need to use it”
		Difficulty	Spanish is too difficult	“It's too hard to make an effort in”
		AI easily available	No need to learn when AI is easily accessible	“There's Google translate on the phone”
Enjoyment	General enjoyment	Enjoying Spanish classes	No reason given	“I generally look forward to Spanish lessons”
Responses specific to intervention one	Positive	Accomplishment	Being able to write an email and receive a reply	“I liked it when they wrote back in Spanish because they thought i could speak it properly”

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(pet rescue project)	Negative	Autonomy	Having a choice	"It was nice to go through all the animals and choose one"
		Sense of disappointment	Not seeing the point	"I really thought that maybe I could get the dog. I even asked my mum. So I liked that apart from when they said I couldn't have it."
Responses specific to intervention two (translation project)	Positive	Autonomy	Having control over the finished product	"Even if you did it different to another group it wasn't wrong it was just different"
		Collaboration	Working in groups, independent of the teacher	"I like doing it together"
		Accomplishment	Feeling a sense of achievement	"That was a whole story that we did ... we managed to do quite a lot of translating"
		Relatedness to audience	Providing a service for non Spanish speakers	"It was for little kids and they couldn't speak Spanish"
		Links to real-world application	Linking to careers	"You can get paid for it. So it was like having a job"

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5.3.1 Intervention focus group results

There were four utterances which I could not attribute to gender. I have not included these in the table below.

Table 5.5 below reveals that in terms of frequency, codes relating to perceptions of capability and progress were mentioned most often, followed by those relating to social and relational motivation, and lastly those relating to sense of agency and control. I have grouped the codes according to these themes, and have also included the additional themes of amotivation and disengagement and general enjoyment. Within each theme, I discuss codes in order of most frequent to least frequent, as I believe the frequency represents the sense of importance to the participants and offers a fair description of the nature of the focus group data. I finish with groups which describe the experience of the two interventions, again in order from most to least frequent. I have identified quotes as being from male, female or non binary participants with the abbreviations M, F and NB. I have also identified the focus group each participant was in with the abbreviation FG. Focus groups one, two and three were the intervention groups, and four and five were the control groups.

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Table 5.5

Intervention focus groups code frequency table

Code	Frequency females	Frequency males	Frequency non binary
Valuing cognitive stimulation of language learning	8	6	0
Accomplishment	5	6	1
English is enough	7	1	4
Openness to others (travelling)	7	2	1
Valuing future language learning	3	4	0
Empathy for non-English speakers	4	3	0
Wishing to avoid consequence	2	3	2
Pet rescue project – sense of disappointment	3	2	0
Independence	2	3	1
Sense of obligation	2	4	0
Pet rescue project – autonomy (choice)	3	1	1
Choice	3	1	1
Pet rescue project – accomplishment	0	5	0
Translation project - autonomy (control over finished product)	1	2	0
Difficulty	4	0	0
Translation project – accomplishment	2	1	0
General enjoyment	1	1	1
Translation project – collaboration	1	1	1
Family links	2	0	0
Translation project – links to real-world application	1	1	0
AI easily available	0	2	0
Confusion	1	0	1
Translation project – relatedness to audience	2	0	0
Significant others' expectations	0	1	0
Grades	1	0	0
Careers	0	1	0

Total	65	51	14
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5.3.1.1 Perceptions of capability and progress

5.3.1.1.1 Valuing cognitive stimulation of language learning

Participants expressed intrinsic enjoyment of the learning process, recognising and relishing the need to think. When asked if they enjoyed completing difficult tasks in Spanish, one participant replied:

“I like doing listening because it's kind of in a way [sic] It's kind of really helpful because you can kind of think like you can actually use your brain and think, OK, that's one word. What should I use? Like how do I translate that into our language?” (FG3, M).

EAL students in particular expressed this emotion, one saying, when asked if they felt good about being able to speak Spanish:

“I like to learn new languages like when I start learning English, I feel like interesting and I like to learn things languages.” (FG3, F).

Some participants did not enjoy the difficulty at the time of working on the task, but valued the learning they perceived as having managed once completed, saying;

“I don't like doing the really hard tasks, but in the end, I feel glad I've done it because I've learned something new.” (FG1, M).

Others valued the feeling of understanding. When asked if they enjoyed hearing Spanish being spoken, one participant replied:

“Yeah when I understand it.” (FG1, F).

Participants also enjoyed being able to show what they had learned, using their Spanish at home or being able to teach siblings, another said:

“Yeah, well, when I'm at home, if I know a word in Spanish, if I'm having a conversation with someone and I know a word in Spanish, then I say the word in Spanish because it helps me learn it.” (FG1, M).

Others enjoyed feeling more knowledgeable than those around them, with one participant saying;

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“I just like, because my sister's seven and she does Spanish too. I just pretend I know more than her, but she doesn't know some of the things I'm doing. Yeah, which I just like, bragged to her.” (FG2, F).

Another was keener to help their younger siblings, saying:

“My brother and sister are learning Spanish. So whenever they're at home, and sometimes they'll come home and ask me, What does this mean? What does that mean? So I try and help them.” (FG1, M).

In summary, participants appeared to associate LL with a sense of cognitive challenge and personal growth, expressing satisfaction in thinking deeply and mastering new skills. Even when tasks felt difficult, learners valued the accomplishment and understanding that followed. Using Spanish beyond the classroom further reinforced their sense of competence and pride in their learning. These utterances could reflect a sense of intrinsic motivation in relation to knowledge or stimulation.

5.3.1.1.2 Accomplishment

Participants expressed satisfaction at completing difficult tasks, celebrating a sense of achievement and feeling clever. When asked if they felt good about being able to speak Spanish, one participant said:

“It's good to know that you can do hard stuff,” (FG3, M)

Another responded with:

“Yeah, I feel so good. Like once, once you're done, you can, like, tell the teacher I've done this. And I'm, like, really proud of it,” (FG3, M).

When asked if they felt satisfaction in completing difficult tasks in Spanish, this participant replied:

“Difficult tasks are my favourite in Spanish because I don't like it when the tasks are easy because I don't feel like it's much of a challenge and I want to be able to learn the language. But if I already know it all, then I want to be able to do something more difficult that helps me learn the language.” (FG1, F).

Sometimes, the code of Accomplishment was double coded to Valuing cognitive stimulation, such as this utterance:

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“The reason I do it. It's because I feel like if I do it, then I'll feel better about myself because I know that I've done it. Even if the actual learning bit is hard, but once I've done it, I know how to speak Spanish, and it's just an achievement.” (FG1, M).

It is interesting to note here, especially for classroom practitioners, that learners do not seem to mind a task being hard. To achieve a sense of competence there must be a certain level of difficulty, otherwise they won't feel they have done something worthy of that feeling. Therefore, pitching the difficulty of tasks is a key element in course design. These utterances could express intrinsic motivation in relation to accomplishment.

5.3.1.1.3 Valuing future language learning

When asked why learning Spanish matters, this participant replied immediately with:

“So that we can learn other languages.” (FG2, M).

Participants seemed aware of the Latin roots of Spanish being useful for learning other Romance languages, such as this idea which appeared more than once:

“You can learn French and Italian from learning Spanish.” (FG2, F)

Others built on her idea, with another participant in the same group later saying:

“Like [she] said, it can open doors to other languages,” (FG2, F)

The idea of further languages making future learning easier was also mentioned, with another participant saying:

“Like if you know, like, 2 languages, it's like, easier to learn another language and Spanish also, like, helps you learn like French and Italian.” (FG3, M).

5.3.1.1.4 Confusion

When asked if they enjoyed hearing Spanish being spoken, some participants implied that it was a stressful experience, such as these participants who said:

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“Yeah except when they speak really fast and all you can get is like little words here and there that you understand,” (FG1, F).

“No, because it confuses me.” (FG3, NB).

These examples are the only two occurrences of this code, making it a minor comment rather than a frequent one.

5.3.1.1.5 Grades

The external regulation of grades was expressed only once. This participant seemed aware of the Ebacc system of subject classification, answering the question “Do you think Spanish is a waste of time?” with:

“If you get a GCSE and then you get, like, more points,” (FG2, F).

5.3.1.1.6 Careers

When asked why learning Spanish was important, one participant had an idea of how languages could help in different careers, saying:

“For example, if, if you're like, in a job like for example, like archaeologist or like a journalist and you're trying to like, find like a treasure ... Yeah, well, if you, if a journalist can translate like a script of it, like a piece of it, you can identify where it [sic] the location is,” (FG2, M).

It is interesting to note here that students have a degree of uncertainty around the concrete benefits of LL, perhaps another symptom of the unclear communication around rationales discussed further in Chapter 1, Section 3.

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5.3.1.2 Social and relational motivation

5.3.1.2.1 Openness to others (travelling)

Participants frequently mentioned their future plans to travel, some being aware of the prevalence of Spanish in the world. When asked why learning Spanish was important, one participant said:

“Because if we go on different trips to different countries and they don't speak English, but they might speak Spanish because Spanish is the most spoken language in the world, isn't it?” (FG3, F).

When she was challenged by another participant, who said that Mandarin Chinese was the most spoken language, she replied:

“Anyway. Yeah. Well, those and then English and Spanish are about the same. Then if they didn't know English, they might know Spanish, so then we'd be able to talk to them.” (FG3, F).

Another participant stated,

“It's a key tool for life if you do [learn Spanish], because it's important in ways like traveling, you need to learn different languages to travel,” (FG1, F).

When asked why anyone would want to learn Spanish, this participant replied:

“Because of the culture. In Spanish lessons, we learn about the culture in Spanish as well and all their traditions and stuff like that. Interesting. When you go there, if you go there on Christmas, you know all their traditions and everything.” (FG1, M).

This was a frequently noted code, although some participants had difficulty expressing it, such as this utterance in reply to why learning Spanish matters:

“So if you go there, like, you can speak.” (FG2, F).

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On the idea of finding oneself in a Spanish-speaking country with no-one around to help, one participant expressed a desire to be prepared saying:

“But then like it could, it could happen. It couldn't. But you just kind of need to be ready for if it does happen.” (FG3, F).

Occasionally, utterances were double-coded to openness to others and valuing cognitive stimulation such as this:

“It's very interesting to learn different languages because you could just go over to the country and like, be able like to speak, speak their language.” (FG3, M).

To summarise, learners demonstrated a genuine curiosity about the wider world, viewing LL as a gateway to cultural understanding and global connection. Their comments reflected both an eagerness to engage with people from different backgrounds and a desire to be prepared for real-world encounters, suggesting that learning Spanish nurtured an outward-looking mindset and a sense of belonging beyond their own cultural context.

5.3.1.2.2 Empathy for non-English speakers

Participants expressed empathy several times. When asked if learning Spanish was a waste of time, this participant answered:

“I think it is important because if someone comes into the school and they don't know any English and they're really shy, then I think it's good to learn some stuff. So they [sic] you think like they think that we're on the same page as them, they'd have [less] to worry about and they can kind of communicate with us,” (FG1, M).

Participants also perceived the dominance of English as unfair for speakers of other languages. When others brought up the idea that English was enough, a participant said:

“No, it's not fair on them, but I think it would make it so much easier for them if they knew that we could understand them,” (FG3, F).

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Another participant also seemed to recognise the importance of language to identity, saying:

“Yeah, but then I think the person who speaks Spanish and is shy would rather you take like they feel like you really care about their language and you take the time to learn it,” (FG3, M).

When another participant responded with the ease of AI, he responded with:

“But how do you know there's going to be someone who speaks Spanish and is shy. You just don't know though.” (FG3, M).

5.3.1.2.3 Wishing to avoid consequence

When asked if they learnt Spanish for themselves, their parents or their teachers, some participants felt forced due to MFL being part of the national curriculum. Participants were aware of the school policy on truanting lessons, which was an after-school detention. When asked if they learnt Spanish for themselves, their parents, or their teachers, one participant said:

“Because you'll get a detention if you don't go to Spanish. Because say you just completely hate Spanish, you don't want to learn about it because you've had bad experiences. Then school are saying, No, you're... Okay, so you have Spanish lesson next, and you're like, No, I really don't want to go. If you don't go, you'll get in trouble and stuff. It's almost like saying, No, you will learn Spanish. That's part of the curriculum. When some people might not want to do it,” (FG1, M).

5.3.1.2.4 Sense of obligation

Remarks expressing a sense of obligation came up in conversation against the idea of English being enough, alongside empathy. This participant demonstrated a feeling of guilt with the sense of obligation, saying:

“I would kind of bother because they've actually taken the time. I think they'd appreciate that we knew some, like, not all of it. We don't have that. I don't think they expect us to know all of it, but they'd feel, they'd feel, like, good inside that we've learned their line, like tried to learn their language. But it's kind of guilty because they

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took the time to fully understand our language.” (FG3, F).

One participant seemed embarrassed at the prospect of using AI, saying:

“If you're in a Spanish restaurant, in Spain or something, and you want to order your food, and if they don't speak English, It'll be weird if you just pull out your phone to use a translator,” (FG1, M).

In reply, another participant said:

“It's not like you have an English restaurant in Spain, is it? I'd have to use a Google translator to look at the menus.” (FG1, F).

Another participant was resistant to the idea of speaking English with a non-native speaker to avoid having to learn another language, saying:

“Do you not feel that they've made more of an effort to be your friend with you because they've learned your language?” (FG2, M).

5.3.1.2.5 Family links

Some participants had Spanish speaking relatives, which came up with the question “Do you learn Spanish for yourself, your parents, or your teachers?”, such as this participant saying:

“I speak Spanish because my mum speaks Spanish,” (FG1, F).

Another mentioned family members who lived in Spain, saying:

“I wanna speak to my cousins in Spanish, but they can speak in English to me, but I can't speak in Spanish to them,” (FG2, F).

This last utterance was also coded with a sense of obligation.

As evidenced above, personal connection can help with motivation, as can a sense of

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obligation and duty. However, the more frequent codes are of psychological dimensions related to self, such as a sense of competence.

5.3.1.2.6 Significant others' expectations

Only one participant explained that his family was supportive of his language learning, saying:

“My dad, he likes to try to encourage me to say words in Spanish.” (FG3, M).

5.3.1.3 Sense of agency and control

5.3.1.3.1 Independence

A sense of independence was often coded along with autonomy for either the pet rescue project or the translation project. In answer to the question asking which project participants had enjoyed more, the following remarks were noted:

“Well Miss helped but we actually did the work,” (FG3, M), regarding the translation project, and:

“It was really nice to go through all the animals and choose one,” (FG3, F), regarding the pet rescue project.

5.3.1.3.2 Choice

Choice was often coded along with autonomy in the pet rescue project, such as this participant saying:

“I also liked choosing the animal because there was this really cute cat.” (FG3, F).

5.3.1.4 Amotivation and disengagement

5.3.1.4.1 English is enough

The sense of learning another language being pointless was a recurring theme. Some participants seemed unable or unwilling to imagine a scenario in which Spanish would

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be necessary. In answer to the question on why learning Spanish was important, one participant simply said:

“I just don’t think there’s much point.” (FG2, F).

Others replied more positively, leading her to elaborate with:

“If I just don’t go to Spain, then what’s gonna happen? I’m just gonna magically teleport that right. And now I have to speak Spanish,” (FG2, F).

Even when other participants discussed a desire to travel, she responded with:

“If I just don’t go to Spain, I’ll never need to use it. And as I highly doubt that everyone in Spain only speaks Spanish,” (FG2, F).

When asked if they thought learning Spanish was a waste of time, she was the only participant in her focus group to reply affirmatively, saying:

“I do, yeah. I do.” (FG2, F).

While discussing the possibility of meeting other Spanish people, the same participant mentioned the fact that they would have probably learned English as a second language, saying:

“She can still talk to them in English. You can still talk to them and she like. If you just speak to them in Spanish, there’s not much of a difference there. You just still speaking to them.” (FG2, F).

Members of another focus group made the same observation, one saying:

“Like, what’s the point if, if they’ve already learned yours, then you can speak like that. Just find the common language that you can both can [sic] speak.” (FG3, NB).

Another added:

“I don’t think it’s that important.” (FG3, NB).

The above quotes support the idea that amotivation was closely tied to learners’ limited sense of future self as language users, with several unable to envisage realistic contexts in which Spanish would hold personal relevance. For some, the widespread use of English reinforced the perception that additional languages were unnecessary,

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reducing motivation to engage meaningfully with LL. This view reflects a lack of imagined international or intercultural identity beyond the English-speaking world.

5.3.1.4.2 Difficulty

The female participant quoted above as expressing the feeling that English is enough appeared to express the desire to learn Spanish, but felt that she was unable to do so, saying:

“I just want to speak Spanish. Not my fault, I can't,” (FG2, F).

When the same participant was asked if she felt any satisfaction in being able to communicate in the language, she replied:

“No, because I don't know how to speak Spanish,” (FG2, F).

5.3.1.4.3 AI easily available

The ease of use and wide availability of translation software made one participant feel like language learning was not worth the effort, answering the question on why learning Spanish was important by saying:

“I think that it's not really that important because there's obviously Google Translate on the phone.” (FG3, M).

Sadly, this comment reflects a view of language as a purely functional tool for information exchange, overlooking its social, cultural, and interpersonal dimensions. By equating communication with simple message transfer, the participant demonstrates a transactional understanding of language that neglects its role in building relationships, expressing identity, and engaging authentically with other cultures.

5.3.1.5 General enjoyment

5.3.1.5.1 Enjoying Spanish classes

One category of utterances which did not fit into the other codes was a general sense of enjoying lessons, at times without a clear reason, such as this participant answering what she enjoyed about the lessons by saying:

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“Because when you see it on your thing [timetable], you can either... Sometimes you're actually really looking forward to it and there'll be a really fun lesson. Or it's one of them things where you're not looking forward to do it, but then once you are actually starting to do it, it's actually quite enjoyable,” (FG1, F).

Others felt that their enjoyment came from the teacher, saying:

“I really like Miss's lessons because I think she is a good teacher and patient when we ask a question,” (FG3, M).

Others were a little more vague, such as this participant who replied to the question of who they learned languages for (themselves, parents or teachers):

“It's cool to know language too, so also for yourself, but also because I, probably, if it wasn't for the teachers, I wouldn't be learning Spanish. But it's also cool.” (FG2, NB).

5.3.1.6 Responses specific to intervention one - Pet rescue project

5.3.1.6.1 Positive - autonomy

The element of choice over the animals was a popular theme, with several utterances such as the following answering which project they had enjoyed the most:

“Yeah it was nice to like go through all the animals and choose one,” (FG1, F).

“I also liked choosing the animal because there was this really cute cat.” (FG3, F).

The choice being completely unguided by the teacher was seen as a positive, with another saying:

“Yeah we got to choose an animal for ourselves and then write to ask if we could have it.” (FG2, M).

Some seemed unperturbed by the simulated nature of the task, saying:

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“And then they wrote back to say no but it was fun to look through at the animals.” (FG2, NB).

5.3.1.6.2 Positive - accomplishment

The sense of accomplishment in the pet rescue project came from being able to write a real email and receive a response in Spanish, with this participant saying:

“And I liked it when they wrote back in Spanish because they thought I could speak it properly. Even though I had to ask the teacher to read it for me,” (FG1, M).

When the negative element of the adoption not happening came up, participants responded as follows:

“Yeah but that wasn’t the point was it, the point was writing the email and then reading the email back,” (FG2, M).

“So you could learn the words about them and things.” (FG2, M).

5.3.1.6.3 Negative – sense of disappointment

As mentioned above, some participants were dismayed to find that the adoption was not going to happen in reality. One participant stated:

“Well I really thought that maybe I could get the dog. I even asked my mum if we could get the dog. So I liked that apart from when they said I couldn’t have it,” (FG1, M).

One participant said:

“I liked the animals but we couldn’t actually get the one we wanted so ...” (FG2, F).

Another participant thought that made the project pointless, asking:

“But then what was the point of looking at the animals?” (FG2, F).

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5.3.1.7 Responses specific to intervention two - Translation project

5.3.1.7.1 Positive - autonomy

Participants liked the idea of different translations being possible, diminishing the fear of being incorrect. When answering what they had enjoyed about the lessons, this participant said:

“I liked that it was like you couldn’t be wrong. So even if you did it different to another group it wasn’t wrong it was just different,” (FG1, F).

Another participant replied:

“Yeah, and they could both be right.” (FG1, M).

5.3.1.7.2 Positive - accomplishment

One participant expressed a feeling of accomplishment at the amount he and his group had been able to achieve, saying:

“And like even though there was the teacher and everything that was still a whole story that we did. So like we managed to do quite a lot of translating,” (FG1, M).

When asked which of the two interventions they had preferred, this participant replied:

“Translation because it was more of a challenge.” (FG1, F).

One participant appeared to value the use of the two languages simultaneously, meaning she was working on English and Spanish together. This was also coded with relatedness:

“Like I like learning, like Spanish because ... Because if some people move through here and they're Spanish but they don't know English, it's kind of they're trying. They try the translation of English to Spanish. Kind of actually help them on their English. It's technically working on both languages at the same time, so just one, even though it's more focused on the translation.” (FG2, F).

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5.3.1.7.3 Positive - collaboration

Participants expressed enjoyment of working in groups with what felt like minimal direction from the teacher. One said:

“Well we got to sit in our groups for the whole time so we knew we just had the work and we just did it ourselves,” (FG3, F).

Another said simply:

“I like doing it together.” (FG2, NB).

One gave it as the reason he preferred the translation task to the pet rescue, saying:

“I liked the translation because we were in the groups more for that one.” (FG3, M).

5.3.1.7.4 Positive – links to real-world application

One participant embraced the idea of the translation being similar to a work experience project, saying:

“And even you can get paid for it. So it was like having a job,” (FG1, F).

Unlike the pet rescue project, the simulated nature of the translation did not appear to affect the enjoyment of the project, with another participant replying:

“Yeah, although we didn’t get paid, but it was still fun.” (FG1, M).

5.3.1.7.5 Positive – relatedness to audience

This participant seemed to enjoy the idea of providing a service, saying:

“It was for little kids and they couldn’t speak Spanish,” (FG3, F).

Across both interventions, participants’ enjoyment of the tasks emerged as a key motivational driver. The sense of fun and engagement could have fostered feelings of autonomy through choice and collaboration, competence through perceived

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accomplishment, and relatedness through helping others or authentic communication. In this way, enjoyment functioned not as an end in itself but as a catalyst for deeper motivational gains which may align with the three BPNs of SDT.

5.3.1.8 Comments on the two different interventions

When asked which intervention they had preferred, seven participants answered with the pet rescue project and four stated that they had preferred the translation project. Of those who uttered a clear preference for the pet rescue, one was female, five male and one non-binary. Of those who expressed a clear preference for the translation project, two were female and two male.

The above is suggestive of the pet rescue project being the more enjoyable, particularly for male participants. However, the frequency tables above show that there was some negative feeling about the pet rescue project when participants realised that they would not be able to re-home their chosen animal in reality. No such negative emotion was expressed for the translation project, although the translation was also not published in reality.

5.3.2 Control group results

Table 5.6 below reveals that in terms of frequency, codes relating to perceptions of capability and progress were again mentioned most often, followed by those relating to social and relational motivation. Unlike the intervention groups, no utterances attributable to sense of agency and control were recorded in the control group data. I have grouped the codes according to these themes, again including amotivation and disengagement and general enjoyment as separate groups. Within each theme, I discuss codes in order of most frequent to least frequent. Focus groups four and five (FG4 & FG5) were the control groups.

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Table 5.6

Control groups code frequency table

Code	Frequency females	Frequency males
Accomplishment	10	3
Valuing cognitive stimulation of language learning	9	2
Significant others' expectations	5	5
Openness to others (travelling)	7	1
General enjoyment	5	2
Wishing to avoid consequence	3	3
Confusion	1	1
English is enough	0	1
Difficulty	0	1
Empathy for non-English speakers	0	1
Family links	0	1
Sense of obligation	0	1
Total	40	22

5.3.2.1 Perceptions of capability and progress

5.3.2.1.1 Accomplishment

Participants enjoyed being able to mark their own work and see their success rate immediately after completing a task. When asked if they enjoyed completing difficult tasks in Spanish, one participant said:

“I like it when you hear it and you have understood it. I like it when you do the listening tasks and you write down the answers and then you tick them off, it's good when you

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have ticked like ten out of ten so you got it all right,” (FG4, F).

Participants also expressed satisfaction at completing differentiated tasks, with another participant stating:

“I just think that when you have done it and she tells you you got it right it makes you feel like you are good at it and that’s so cool because you know everyone knows that it is hard,” (FG5, M).

One participant said:

“I like it. I like the hard stuff” (FG4, F).

And another replied to her with:

“Yeah because when you can do that then you know you are good.” (FG4, F).

She replied:

“Yeah and why else would we be here but we are not here to do easy stuff because we could just do that at home probably.” (FG4, F).

And another participant added:

“Yeah I’d say that as well it does feel good especially when the teacher says this bit is the hard bit and you do it and it’s right.” (FG4, M).

5.3.2.1.2 Valuing cognitive stimulation of language learning

Participants seemed to recognise the value of language learning, with answers to why learning Spanish was important including this participant saying:

“Yeah it’s good to know at least one more than English,” (FG5, M).

They also enjoyed knowing more than the people around them, another participant

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built on his idea, saying:

“I mean there’s not that much yet that we can say but it’s still more than, like, other people I know,” (FG5, F).

Another participant replied with:

“Exactly and one day we will be able to have, like, a full conversation.” (FG5, F).

This contributed to the idea of sharing their knowledge with family, with participants enjoying being able to demonstrate their knowledge. With similar thoughts to the intervention groups, one participant said:

“I have been teaching my family a bit.” (FG5, M).

When asked if they felt good about being able to speak Spanish, one participant replied:

“Yeah I have been teaching my family some when we have dinner they ask me for like 3 words and they keep repeating them.” (FG4, F).

Another participant added:

“And you can just walk around speaking Spanish at home even if it’s not right they won’t know.” (FG4, F).

As with the intervention focus group data, these quotes clearly demonstrate that students enjoy feeling challenged and only feel a sense of accomplishment if the challenge is there.

5.3.2.1.3 Confusion

As in the intervention groups, the idea of feeling stressed when listening to a Spanish speaker came up. When asked if they enjoyed hearing Spanish being spoken, one participant answered:

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“Actually that can be a bit scary because if they are speaking and you don’t know then you’re kind of like, stuck for what to say,” (FG5, F).

Another participant added:

“I get it, I like the sound of it, like hearing the words but yeah it can be a bit worrying like, if that happens.” (FG5, M).

5.3.2.2 Social and relational motivation

5.3.2.2.1 Significant others’ expectations

Several participants mentioned their family being supportive or having expectations of their language learning, with one participant saying:

“My parents want to hear at parents' evening that I am doing well,” (FG4, M).

Another participant added:

“When we get our reports they look at that,” (FG4, F).

When asked if they learnt Spanish for themselves, parents or teachers, this participant replied:

“Teachers and also my parents.” (FG5, F).

Another said:

“I mean the teachers obviously expect you to because that's their job but also my parents want me to do well.” (FG4, F).

Another added:

“Oh yeah my parents will be like tell me about some things you learned today and then

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one of them has to be a word I didn't know before so that's usually a Spanish word.” (FG4, M).

One participant felt parental expectation across the board which was not subject specific, saying:

“My parents don't really mention Spanish but they do ask me about, like, my results when we get reports.” (FG5, F).

This data indicates that not many parents specifically care about LL but about grades in general.

5.3.2.2.2 Openness to others (travelling)

One EAL participant expressed openness to others by saying:

“Because like my family we don't speak English very well, well my parents don't speak it very well but we do speak Romanian and so that's two that we have and it's good because you can speak to more people not just like one group,” (FG5, F).

Another participant said:

“I just want to learn Spanish because, like, I want to go there one day,” (FG5, F).

She was responded to by this participant:

“And if we want to travel then there is quite a big part of Spanish [sic] that speaks Spanish so we can travel easier.” (FG5, M).

When asked why learning Spanish was important, this participant responded with:

“Talking to people when they can't speak English.” (FG4, F).

5.3.2.2.3 Wishing to avoid consequence

When asked if they learnt Spanish for themselves, their parents or their teachers, one participant answered:

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“Well really it's the teachers though because they are the ones you are learning it for. I don't know, I mean it's OK and I like it but really if it wasn't for the teachers making us do it I don't think I would do it,” (FG4, M).

5.3.2.2.4 Empathy for non English speakers

This code came up only once, much less frequently than with the intervention group. When asked if learning Spanish was a waste of time, one participant answered:

“No, imagine if like in Spain they think English is a waste of time and then if we here we think that Spanish is a waste of time then how are we ever gonna like speak to each other?” (FG5, M).

5.3.2.2.5 Family links

When asked if they learnt Spanish for themselves or others, the following reply was double coded with a sense of obligation:

“Well my uncle lives there so I feel like my mum and dad want me to learn it so when we go to see him I can do things for them.” (FG4, M).

5.3.2.3 Amotivation and disengagement

5.3.2.3.1 English is enough

In response to the utterance above about Spanish not being a waste of time, one participant responded:

“Yeah but with English it's different because it's everywhere,” (FG5, M).

5.3.2.3.2 Difficulty

While one group was discussing the question of Spanish being a waste of time, one participant said:

“I don't think people think it's a waste of time but maybe they just think it's too hard to make an effort in and so they just don't try,” (FG5, M).

5.3.2.4 General Enjoyment

5.3.2.4.1 Enjoyment

Participants enjoyed that the mixture of tasks (reading, writing, speaking and listening) meant that the lessons felt broken down into chunks, which passed the time quickly. Speaking tasks were particularly popular as participants felt unable to speak in some other subjects. When asked what they enjoyed about lessons, one said:

“I like that we get to speak because in some lessons you have to just be in silence for like the whole time but Miss will say we need to do this and after that we will speak and then you get to have a conversation to the person next to you so it breaks up the lesson a bit,” (FG5, M).

Another built on this idea, adding:

“Oh yeah and then it's the end of the lesson and you're like, what?” (FG5, F).

When asked if they learnt Spanish for themselves, parents or teachers, this participant responded:

“Well teachers because they are the ones who make you do the work but I like doing it.” (FG4, F).

Another participant responded:

“Yeah I would still do it anyway.” (FG4, F).

And another added:

“Yeah even if Miss wasn't there we can do Duolingo or something.” (FG4, M).

5.3.3 Comparison of intervention and control qualitative data

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Both the control groups and intervention groups appear to value accomplishment and the cognitive stimulation of language learning, with the former taking precedence in the control groups and the latter in the intervention groups. This is a sign that, even without the intervention, students have a basic intrinsic desire to engage with LL.

The short nature of many control group class activities, such as specific skill-based tasks of five to ten minutes duration which students self-marked, appears to have been a motivating factor for the control group, perhaps increasing their sense of accomplishment. These short tasks are a contrast to the project-based intervention, which had a larger, longer term end goal of a completed translation or email.

The utterances attributed to the code of valuing the cognitive stimulation of language learning in the intervention group were expressed more frequently, and participants had a wider range of thoughts to contribute in this regard. Additionally, a sense of empathy for non-English speakers was much more frequently coded in the intervention groups. This may be because the pet rescue task contained real communication with Spanish speakers, and the translation task had the simulated goal of aiding non-Spanish speaking children to access a text. It is possible that these two tasks could have fostered a sense of empathy in the participants.

In both intervention tasks, the most frequently coded feeling was that of autonomy. This suggests that what participants valued most of all was the sense of independence and choice they perceived.

The qualitative data is also suggestive of the pet rescue task being the more enjoyable, particularly among male participants.

Unsurprisingly, in the Anglophone context of this research, the sense of English being enough was the most frequently coded form of amotivation or disengagement, in both the control and intervention groups. However, the intervention groups had a greater variety of positive things to say, which is promising for future curriculum design.

There was little gender difference in any type of motivation in either group. However, there is a well known difference in GCSE uptake between genders. This will be further discussed in the next chapter.

5.4 Summary of chapter

In summary, the quantitative data revealed that nearly all pre-post improvements I hoped for in the intervention groups were achieved. Qualitative data further elaborated on what the participants especially liked and the range of motivational orientations.

Overall, students mentioned themes relating to intrinsic motivation most, such as a sense of agency and control, and curiosity and openness to other cultures and languages. Enjoying the lesson, and the cognitive stimulation during the lesson (and outside), was also important. Furthermore, it is noticeable that more females than males expressed the opinion that ‘English is enough’.

There were cases and groups where improvements were partial, the first of these were the strongly amotivated learners who appeared not to be reached by the aims of the intervention. I believe this may be because of a sense of amotivation towards school and education in general, which would perhaps require a school-wide intervention. The second group is those who were disappointed about the real-life changes not being realised. This could be due to the age and level of maturity of the participants.

Chapter 6 - Discussion

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I interpret the key findings and consider how these could be applied in educational practice. I outline the contribution the study makes to the field of curriculum design, both theoretical and empirical, and how it informs current literature. I discuss limitations, and make recommendations on future policy, practice and research.

6.2 Interpretation

The quantitative results validate the hypothesis that a task-inspired intervention can positively impact motivation amongst Key Stage 3 students, with a medium to large effect size in each motivational orientation. While these results are reported across distinct motivational orientations, it is important to note that, as indicated by the pilot factor analysis (Chapter 4 Section 7.5.1), these may reflect broader underlying motivational dimensions in this age group. The intervention effect on motivation did not differ between genders, and female students remained more likely to continue MFL study at GCSE both before and after the intervention. However, there was an increase in the inclination of males to continue to GCSE level study post-intervention, which is promising.

This study failed to provide evidence that the interventions might close a (purported) gap between male and female motivation levels in MFL study. Motivation in males is reported to be lower than females both in formal education generally (Lietaert et al, 2015) and MFL specifically (Davies, 2004). This was the case for the control groups, in line with current research (Education Policy Institute, 2020; Davies, 2004), but not for the intervention groups. For these participants, both genders benefited equally from the intervention.

Regarding qualitative data, these suggest that boys, in particular, were receptive to the pet rescue type of task. As in the quantitative data, there was no significant gender difference in motivation in the intervention groups, contrary to expectations (Burgess et al, 2004). The results support the hypothesis that a task-inspired curriculum could be an avenue to raise the intention to continue with GCSE study, therefore raising entries of GCSE MFL, now an optional subject. When genders were compared, females remained more inclined to continue study, although there was a small increase in males' intention towards continuing Spanish from pre- to post-intervention. This is a promising sign and could be followed up by further research, given that

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gender can be a more significant variable influencing success in MFL than socio-economic background (Education Policy Institute, 2020).

Furthermore, regarding the third data type, the immediate post-lesson feedback suggests that students enjoyed the control lessons about as much, sometimes more than, intervention lessons. To explain these findings, I would suggest that knowing the format of 'normal' lessons from term one gave a sense of familiarity which the students valued. For example, each lesson contained a phonics starter, a grammar explanation and some assessment for learning (AFL) activities such as reading or listening tasks which were immediately self-assessed. Results from the qualitative data suggest that participants valued the nature of the short activities giving the lesson a sense of pace, and the immediate gratification which came from self-marking each exercise. The immediate post lesson data suggests that the nature of these tasks fostered their sense of accomplishment, therefore enabling a feeling of competence.

Regarding the enjoyment of the intervention lessons, qualitative data suggests that the intervention students valued the sense of agency and control they felt over their own learning. Both interventions afforded the learners this sense of agency. In the pet rescue project, the chance to choose their own animal promoted this feeling the most. In the translation project, the students' experience of relatively low level teacher input was a strong motivator. Intervention participants also felt a perception of capability and progress, which came from the feeling of achievement upon completing the project. With the pet rescue project, sending a completed email promoted this feeling of accomplishment. In the translation task, completing what felt to the students like a large amount of translation - a complete rhyming story - also led to a sense of accomplishment. Looking at currently available pets in a real animal shelter and writing to the staff, knowing that the staff were native Spanish speakers and receiving a reply, enabled a real-world link which the control materials lacked. This perception of relevance leads to increased engagement and, ultimately, the ability of learners to drive their own learning (Berry, 2020). This activity also appears to have increased empathy towards non-native English speakers: the relevant code appeared much more frequently in qualitative data of the intervention groups than the control groups. An emotional engagement with (imaginary) L2 speakers was also present in the translation task: although the translation agency was not a real commercial enterprise, students reported feeling a sense of relatedness to the audience in providing a service

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for the Spanish-speaking community. Knowledge of the task being something which 'in real life' would be remunerated could have also contributed to this feeling of real-world relevance, as many activities done in a classroom session have no obvious point other than the completion itself. This nature of real-world tasks versus decontextualised classroom activities is emphasised by both Ellis and Long when describing how TBLT differs from traditional classroom practice (Ellis, 2003, 2009a; Long, 1985).

In sum, this study shows that increasing the relation between classroom and real life via task-based learning can lead to an increase in both agency and capability, as perceived by learners. Taking the continuum of personal meaningfulness devised by Prinski, Hecht & Harackiewicz (2017), identification is the most personally meaningful degree of relevance, in which the stimulus is incorporated into individual identity. The intervention tasks both reached this level of relevance, firstly by allowing learners to identify as pet rescuers, secondly as translators. The results suggest that replication of the projects with both tasks, carried out in larger scale and over a longer period, would be desirable to increase the rigour of the findings from this study. However, it is necessary to bear in mind that students experiencing the control materials also fostered a sense of capability and progress, but less of a sense of agency and control. Overall, the findings suggest that task-based approaches may be particularly effective in raising motivation more broadly. This interpretation is consistent with the view that, in younger learners, motivational orientations may be experienced in a more integrated manner, shaped strongly by classroom context and task design.

6.3 Theoretical integration

6.3.1 Motivation through tasks

The findings of this study contribute to ongoing debates about the nature and function of motivation in L2 learning. While previous research conceptualised motivation as an individual trait or internal state (Corder, 1967), the present study suggests that motivation is highly situated, emerging through interaction, task engagement, and classroom dynamics. Motivation increased with a task-based pedagogy, which is a form of autonomy-supportive teaching. Rather than viewing motivation as a fixed precondition for success, this study positions it as something that can be nurtured through design: the outcome of meaningful, achievable, and personally relevant

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activity contributing to the fulfilment of the three BPNs. This reconceptualisation aligns with the view that motivation is not simply an antecedent to learning but also a by-product of effective pedagogical design (Ushioda, 2020), constantly shaped by relationships, interactions and experiences (see Chapter 3, Section 3.3.1).

In the data from this study, learner motivation appeared to fluctuate not as a function of inherent ability or personality, but according to how lessons were structured and how meaningfully learners could participate. When tasks were purposeful, achievable, and connected to learners' real-world interests, motivation was raised. This supports the argument made by Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) that motivation is both dynamic and co-constructed, continuously shaped by the affordances and constraints of the immediate learning situation.

TBLT conceptualises learning as the process of using language to achieve communicable goals, rather than as the accumulation of discrete linguistic knowledge (Ellis, 2018; Willis & Willis, 2007). The qualitative data points towards learners feeling that their study was meaningful and achievable. On examination of the qualitative data in this study, several participants described experiences consistent with Csikszentmihalyi's (1988), Egbert's (2003) and Dörnyei, Henry and Muir's (2016) perception of flow: a sense of absorption, challenge, and satisfaction when working on creative tasks. This suggests that well-designed tasks can create optimised motivational conditions by balancing difficulty with support, and allowing learners to experience progress and agency. Tasks that are authentic, goal-oriented, and contextually relevant invite learners to see the immediate purpose of language use. This instrumental clarity can transform perceived effort into meaningful investment. The two tasks implemented in this study illustrate how project-based or extended tasks can sustain interest over time, as learners saw tangible progress and outcomes.

The findings also challenge the assessment-heavy nature of the secondary MFL classroom. When assessment becomes the primary driver of classroom activity, the motivational climate can shift from exploration to performance, and the emotional rewards of learning are replaced by anxiety and avoidance. The findings of this study suggest that task-based pedagogy has the potential to counteract this pattern by reinstating purpose and agency as central motivational forces. Learners who feel that

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their classroom activities have real communicative value and personal relevance are more likely to experience a sense of ownership and enjoyment.

It is important to acknowledge that motivation is not just shaped in the classroom, but by many socio-cultural and educational external forces as well. Consideration must be given to parental expectation, high-stakes assessment, negative parental attitude, societal discourse towards 'otherness' and school policy on MFL. Motivation is multi-layered, shaped by top-down messaging on the usefulness or difficulty of LL, as well as by bottom-up classroom experience and teaching styles. Task-based and other autonomy-supportive pedagogies may therefore act as local interventions within a broader motivational landscape. This means that there will always be a threshold limit on the extent that classroom delivery may influence motivation, and especially reach the group of most amotivated learners, vocal in this study in the qualitative data. In short, pedagogical innovation should be accompanied by cultural and institutional change if motivation is to be sustained across cohorts and contexts.

6.3.2 SDT in the classroom

According to SDT principles, learner motivation flourishes when three basic psychological needs are supported. The task-inspired approach utilised in this study offered opportunities for all three needs to be met. Learners reported greater enjoyment when tasks allowed for personal choice, creative outcomes, or collaborative interaction. In these contexts, autonomy was not so much synonymous with independence, which can be difficult to put in place with younger learners, but with interdependence - the ability to make meaningful contributions within a structured but flexible environment.

Competence was fostered through scaffolding and opportunities for success at appropriate levels of challenge, while relatedness was developed through tasks which encouraged co-operation, peer support, and real-world communication. These findings echo the growing body of evidence that autonomy-supportive classrooms are associated with higher intrinsic motivation and deeper engagement (Reeve, 2012). Importantly, however, this study extends SDT into the specific context of the compulsory MFL classroom, where learner choice is limited by curriculum policy. Even within such constraints, task design in this study has shown learner motivational gains,

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demonstrating that the principles of SDT are applicable not only in elective but also in compulsory L2 education contexts.

An important consideration emerging from this study concerns the structure of motivational constructs in younger learners. While the questionnaire was designed to reflect the distinctions proposed within self-determination theory, exploratory factor analysis conducted on the pilot data suggested a more consolidated structure. This aligns with previous research indicating that motivation in younger learners may be experienced in less differentiated ways, and may be more strongly shaped by immediate classroom context (Lamb, 2017; Dörnyei, 2005).

In this sense, the findings of this study may be more appropriately interpreted as reflecting broader shifts between more controlled and more autonomous forms of motivation, rather than finer distinctions between individual subtypes. This does not undermine the usefulness of SDT as a framework, but rather highlights the importance of considering developmental stage when applying its motivational orientations in school contexts. Therefore, I present the findings as exploratory and recommend that future research clarifies the structure of motivational orientations with younger learners, as recommended by Flores-Kanter et al (2025), a study which cautions against the common practice of generating summed scores across items associated with originally proposed factors in established instruments.

Finally, the finding that both autonomous and controlled forms of motivation increased following the intervention requires careful interpretation with regard to SDT. While the increase in autonomous motivation aligns with theoretical expectations of a task-based approach, in which learner agency, meaningful content, and real-world relevance are paramount, the rise in controlled motivation might initially appear unexpected from an orthodox SDT perspective. However, closer examination of the task characteristics of both interventions suggests that this finding is theoretically coherent.

In the pet rescue project, students were required to produce a structured email to a real shelter in Spain. The task had clearly defined components and was evaluated against an external real-world standard - the shelter itself was a genuine recipient. These characteristics align closely with those identified by Al-Hoorie (2024) as conducive to controlled motivation: structured, close-ended output with clearly defined

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performance criteria. In the translation project, the two-stage process produced a similar dynamic: the initial literal translation stage demanded accuracy and adherence to the source text, again consistent with Al-Hoorie's task characteristics for controlled motivation, while the subsequent creative reworking, in which different versions were equally valid, invited the open-ended engagement more associated with autonomous regulation.

This analysis suggests that the motivational profile of both interventions was, in effect, multidimensional by design, even if not explicitly framed as such at the outset. Drawing on the meta-analytic evidence reviewed by Miele, Fujita and Scholer (2024), and on Al-Hoorie's (2024) concept of task-motivation fit, the increase in controlled motivation can be understood not as an undesirable side effect but as an appropriate regulatory response to specific task demands. Autonomous and controlled motivation are, as Al-Hoorie (2024) argues, complementary rather than antagonistic, and an intervention that raises both may reflect a richer and more ecologically valid motivational response than one that increases autonomous motivation alone. This interpretation is particularly pertinent in the secondary MFL classroom, where learners must navigate both the intrinsic rewards of language use and the external structures of formal assessment.

6.4 Implications

6.4.1 For policy-makers

The OCRR states that the curriculum is negatively impacting learner motivation, recommending improving learners' self-efficacy by ensuring that they experience success in their learning and are clear about how to make progress. (Ofsted, 2021). According to the results of this study, a sense of capability and progress is experienced by learners using the NCELP control materials, but a sense of agency and control and social and relational motivation were less than with the intervention materials.

While this study did not measure learning outcomes, it has been found by Ezzaidi (2020), Şakrak- Ekin and Balçıkanlı (2019), Alrabai and Alamer (2024) and Jiang, Tian & Lou (2024), that raising learner autonomy has a direct positive correlation on learner outcomes. Since autonomy-supportive teaching has been found to increase learners' autonomous motivation in MFL specifically (Parrish et al, 2024), this ought to be given

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more consideration in pre-service teacher training, particularly since the results of Parrish's study were even more pronounced in the context of MFL being an optional subject. Additionally, TBLT has been shown to be more effective on a range of L2 learning outcomes than non-TBLT (Bryfonski & McKay, 2019; Shintani, 2011; 2015; González-Lloret & Nielson, 2015; Namaziandost & Bohloulzadeh, 2017; Mudra, 2016; Mohamedamin & Seyyedi, 2025; Alshahrani & Saud, 2024, Keck et al, 2006; Jabri & Fadhlou, 2023). In other words, the TBLT pedagogy applied here has the potential to influence not only motivation, but also learning outcomes.

The control materials used in this study were created by NCELP with central government funding and provided free of charge to schools. Since the study took place, NCELP has been disbanded, although the resources are still freely available from the Language Driven Pedagogy (LDP) website. Funding for MFL education is currently allocated to the National Consortium of Linguistic Education (NCLE), run by the UCL's Institute of Education. NCLE has not, thus far, provided lesson-by-lesson resources with schemes of work. If centrally made resources were to be re-designed and shared, it would perhaps be advisable to focus on nurturing learners' BPN fulfilment, something which appeared limited in the NCELP materials.

6.4.2 For educators

East (2022) noted the difficulty in convincing teachers, often restricted by large class sizes, time constraints, and assessment policies, of the merits of TBLT as a well-grounded theory, due to the lack of empirical evidence. This study is an example of empirical evidence into how TBLT can nonetheless be effective in raising motivation. As a school teacher myself, I appreciate the difficulty in teaching large classes with a limited amount of curriculum time and high-stakes assessments, particularly when members of the class experience a lack of motivation. I hope that the results will encourage more teachers to consider this approach.

The Department for Education in England defines the purpose of study of MFL at Key Stage 3 as follows -

Learning a foreign language is a *liberation from insularity* and provides an opening to other cultures. A *high-quality languages education should foster pupils' curiosity and deepen their understanding of the world*. The teaching should enable pupils to express their ideas and thoughts in another language

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and to *understand and respond to its speakers*, both in speech and in writing. It should also *provide opportunities for them to communicate for practical purposes*, learn new ways of thinking and *read great literature in the original language*. Language teaching should provide the foundation for learning further languages, *equipping pupils to study and work in other countries*.

(Department for Education, 2013, emphasis added).

I have italicised the text above where the task-based approach meets the purposes described. The pet rescue project fostered learner curiosity and increased participants' level of empathy for speakers of languages other than English (LOTE). It provided an opportunity for practical communication, which strengthened perceptions of capability and progress.

The translation project provided an opportunity to read Spanish children's literature, helping to deepen understanding of the world and the opportunities available to study and work in other countries. This, too, had a positive impact on the perception of capability, progress and openness towards others of the participants.

The above shows how the national guidelines for Key Stage 3 curriculum design can be interpreted to include tasks which participants can enjoy doing and which can provide a liberation from insularity. It is worth remembering that the participating school has a higher than national average percentage of PP students, as well as those with SEN. Many of these pupils had never travelled internationally, or had any meaningful interaction with speakers of LOTE. These tasks were able to break down barriers of communication between countries and languages in a way in which they are likely to never have experienced, and would not have experienced in the classroom if the control materials were used exclusively throughout Key Stage 3.

6.4.3 For school leaders

This study demonstrates that learner motivation can be increased with a task-based methodology. This is not explicitly referred to in the 2016 TSC review, on which the OCRR has based its recommendations on what it considers 'high-quality language education'. Schools necessarily hold the OCRR in high regard due to the nature of Ofsted as their regulatory body. However, it is imperative that school leaders look for

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evidence-based methods of increasing motivation in order to allow their cohorts to make informed choices when the time comes to select their GCSE subjects.

Additionally, in the participating school of this study, as in many other UK schools, there was no learner freedom over the choice of language. Despite French being the taught MFL in every feeder primary school, Spanish was the only language available at Key Stage 3 (this was changed after the study due to mine and my colleague's pitch to SLT to introduce a choice between French and Spanish).¹ Sometimes this is unavoidable, due to the retention crisis of secondary teachers in the UK, with MFL teachers particularly affected (Quantum Scholars, 2023). However, if there is the option to choose the language of study, this would aid the sense of autonomy, and consequently the level of motivation. Although a 'fresh start' in a new language can work under the right motivational conditions, motivation is found to be higher in those pupils who continue in the same language from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 (Bolster, 2009).

6.4.4 For researchers

The study is a response to several calls for research into the application of TBLT. Bygate (2020) remarked upon the need for classroom studies with regular classes, and East (2022) recommended classroom-based research in mainstream secondary and high-stakes exam contexts. Poupore (2014) noted the need for research into the motivational effects of content and design of task characteristics. Additionally, it contributes to a gap in the SDT research, as the majority of this is conducted with post-secondary students of English as a L2 (Boo, Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; McEown, Noels & Chaffee, 2014). It demonstrates an excellent fit between the principles of TBLT (authenticity, collaboration, task orientation and a student-centred approach) and the basic psychological needs of SDT. It also confirms the findings of Parrish and Vernon (2022) of SDT being a suitable framework through which to assess anglophone LL motivation.

As Bygate (2020), Andon (2018) and Baralt (2018) note, the difficulty of TBLT is in moving it from theory to practice. I argue that by using Ellis' (2003) definition, less rigid

¹ The school policy of Spanish as the only Key Stage 3 MFL was in effect when we joined the school. As we had pupils who chose to learn French at Key Stages 4 and 5, and were both qualified to deliver it, SLT agreed to our proposal of re-introduction at Key Stage 3.

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than those of Long (2015), Skehan (1998) and Willis & Willis (2007) this can be achieved more realistically in the UK school context. Put simply, for TBLT to survive, it must address the priorities and needs of classroom stakeholders (Bygate, 2020). In the high-stakes environment of Key Stage 3, this means it must adhere to the curriculum requirements of phonics, vocabulary and grammar. Theorists ought to consider this when expanding upon TBLT, as Bygate (2016) did when he explained four different methods of delivery - needs-based, the three-phase model of pre, on, and post-task, discovery based and project based. This study used the project-based approach, which is why projects, or project-based learning (PBL), discussed in the recommendations, can be used to refer to the same pedagogical approach.

The study supports the finding of Tavakoli, Lotfi & Biria (2019) that TBLT raises learner motivation when compared to a control group. Findings differed from the theory of Rubic & Matijević (2019), which was that external motivation can shift to internal when the classroom environment supports the three basic psychological needs. Instead, I found that both external regulation and intrinsic motivation improved. I would suggest that this is due to the age of the participants, as parental approval is still important to them, whereas Rubic & Matijević theorise on English for Specific Purposes (ESP), which usually involves older learners. See also Section 6.3.2, in which task-motivation fit is discussed.

Results also endorse Carreres (2006) assertion that translation can boost motivation, and Gultekin's (2021) suggestion that it fosters active and meaningful participation in the classroom. As Barnes (2018) discovered, UK GCSE Spanish pupils enjoyed translation when it was delivered in a TBLT manner, and worked in groups.

Finally, the study shows that increasing learner motivation in the compulsory stage is possible with a pedagogical intervention. It had a small effect on the inclination to continue GCSE study among male participants, which is encouraging.

6.5 Limitations

This study has several limitations, relating to scope, data, and ultimate significance. Relating to the data gathered, the study did not include a measure of language progress, discussed further in Sections 4.1 and 6.4 of this chapter. This was due to the focus on evaluating the psychological dimension and effects on decision making for GCSE instead, and is something which would be useful to examine in future

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research, as it could be instrumental in establishing this pedagogy more widely - particularly in the assessment-heavy Key Stage 3 context. However, the government must consider the inescapable fact that if learners do not feel motivated to continue, as long as MFL is an optional subject, they will vote with their feet at age 15 against it. No amount of 'measured progress' can compensate for the loss of students.

Regarding the scope, the study is inevitably limited by being situated in one secondary school only. This was a fairly typical UK state secondary; however, it was situated in a small northern city. In a larger, more linguistically diverse urban area the results may differ.

Thirdly, although this study ultimately advocates a TBLT based approach to increase LL motivation, it is important to consider its contextualisation in an anglophone country. As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, in the context of Global English, learner motivation in anglophone contexts faces a particular challenge. Thus, results of this study can be considered of relevance first and foremost in similarly challenging anglophone contexts: beyond this, and for language learners of English in particular, it would be advisable to refrain from generalisation. Additionally, as mentioned in Chapter 4 Section 1.5, the non-probability based selection of participants means it is not possible to apply the results of the study to the general population, as empirical association and causation cannot be generalised (Stratton, 2021). Despite this, the credibility is increased by the high participation rate (95%), the precise nature of the Research Questions, and the fact that each group was composed of a mixture of students identified as PP, SEN and EAL, similar to the population of many state school classes.

A further limitation of this study concerns the construct validity of the questionnaire. Although the instrument was designed to measure distinct motivational orientations within self-determination theory, exploratory factor analysis conducted on the pilot data suggested a more consolidated factor structure in this sample. This may indicate that participants did not clearly distinguish between the proposed subtypes of motivation. Furthermore, as item-level data were not retained for the main study, it was not possible to reconstruct alternative factor-based scales for subsequent analysis. As a result, the quantitative findings are based on theoretically defined subscales and should be interpreted with caution, particularly in relation to specific distinctions between motivational orientations. This is an approach endorsed by Borgstede (2019)

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and Flores Kanter et al (2025), who question the common practice of generating summed scores across originally proposed factors in scale scores.

Another possible limitation is the validity of responses to intention to continue MFL study at GCSE. This decision is made by most learners in Year 9, two years on from the age of participants in this study. As discussed in Chapter 4, the control participants completing the intervention materials once the study was finished means a delayed post-test immediately before GCSE options would not produce any meaningful data. One further avenue of study could cover the entirety of Key Stage 3, but this may not be possible with regard to curriculum constraints, teacher willingness, ethics and maintaining control and intervention groups for this length of time. Additionally, the rate of attrition would likely be higher due to the longer time scale. Since neuroscience tells us that decision making processes change from childhood to adolescence (Jacobs & Klaczynski, 2002), perhaps a similar study done in Year 9 would produce some more reliable predictions on students' future GCSE subject choices, rather than simply intention towards choice. The way in which options are presented must also be taken into consideration, as learners sometimes feel their choices are restricted by measures such as option blocks provided by the school making certain combinations impossible (Barrance & Elwood, 2018) and the importance each individual school places on MFL has a considerable impact, with some mandating languages for all, some encouraging or insisting upon a language for those who show academic promise, and others (like the participating school in this study) offering a free choice (Hua, Arfon & Hunter, 2026).

A further potential limitation relates to the design of the focus group schedule. The questions were largely structured around the items of the questionnaire, replicating its thematic focus. It could therefore be argued that a schedule designed more specifically around the SDT literature might have allowed for more targeted exploration of BPN satisfaction. However, the richness and depth of the data generated across all five focus groups, including the emergence of inductive codes not anticipated by the original framework, and the range and nuance of participant responses, suggests that the schedule was nonetheless effective in eliciting meaningful motivational data from participants.

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Finally, while this study focused on pre- and post-intervention changes in motivation, future research could usefully explore relationships between variables such as enjoyment, motivation, and intention to continue, if data is collected at the individual level.

6.6 Recommendations

Drawing on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are directed at the key stakeholders of policy-makers, educators, school leaders, and researchers. These recommendations are intended to bridge the gap between theory and practice by outlining actionable steps to support LL motivation and, ultimately, address the ongoing challenges in MFL uptake.

6.6.1 For policy-makers

At policy level, the findings of this study point to the need for a more coherent and motivation-sensitive approach to MFL education. The following recommendations focus on how policy can better support what is known about how motivation develops and is sustained in classroom contexts, with a view to fostering more sustained engagement.

6.6.1.1 Rethinking assessment

If GCSE is to remain optional, and Ofsted (2015) finds the lack of motivation a key reason for discontinuing, motivation ought to be prioritised in order to increase numbers. An important step towards remedying this at a national level is to redesign assessment. There is a noticeable absence of creative and autonomous use of the L2 in many MFL classrooms, with tightly controlled and repetitive exercises frequently seen (Wingate & Andon, 2017). I believe this is not the fault of MFL teachers, but of the high-stakes nature of assessment squeezing creativity out of the curriculum. Currently, GCSE assessment narrows the curriculum (Committee for Linguistics in Education, 2024). Connecting it to a broader curriculum would respond more flexibly to diverse learner needs. This could be achieved by offering a range of alternative qualifications, both pre and post-16, which focus on skills. A promising example is the new Accreditation in Languages for Business, which is assessed through both examinations and tasks such as giving a sales pitch (Language Alliance, n.d.). Currently, there are many academic voices demanding a change to GCSE, or an

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integration of the current assessment system with the more competence based one of language ladders (Hunt, 2026; Kenny, 2026).

One example of the restrictive nature of the GCSE can be seen below, in the examiners' reports for the 2024 French and Spanish writing papers. The French foundation tier mark scheme does not allow *vraiment* as a translation of 'very', as it is not seen as a direct substitution. However, I would argue that the message of the original English sentence can be successfully conveyed with this word, depending on context, such as in the example below. When compared to the Spanish mark scheme, both the foundation and higher tier show examples of more flexibility, highlighting a disparity in the awarding of marks. This is despite Ofqual's (2019) recognition that French and German grading standards needed to be adjusted to be brought into line with Spanish. Here, *me gustaría* is accepted as a translation of 'I want' at foundation level, and *información* accepted as 'news' at higher level, despite neither being a direct translation. I believe that the assessment of the translation element of the exam is overly repressive and marks should be awarded for more creative use of language.

My father is very sporty.	The vocabulary here is familiar to students and on the whole, the messages were successfully conveyed. However, some students incorrectly used <i>trop</i> or <i>vraiment</i> for <i>très</i> .
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AQA Examiners' report, June 2024, GCSE French foundation tier writing paper (AQA, 2024a).

I want	Many used <i>me gustaría</i> rather than <i>quiero</i> , but this was fine. However, this section proved challenging for many.
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AQA Examiners' report, June 2024, GCSE Spanish foundation tier writing paper (AQA, 2024b).

news about the environment.	<i>Noticias</i> was often rendered as <i>información</i> , which was accepted, and this was done quite well. The most common error was to translate 'news' as <i>nuevos</i> .
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AQA Examiners' report, June 2024, GCSE Spanish higher tier writing paper (AQA, 2024c).

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As Ismail et al demonstrated in 2023, authentic assessment is shown to increase self-regulation, autonomy and self-efficacy. Therefore, a redesigned GCSE could focus more on effective communication demonstrated in real-life ways.

The definition of an authentic assessment is a real-world task, which can be an exact duplicate of, or comparable to, the types of issues faced by adults in their real lives (Mueller, 2005). For example, the International Baccalaureate equivalent to the GCSE, the MYP eAssessment, assesses writing in the form of text types such as emails, blogs, letters and posters. Students are expected to express ideas in 'meaningful and creative ways' (International Baccalaureate, 2025a). It is disappointing, therefore, to learn that the DfE will reduce funding for state schools which offer the IB programme in 2026 - particularly given that language acquisition is a key part of its post-16 provision (International Baccalaureate, 2025b).

Similarly, both the *Diplôme d'Études en Langue Française* (DELF), and the *Diploma de Español como Lengua Extranjera* (DELE) exams, including the junior versions, contain a writing element in which the candidate may fill in a form, respond to a message or post to an online forum (France Éducation International, n.d.; Instituto Cervantes, n.d.).

A common concern shared by MFL teachers in the UK is the rigour of the curriculum. The feeling of having to fit so much linguistic content into the limited contact time available leads many to feel unable to implement more creative projects (Claro, 2021). When learners feel that there is a positive climate for learning and their teacher is autonomy-supportive, their language learning is more autonomous (Parrish et al, 2024). Crucially, these positive effects are amplified in contexts where MFL is offered as an optional subject, suggesting that both teacher practice and curriculum structure interact to shape motivational outcomes. These findings have clear implications for Key Stage 3 curriculum design: to sustain learner engagement, curricula should be developed with greater flexibility and built-in opportunities for student choice. Additionally, teacher training and classroom practices should explicitly incorporate principles of Self-Determination Theory, equipping educators with knowledge to support autonomy, competence, and relatedness in the classroom environment.

I argue that pushing for a 'broad, ambitious and knowledge-rich curriculum until at least the age of 16' (Gibb, 2021), causes educators to feel unable to deviate from

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materials dense in grammar and complex structures. Instead, teachers should be able to embrace creativity and plan engaging, authentic tasks or projects which learners find relevant, and which afford them a degree of autonomy. No government policy can replicate the influence of a good teacher.

6.6.1.2 Autonomy-supportive teaching

Reeve & Cheon (2021) identify TBLT as a form of autonomy-supportive teaching, as it shows learners the usefulness and personal relevance of their class activity. They define autonomy-supportive teaching as instructional approaches which allow student voice, choice and active participation. Wang et al (2024) found that autonomy-supportive practice by teachers led to higher learner engagement and improved performance. Chen & Wright (2017) recommended teacher training which empowered teachers to develop their own autonomy, but as mentioned above, the rigour of the UK curriculum means that many feel unable to plan and teach with autonomy. Lanvers & Graham (2022) note that the combination of Academisation, streamlined top-down training and the OCRR (Ofsted Curriculum Research Review 2021) have reduced teacher autonomy, rather than encouraged it. Training on this is one of their recommendations, along with the removal of target-setting, allowing schools the freedom to teach languages which pupils want to learn, and supporting learner relatedness and competence.

6.6.1.3 The conceptualisation and communication of rationales

Bowler (2025) and Lanvers (2024, 2025b) both remark on the rationales of LL needing to be better communicated. Given the unique status of English as a global *lingua franca*, UK policy makers - and indeed those in any anglophone country - ought to emphasise the communication of the non-material benefits of LL. This has the potential to raise motivation more holistically, encouraging the consideration of not just the utilitarian purposes of languages but their individual and societal benefits. In this regard, Bowler's recommendation of reframing LL is logical - as the mathematical mindset appears to be embraced (such a high proportion of the curriculum is devoted to maths, despite the prevalence of calculators) publicising the benefits of a 'languages mindset' may well pay dividends.

Finally, Bowler (2025) lists empathy as one of the transferable skills attributed to LL, and one that is needed in the digital age. The real-world, communicative element of

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the tasks used in this study appears to have raised the level of empathy among participants, which could play a part in improving the social cohesion of the UK, currently somewhat divided (see Chapter 1 Section 3).

6.6.2 For educators

This section makes recommendations for classroom level actions relating to TBLT and SDT, with examples of tasks which I have found successful and which could be adapted.

6.6.2.1 TBLT

The degree of modification of existing practices, or change to entirely different methodology, depends on the understanding of task-based approaches. For instance, Long (2015) is more rigid in his definition of a Task-Based approach than Ellis. However, Long concedes that a Task-Supported curriculum (TSLT) may be considered as a bridge between TBLT and a 'synthetic' syllabus (discussed in detail in Chapter 3, section 2.7). In fact, the difference between TBLT and TSLT can be difficult to conceptualise, even by researchers. For example, almost every study used in Bryfonski & McKay's 2015 meta-analysis on the effectiveness of TBLT was later judged to be unsuitable, better defined as TSLT than TBLT (Boers et al, 2020). I believe the TSLT approach is worth considering across Key Stage 3 of the UK MFL curriculum, as it has the potential to raise motivation while also maintaining intentional learning, focusing on form during the *task-as-process* phase.

One concern I shared with the teacher of the intervention groups was the relatively small amount of focus on form present during the translation task, leaving us both to feel unsure of how much linguistic advancement the learners achieved during this project. I am confident that other teachers considering adopting the approach outlined in this study would have the same concern, and would therefore recommend a TSLT approach as a 'happy medium'. One must also consider that TBLT, when used in a low-exposure environment like the UK MFL classroom, necessitates a greater prominence of teacher instruction, rather than facilitation as could be the case in an immersive environment (East, 2025; Shehadeh, 2012). As Ellis (2003) suggests, focus can shift from meaning to form within a task, and learning can become intentional. However, the higher importance given to this intentional learning in TSLT allows for

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this explicit instruction, which could serve as an introduction to a Task-Based or Task-Inspired curriculum.

One persistent problem with the implementation of TBLT is the difference in understanding of what constitutes a task (East, 2025). Even in a supportive school environment with a long history of using TBLT, Chen & Wright (2017) found that some teachers were not confident in task design and delivery. As Ellis (2003) suggests, TBLT can be experimented with pedagogically, and when designing a course, the educator can tailor the tasks to suit their circumstances. Taking into account Ellis' definition of a task below, which is the more flexible of TBLT descriptors, educators can create a multitude of engaging tasks.

1. The primary focus should be on 'meaning' (by which it is meant that learners should be mainly concerned with processing the semantic and pragmatic meaning of utterances).
2. There should be some kind of 'gap' (i.e. a need to convey information, to express an opinion or to infer meaning).
3. Learners should largely have to rely on their own resources (linguistic and non-linguistic) in order to complete the activity.
4. There is a clearly defined outcome other than the use of language: i.e. the language serves as the means for achieving the outcome, not as an end in its own right

(Ellis, 2009a).

I would recommend combining the above definition with Egbert's (2003) description of the task itself as the main motivator, with the four qualities of; difficulty matching learner ability, opportunity for focused attention, authentic or interesting content or format and some control in the hands of the learner, and Park & Hiver's (2017) definition of a project - collaborative learning, process oriented and with a tangible result.

Implementing TBLT in a traditional classroom context comes with several challenges. Pitfalls include insufficient structure and support (Dupuy, 2006), learners doubting whether the task is worthwhile (Beckett & Slater, 2005), irrelevant or boring topics, high difficulty and role-play formats (Ushioda, 2001), inauthenticity (Leger & Storch, 2009) and unclear success criteria (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2004). To ensure a

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clear and attainable vision of success, the use of learners' work as examples of excellence is recommended (Patton, 2012). To maintain motivation, collaboration is beneficial (Henry et al, 2015; McDonough, 2004) and regular formative feedback is essential (Voerman et al, 2012). Teachers should also consider that learner-generated content is more engaging than teacher-generated content (Lambert, Philp & Nakamura, 2017), therefore, depending on the students, a teacher may wish to encourage learners to design or co-design the tasks themselves.

A balance must be struck between teacher control and learner-centredness, which is often difficult - particularly in the compulsory setting of this study. Learner engagement can be a challenge, especially in students with low L2 proficiency, as their participation is often limited, or they resort to minimal or formulaic L2 use (Teng, Wen & Li, 2025). This is why I believe the motivational benefit of a task ought to be the first consideration in its design. As Littlewood (2004) noted, TBLT implementation can suffer from classroom management issues with large, less-motivated classes, and assessment systems which emphasise accuracy and teacher authority - both factors which impact the UK MFL Key Stage 3 classroom. He proposed that effective implementation relies heavily on the teacher's ability to adapt the approach, often by blending the communicative methodology with more traditional practice, and complementing meaning-focused tasks with form-focused ones. In the next section I give some suggestions which I have used successfully with my own students.

6.6.2.2 Reflections on my teaching experience: MFL tasks at different levels

I have listed below some tasks which I have used in practice which teachers could use as inspiration, although they will need to take their individual context and cohort into account. Since these examples come from my own practice, they are implementable in the standard school context in terms of demands on resources, teacher expertise, time and curricula constraints. As with the tasks used in this study, the following are designed with the aim of fulfilling learners' BPNs.

1. Year 7 (age 11) students used the picture book *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* by Bill Martin Jr, as inspiration to create their own book. They were free to use the animal vocabulary learned in class or to research fantasy animals such as unicorns and dragons, or non-standard colours such as gold and silver. They made a physical copy with one page of coloured paper as the

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cover and three pages of white A4 paper, stapled along the middle to create a twelve-page book. Once complete, the book was used to assess their writing skills, looking specifically at the grammar of indirect object pronouns and adjectival placement and agreement. Contact was established with a primary school and the students took their books to read to Year 1 and 2 (ages 5 and 6). The students were given 15 minutes to teach some colours before reading their stories. Student voice feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with the feeling that teaching younger learners enabled them to feel mastery of their learning.

2. Year 8 (age 12) students created a video guide of their school for prospective foreign exchange students. After establishing contact with a Spanish language academy and exchanging some pen-pal letters, students recorded videos of themselves walking around the school and describing the facilities, taught subjects and their timetable. They interviewed other students and teachers and subtitled their responses. The video was used to assess their speaking skills and sent to their pen-pals.
3. Similar to the above project, a school trip was arranged to a local zoo. Students worked as a group to create a video tour, explaining their favourite animals and the conservation work done by the zoo. Since international trips were not approved at the time due to the after-effects of the pandemic, this enabled the students to experience MFL outside of the classroom. The video was sent, and the students received one in return which showed them the Alhambra region of Spain.
4. Year 9 (age 13) students worked as travel agents to plan a holiday to a Spanish speaking country for a family of four. They were given a budget and information about the family's requirements. They found flights, accommodation, activities and restaurants to visit, as well as creating a phrase-book to be taken on the trip. Real emails were sent to restaurants to establish whether they could cater to the family's dietary needs, and to the hotels to check for availability. Once the trip was planned, they presented their work to the class and peer assessment rated how well they had met the brief.
5. Year 9 students planned their 'Super-Sweet 16' style party in a Spanish speaking country. Elements of this task included researching and contacting prospective venues, creating a guest list with justification for each friend's

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inclusion, writing invitations and a voice recording of themselves asking their parents for a specified amount of money, listing their achievements that year (a good practice of the preterite tense). Once again, this was presented to the class in Spanish and peer-assessed, with the guest lists, invitations and voice recordings used to assess writing and speaking.

If the pet rescue task used in this study were to be replicated, I would suggest that the teacher makes explicitly clear to the participants that the intention is the communication rather than the adoption, to avoid a sense of disappointment at the culmination of the project.

6.6.2.3 The principles of SDT in curriculum design

The results suggest that it might be possible to design current lessons and curricula with a view to fulfill the BPNs. If one considers the principles of SDT in curriculum design, it is possible that motivation could be raised with approaches other than Task-Inspired teaching (Lanvers & Graham 2022). Parrish & Vernon (2022) also advocate for the integration of SDT-informed teaching strategies to promote more engaging and motivating classroom environments, noting that current curriculum structures in the UK often neglect these motivational principles, which contribute to widespread student disengagement from language learning.

CLIL (explained in Chapter 3, Section 2.3) is one such approach which has shown potential to positively impact motivation. Hunt (2011) raised learner motivation with CLIL, and competence was improved with it, although there was no mention of autonomy. The issue with implementation of a CLIL approach is that it requires considerable pre-service teacher training (Lyster, 2017). The LLOS IEA has been used to find an increase in learner motivation with cooperative learning techniques (Fakhri Alamdari & Ghani, 2022) and teacher personality (Khalilzadeh & Khodi, 2021) - the latter specifically impacting intrinsic motivation. It was also used to detect a rise in all motivational orientations- their interrelatedness meaning that the satisfaction of one positively impacted the others - in international school secondary students when a TPRS methodology (explained in Chapter 3 Section 2.5) was used (Printer, 2021).

6.6.2.4 Final remark for educators

I conclude the recommendations for educators with a caution that education is not a science, each teacher and group of learners will have different considerations, and what appears to have worked well in this study may not work as well in another classroom (Biesta, 2007). Therefore, I would encourage educators to find an approach which they believe in, that they would enjoy delivering, and that they feel would work for their students, without feeling that they must follow one particular approach at the behest of another. I am mindful of the recent call for research into language teacher wellbeing and the possible interplay between teacher and learner wellbeing (Mercer & Murillo-Miranda, 2025), and of the high workload of teachers impacting their health, wellbeing and attrition (Creagh et al, 2023), and so would not recommend a complete overhaul of existing practices. As stated earlier in this chapter, there is no substitute for a good teacher, and in the support of teacher autonomy, I encourage educators to conduct their own research and to pursue their own passion projects.

6.6.3 For school leaders

A major concern in terms of GCSE selection is the way in which options are presented to students. Barrance & Elwood (2018) demonstrated that option blocks, produced by school leaders, can restrict a free choice. As much as staffing and timetabling allows, schools ought to consider how best to accommodate learner choice as much as possible. They must also acknowledge the impact their policy towards MFL study - curriculum time, free choice versus guided or compulsory choice - impacts the choices of their pupils (Hua, Arfon & Hunter, 2026).

Bowler (2025) recommends additional Key Stage 4 options and beyond, aligning with the CEFR framework where possible. The discontinued Languages Ladder contained a series of 'can-do' statements which aligned with the CEFR, so that achievement at every step could be recognised, rather than in a single examination which many do not opt for. As Woore, Molway & Mutton (2026) and Hunt (2026) argue, this could be reintroduced and completed at the end of Key Stage 3, or at Key Stage 4 as a GCSE alternative. Kenny (2026) conceptualises a new system of a multilingual ladder - a lifelong framework which complements, rather than replaces, the existing qualifications, and which includes L1 or L2 English with many other living or ancient languages, including Home, Heritage and Community Languages (HHCLs).

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In this context, I believe that internationally recognised qualifications such as the DELF and DELE (and other language equivalents) are particularly valuable. These certifications provide clear, externally validated benchmarks of proficiency aligned with the CEFR, encouraging authentic language use and rewarding communicative competence. Incorporating DELF and DELE preparation into school programmes could even be done at Key Stages 2 and 3. They could not only raise the academic rigour and visibility of LL, but also equip students with tangible credentials recognised by universities and employers worldwide, thereby strengthening the strategic value of MFL education within the curriculum. The format of these examinations blends well with the real-world nature of the tasks used in this study, as explained in Section 6.1.1 of this chapter.

6.6.4 For researchers

This study measured learner intention at Year 7 (age 11) to continue with MFL beyond the compulsory stage. However, in most English secondary schools, GCSE subject selection is typically made in Year 9 (age 13). The timing of this decision is pedagogically and psychologically significant. Gnambs and Hanfstingl (2016) identified a decline in intrinsic motivation among learners aged 11–15, which they attributed to a corresponding reduction in the satisfaction of the three BPNs. As such, learner attitudes measured at Year 7 may not accurately predict future engagement or subject choice, since motivational orientations are likely to fluctuate throughout early adolescence. My observation from this study's data is that motivation between genders is relatively similar, but willingness to continue with GCSE is sharply gender divided towards female pupils.

Implementing a similar intervention in Year 9, immediately prior to pupils selecting their GCSE options, could therefore provide a more valid and contextually relevant dataset. Such timing would capture motivational dispositions at a critical juncture where students' self-perceptions of competence, autonomy in decision-making, and relatedness to their peers or teachers in LL are particularly salient. The comparison between Year 7 and Year 9 cohorts could deliver valuable insights into the developmental trajectory of LL motivation and inform targeted strategies to sustain interest during this period. These findings could further guide curriculum designers and

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school leaders in developing age-appropriate motivational interventions and decision-making supports aimed at promoting longer-term engagement with language study.

Future research could also seek to further examine the structure of motivational orientations in younger language learners, particularly through the use of larger datasets and confirmatory factor analysis. The findings of this study suggest that a more parsimonious model of motivation may be more appropriate in this context, and further validation of such models would contribute to both theoretical and methodological development in the field. Additionally, it could seek to link measures of classroom enjoyment with individual motivational profiles, enabling more detailed analysis of the relationship between affective responses and motivational development. Alternatively, since intervention materials were designed with the aim of increasing BPN satisfaction, the measure of motivation could involve this satisfaction itself, using an instrument such as the Basic Psychological Need Satisfaction and Frustration Scale (BPNSFS; Ver der Kaap-Deeder et al, 2020).

This study shows an increase in learner motivation is possible with a Task-Inspired intervention. It did not include a measure of progress, which is something future researchers could explore, as it would be interesting to see if the same type of intervention has any impact on learner progress or outcomes when compared to the traditional control materials. The data from this thesis alone does not permit the general conclusion that this benefit was achieved at the expense of language content learning, as this was not evaluated; rather, other existing work on TBLT suggests that there may be no detriment. In my own estimation, linguistic progress in the translation project was hard to gauge. Again, some compromise between the experience of control and intervention lesson design and curricula might be possible. In the following, I give some practical suggestions as to how this could be achieved.

If the theme of the control and intervention groups were standardised, a test given to all students - either grammar or vocabulary based - would produce data on which approach led to improved outcomes. For example, if the same story was used as in the translation project, which contains vocabulary around animals, and the control materials focused on the same topic, a vocabulary test on names of animals could be used to ascertain retention. Similarly, for the pet rescue project, learners were able to introduce themselves and give basic information such as age and family members. If

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the control materials had focused on the same introductory material, the end of unit assessment could have been translation of simple sentences such as 'my name is' and 'I am eleven years old'.

Since school leaders and teachers feel the pressure of GCSE results being compared in league tables (DfE 2025a), adding an element of assessment would alleviate the worry of not making sufficient progress, which, if proven effective, would make this approach more appealing.

It should be noted that there is a precedent for increasing motivation leading to increased linguistic progress, even at the expense of time spent on traditional teaching materials. Busse et al (2020), found in their study with primary learners that an intervention group which completed affective-experiential activities celebrating linguistic diversity made considerably larger gains in both receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge than a control group which spent more contact time with textbook resources. The researchers' expectations regarding increased gains in plurilingual ideal-self aspirations were confirmed. In addition, against expectations, increased learner progress was also observed. The unexpected positive effect led to higher task engagement, which outweighed the disadvantage posed by reduced time on curriculum content.

Initiatives such as WOLLOW (theworldoflanguages.co.uk), which raise awareness of multilingualism across primary and secondary, have the potential to create the same effect. This idea also aligns with Lanvers' (2020) study on metacognition in MFL and raising the profile of multilingualism without concentrating on one specific language. Metalinguistic awareness and the teaching of knowledge about language is further supported by Lanvers & Cowling (2026) and Woore, Molway & Mutton (2026).

While most researchers call for MFL to be made compulsory at GCSE once more (Lanvers & Cowling, 2026; Forbes, 2026; Bowler, 2025), others such as Parrish and Macaro argue against it. Macaro says that:

We are not going to be able to improve our national languages competence by forcing reluctant learners to learn a language at the age of 14.

(Macaro, 2008, p106).

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Instead, he favours the development of appropriate and engaging pedagogies at Key Stage 3, which enable young people to succeed and could impact their decisions at Key Stage 4. Parrish writes:

Making languages compulsory again is probably not the answer. Those who have to take the subject as part of an EBacc pathway may feel they have to engage with it because it is what is expected of them. Instead, the way the subject is perceived by students needs to change. Where it is seen as being of personal value, students are likely to take the subject for their own reasons, with all the associated benefits that come with that. Where the value is seen as general (it's "good" to speak another language) or is not really recognised at all, then even if students take the subject their motivation will be affected.

(Parrish, 2023, no p.n.)

I agree with both statements above, and would argue against the reintroduction of compulsory language study at GCSE level. While the intention to promote linguistic diversity and global competence is commendable, and despite recognising the added value that LL would command if its status were compulsory, I do not believe forcing learners to continue for the extra two years of Key Stage 4 would be productive. Mandating MFL risks undermining the quality of both teaching and learning. When MFL is compulsory, classes often include students with little intrinsic motivation, leading to disengagement and behavioural challenges that detract from the learning experience for others. In contrast, optional classes, comprising learners who have themselves chosen to continue, foster a more positive climate for learning, often with genuine interest, perseverance and collaboration. Moreover, the current shortage of qualified MFL teachers, coupled with the already high workload and accountability pressures in schools, raises concerns about the feasibility of expanding provision without compromising standards. Rather than imposing MFL on all learners, I think that policy should focus on improving the quality and appeal of early LL, enabling students to make informed and motivated choices at Key Stage 4. Finally, as Parrish states, the perception of the subject needs to change - not just of students, but of the anglophone world.

6.7 Concluding remarks

Government measures such as the EBacc qualification, which seek to raise the profile of languages, cannot compete with the impact that perceived enjoyment of lessons has on subject choices (Taylor & Marsden, 2014). This study has produced very promising results on learner experience which could affect the language crisis of the UK by encouraging more young people to gain a qualification in MFL.

If standard classroom practice is moved away from textbook-based, decontextualised activities towards task or project-based pedagogies, learner motivation - and intention to continue study - can be increased. A task-inspired approach may not be necessary, but this research demonstrates it is successful.

These findings support the recommendation of Parrish et al (2024) and Hunt (2026), that the current MFL curriculum, with its focus on accuracy and task completion over communication, has a demotivating effect.

The UK government has, at time of writing, recently conducted a review on curriculum and assessment, with no specific recommendations, curriculum changes or reform agenda made for MFL (DfE, 2025b). This is despite the professional organisations involved in MFL research in the UK and in England having a strong unified voice regarding the current high-stakes summative assessment at GCSE and how it narrows the curriculum due to its required intensity (Committee for Linguistics in Education, 2024). According to the Committee, the existing examination structure imposes excessive intensity and restricts curricular breadth, compelling teachers to “teach to the test” rather than to promote authentic communicative competence and intercultural understanding. These constraints are seen as a significant contributing factor to the ongoing crisis in MFL uptake, particularly acute in areas of socio-economic disadvantage where motivation and access to enrichment opportunities are already limited (Lanvers & Cowling, 2026).

The Committee and other MFL advocacy groups argue that the curriculum’s heavy emphasis on grammatical structures and formal accuracy is misaligned with the goal of fostering long-term learner engagement. They call instead for a more inclusive and contextually relevant approach that values practical language use, creativity, and learner agency. This aligns with the findings of the present study, which demonstrate

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how a shift in classroom practice towards practical, contextualised, and meaningful language tasks, can help to alleviate the disengagement currently evident among learners. On this basis, my recommendation is that future curriculum reforms incorporate greater flexibility and real-world relevance, supporting pedagogies that prioritise communication and intercultural awareness over rote grammatical precision, as endorsed by Pachler et al (2026).

Furthermore, the Committee advocates for the promotion of broader language awareness that extends beyond grammar, punctuation, and spelling, and instead celebrates the linguistic diversity present within many UK classrooms. This includes recognising and integrating HHCLs into mainstream provision, thereby positioning multilingualism as an asset rather than a barrier (Woore, Molway & Mutton, 2026; Anderson, 2026). They also call for improved curriculum continuity across key stages to support sustained language development and smoother progression between primary and secondary education. In this reconceptualised framework, languages should be positioned as living, dynamic elements of school life - a shared responsibility across the curriculum that reflects the linguistic realities of modern Britain. Such an approach requires a shift in institutional mindset, viewing languages as part of the wider cultural and educational fabric of schooling and as central to fostering inclusion, identity, and global citizenship within the school community, as envisioned in Lanvers' matrix of LL rationales and motivation (Lanvers, 2024).

In summary, the findings of this study demonstrate that learner motivation can be enhanced through the use of task-based pedagogy within the compulsory phase of language education, providing a more engaging and contextually meaningful alternative to traditional, assessment-driven instruction. While these findings focus primarily on classroom-level practice, they also complement the broader policy conversation on how to sustain LL in the UK (Ayres-Bennett & Forsdick, 2026). Lanvers (2025a) calls for a more socially responsible LEP that communicates the societal and non-material benefits of learning languages, such as intercultural understanding, social cohesion, and global engagement, and emphasises that coherent national messaging and stakeholder cooperation are essential for meaningful reform. The implications of this study therefore extend beyond motivation alone: learners' decisions to pursue or abandon GCSE MFL are shaped not only by interest, but also by external factors such as parental expectations, institutional

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pressures, and perceptions of difficulty or relevance. The challenge, then, is twofold - to design pedagogical approaches that foster intrinsic engagement, and to situate these within a policy environment that values languages as a shared social good.

The last chapter will draw together the key findings of this thesis and offer concluding reflections.

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7.1 Summary of results

This study used a mixed methods approach to answer the following research questions -

1. How does a Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) inspired intervention at Year 7 in an English secondary school influence
 - 1.1. learner motivation?
 - 1.2. continuation intentions?
2. Experience of intervention
 - 2.1. How do students report on their learning experience of the interventions and their normal classes?
 - 2.2. Do students report differently on their experience of the two interventions and their normal classes?
3. Are there any gender differences in respect of
 - 3.1. motivation for MFL and willingness to continue with MFL (RQ1.1 and 1.2.)
 - 3.2. learner experience of the interventions generally and of each intervention specifically? (RQ 2.1. and 2.2.)

To answer RQ 1.1, 1.2 and 3.1, qualitative data was collected in the form of an adapted trait motivation questionnaire, given before and after task-inspired interventions were conducted. A control group, exposed to 'business as usual' teaching methods, completed the same questionnaire. This data was analysed using both Wilcoxon Signed Rank tests and Mann-Whitney U tests, using SPSS software.

To answer RQ 2.1 and 2.2, immediate post lesson feedback was also collected at the end of each lesson during the term, from both intervention and control groups. This Likert scale data was analysed for a mean enjoyment rating of each lesson.

Additionally, to answer RQ 2.1, 2.2 and 3.2, qualitative data was gathered through focus group questioning. This data was both deductively and inductively coded and analysed for frequency.

7.1.1 RQ1.1 How does a Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) inspired intervention at Year 7 in an English secondary school influence learner motivation and continuation intentions?

The questionnaire data of control group participants indicates some decline in introjected regulation, identified regulation and intrinsic motivation in relation to knowledge, which was not as expected. All other motivational orientations were unchanged, as expected. The same data in intervention participants suggests a decrease in amotivation and an increase in all other motivational orientations (external regulation, introjected and identified regulation, intrinsic motivation in relation to knowledge, accomplishment and stimulation, and willingness to continue Spanish at GCSE). This is suggestive of the intervention having little to no effect on totally amotivated learners, but affecting most other learners positively.

7.1.2 RQ1.2 How does a Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) inspired intervention at Year 7 in an English secondary school influence continuation intentions?

The questionnaire data of intervention participants is indicative of an increase in the intention to study Spanish at GCSE level, past the post-compulsory stage of Key Stage 3, with a mean increase from 3.3 to 4.13.

7.1.3 RQ2.1 How do students report on their learning experience of the interventions and their normal classes?

The quantitative data collection method of immediate post-lesson feedback indicated an overall higher rate of enjoyment of the control lessons when comparing the interventions together as a whole.

The qualitative data indicates that the participants particularly enjoyed the autonomy of both projects - the choice element of the pet rescue, and the independence from the teacher and group work of the translation. Some negative feelings about the simulated nature of the pet rescue project were expressed, but this was not the case for the translation project.

7.1.4 RQ 2.2 Do students report differently on their experience of the two interventions and their normal classes?

The immediate post-lesson feedback indicates that participants preferred the control lessons to the pet rescue project, but preferred the translation project to the control lessons. This suggests that while novelty alone did not guarantee engagement, the translation task, which balanced creativity with clear purpose and collaboration, was more effective in sustaining motivation and perceived learning value.

When the mean score of lesson enjoyment of the two interventions is compared, the translation project appears to be the more enjoyable. However, the qualitative data suggests a preference for the pet rescue project. It also appears that while participants enjoyed the pet rescue, the let-down effect of not getting their chosen animal affected the overall enjoyment for a minority.

7.1.5 RQ3.1 Are there any gender differences in respect of motivation for MFL and willingness to continue with MFL?

The questionnaire data from the control groups suggests that motivation in all categories was lower in male participants, but not significantly. In the intervention groups, there was no significant difference in motivation and genders, either before or after the intervention.

Questionnaire data from both control and intervention groups indicates more female than male participants intending to continue Spanish, which is in line with current exam entry statistics. This remained unchanged after both the intervention and the control lessons. However, the mean score of males intending to continue Spanish to GCSE increased slightly in the intervention groups from 2.3 to 3.15.

7.1.6 RQ 3.2 Are there any gender differences in respect of learner experience of the interventions generally and of each intervention specifically?

The qualitative data suggests that the pet rescue project was more enjoyable for male participants. They particularly enjoyed the sense of accomplishment fostered by writing the email and receiving a reply in the pet rescue project, and the autonomous nature of the translation project.

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7.1.7 Synthesis of results

Quantitative analyses demonstrated a measurable rise in both autonomous and controlled motivation, while qualitative findings revealed the emergence of deeper intercultural empathy and openness toward LOTE and their speakers. In a context where learner engagement and continuation rates in MFL remain critical challenges in UK secondary education, these findings indicate that task-based and task-inspired approaches have the potential not only to enhance motivation but also to cultivate dispositions that are essential for lifelong language learning in an increasingly globalised world.

Although female participants remained more likely to continue MFL study to GCSE level, there was a small rise in the intention of male participants in the intervention groups to continue, which is encouraging given the stark gender divide in post-compulsory MFL study.

These findings substantiate the potential of a task-inspired curriculum to support motivation during the formative Key Stage 3 stage. However, the *similarity* in motivation between genders, coupled with *differences* in the intention to continue to GCSE study (lower among males), highlights that increasing motivation alone might not necessarily translate into increasing GCSE uptake. Nevertheless, the findings point towards a series of wider implications for curriculum design, teacher training, classroom experience, language uptake, and the long-term positioning of LL as a life skill.

7.2 Implications for curriculum design and assessment

The first major implication of this study lies in the design and implementation of the Key Stage 3 MFL curriculum. The evidence suggests that a task-inspired curriculum which emphasises communicative purpose, problem-solving and authentic outcomes rather than decontextualised grammatical structures, can foster motivation by situating LL as a meaningful act rather than a mechanical exercise. When learners engage in tasks that mirror authentic communicative acts, they perceive the learning process as relevant and personally significant, thereby fulfilling the need for autonomy and relatedness. This evidence supports the argument that curriculum design plays a decisive role in shaping learners' motivational trajectories.

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Curriculum developers could thus consider moving towards a more flexible model that allows space for extended, meaningful tasks without sacrificing the progression in language form necessary at Key Stage 3. The findings also suggest that curriculum plans should make explicit the intercultural and empathetic dimensions of task design. Building tasks around themes of global citizenship, real-world dilemmas, or perspectives of L2-speaking communities can foster empathy, making MFL learning socially and personally impactful. I believe that the curriculum must balance communicative tasks with opportunities for reflection and metalinguistic awareness, enabling learners to consolidate and notice form–meaning relationships within authentic contexts.

Currently, however, teachers and those responsible for mapping out Key Stage 3 provision are forced to condense a knowledge-rich curriculum into three years of typically low exposure study, with a focus on vocabulary, grammar and phonics. My argument is that the curriculum should centre around skill building and communicative competence, so that learners are able to use languages in personally meaningful ways, assessed with authentic tasks which mirror real-world communication. For implementation to be a realistic prospect, assessment at GCSE needs to change to reward more creative and pragmatic use of language. GCSE translation tasks, for example, demonstrate a shockingly narrow understanding of what translation is - as discussed in Chapter 3, Section 3.3, it is not merely linguistic substitution, but a complex cognitive and cultural act that involves interpretation, choice, negotiation of meaning, creation and contextual adaptation (Bell, 2006). However, at GCSE, in French at least, only exact linguistic substitution is rewarded, with words or phrasing which convey the same message discounted.

Conceptualising LL in these terms reframes it as lifelong literacy rather than a finite school subject. If learners leave Key Stage 3 seeing languages as a tool for participation rather than assessment, they carry forward an orientation to languages that may resurface in travel, work, or digital contexts later in life. In this way, the intervention's impact could extend beyond immediate motivational gains to the cultivation of a sustained disposition towards LL and engaging with other cultures.

7.3 Implications for teacher training and professional development

TBLT, TSLT or task-inspired teaching approaches, when done well, afford learners a sense of autonomy. A growing body of research underpins autonomy-supportive teaching in relation to learner motivation (Reeve, 2012; Mercer & Dörnyei, 2020; Printer, 2021; Parrish et al, 2024) and outcomes (Şakrak- Ekin & Balçıkanlı, 2019; Ezzaidi, 2020; Alrabai & Alamer, 2024; Jiang, Tian & Lou, 2024). Implementing this approach in the specific context of Key Stage 3 MFL poses challenges, such as large class sizes, behavioural concerns and typically low contact time. Therefore, autonomy-supportive teaching must be prioritised in both initial teacher training and continued professional development.

7.4 Implications for classroom experience

This study demonstrates the impact classroom experience has on learner motivation. It was not able to impact national discourse, government policy, school policy or parental attitude, which all affect motivation in their own ways. However, it does reveal that classroom experience not only impacts motivation, but also, to a somewhat lesser extent, intention towards further study choices. In the context of the UK languages crisis, this is a significant finding.

7.5 Implications for language uptake

There are a number of prominent voices calling for compulsory MFL GCSE, and there is no doubt that mandating this would go some way to raising the profile of the subject. However, rather than making GCSE compulsory, I advocate for a change to both the GCSE assessment and the guidelines for Key Stage 3 study, to enable teachers more freedom to plan engaging and relevant content. I also agree with the re-introduction or re-imagining of the language ladders scheme (Kenny, 2026), to provide learners with a sense of achievement even if they opt not to continue with GCSE. I believe this would make returning to LL at a later date more appealing.

7.6 The long-term positioning of language learning as a life skill

The European Union (EU), the UK's closest partner in both geography and trade, has 24 official and working languages. According to its own regulations, every citizen of the EU has the right to write to any institution or body of the EU in one of these

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languages and receive a reply in the same. Based on its motto “United in diversity”, it seeks to maintain its competitiveness through multilingualism, to promote mobility and intercultural understanding and to create an intercultural dialogue. Foreign language competence is considered a basic skill, required to improve education and employment opportunities. By 2025, its aim is for its citizens to be able to speak their mother tongue plus two additional languages (Milt, 2025). However, this policy is advisory, difficult to implement, and often the member states prioritise English at the expense of the second foreign language, leading many learners to drop the additional L2 when given the opportunity (Lanvers, 2025a). Thus, the ‘English is enough’ mentality permeates even areas in which English is not the L1.

It is understandable, then, even for a linguist, why the perception of ‘English is enough’ is so entrenched into the anglophone UK landscape that it is the catalyst for the current, long-standing and systemic language crisis. This attitude is not the only reason - there are multiple misconceptions about the values and rationale of LL, which are not well understood at the top and communicated badly on the way down. The elitist perception of languages, and their reputation as being ‘too difficult’ for many, have fuelled national discourses on LL, and have led to GCSE study becoming optional, falling numbers at all levels of qualification, university department closures, and a chronic teacher shortage. The final element only serves to create a downward spiral, from which it is difficult to see a solution.

Efforts have been made to combat the crisis, and as yet none have proven successful enough to turn the tide. It is my belief that, although systemic problems usually call for systemic solutions, the best way out of this crisis is from the bottom up. It is to allow adolescent learners, at the exceptionally short compulsory stage of MFL education, to feel that they are able to rise to the challenge, that they have some say in the learning process and that what they are doing really matters. In other words, to enable a sense of autonomy, competence and relatedness. This can be achievable if their educator considers the principles of SDT in their lesson planning and delivery. There is no one better placed to convince young people of the power of multilingualism than their teachers.

Appendix A

Trait motivation questionnaire

Please read each item carefully and check each item according to the following scale. Answer with the first thought which comes to your mind.

Gender (please circle) Male Female Non-binary

Why are you learning Spanish?

1. Completely disagree.

7. Completely agree

	Completely disagree				Completely agree		
1. I don't know why I study Spanish, and frankly, I don't care.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. To show myself I am a good student because I can speak Spanish.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. For the satisfaction I feel when I am in the process of accomplishing difficult exercises in Spanish.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Because I think it is good for my personal development.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Because I have the impression that it is expected of me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. For the good feeling that I experience while speaking in Spanish.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. For the satisfied feeling I get in learning new things.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. I don't know, I can't understand what I am doing studying Spanish.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Because I would feel guilty if I didn't know Spanish.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Because I choose to be the kind of person who can speak Spanish.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. For the good feeling when hearing Spanish spoken.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. In order to get more academic success later on.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. For the pleasure that I experience in knowing more about Spanish.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. Because I enjoy the feeling of acquiring knowledge about the Spanish community and their way of life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

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15. In order to get a more prestigious job later on.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. For the pleasure I experience in improving my Spanish.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. For the pleasure I get from hearing Spanish spoken by Spanish native speakers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. Honestly, I don't know. I truly have the impression of wasting my time in studying Spanish.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. For the enjoyment I experience when I understand something difficult about Spanish.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. Because I choose to be the kind of person who can speak more than one language.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. Because I would feel ashamed if I couldn't speak Spanish when I communicate with my friends from Spanish-speaking countries.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. I think I am going to choose to study Spanish at GCSE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

This questionnaire was adapted from an original by Jee Hyun Ma, found at <https://www.proquest.com/openview/1f83cd4795abafb6290f4f0d692aee2f/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750>

Appendix B

Presented to pupils on a strip of paper and collected face down into an envelope.



Appendices

Appendix C

Focus group schedule

“What are you doing in Spanish right now?”

“Why do you think studying Spanish is important?”

“Do you learn Spanish for yourself, your parents or your teachers?”

“Do you get any satisfaction from completing difficult tasks in Spanish?”

“Do you feel like anyone expects you to learn Spanish?”

“Do you feel good about being able to speak Spanish?”

“Do you enjoy hearing Spanish spoken?”

“Do you think Spanish is a waste of time?”

What did you like about the lessons?

Which did you like more, the animal adoption project or the translation project?
(asked to intervention participants only)

“Is there anything else you’d like to say about learning Spanish?”

Appendix D



An Intervention Study on Task-Based Language Teaching in the UK Key Stage

3 MFL Classroom to ascertain the impact on pupil motivation

Dear pupils,

Mrs Whitehouse is currently carrying out the above research project with all the pupils across your year group.

Please read this information sheet carefully and ask me if you would like any further information.

For information about General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) please follow the link https://www.york.ac.uk/education/research/gdpr_information/

Purpose of the study

The study is designed to measure motivation towards Spanish and to see how a task-based teaching methodology can impact this.

What would this mean for you?

You will be taught Spanish by your usual teacher using either a traditional or task-based approach. You will be asked to fill in a questionnaire at the beginning and end of the intervention to indicate your level of motivation towards Spanish. All questionnaire data will be collected anonymously. Some of you will be asked to participate in an audio recorded focus group which will also be anonymised.

Everyone in your year group will follow the same teaching over the course of the year so you will not be disadvantaged through taking part in this study.

Participation is voluntary

Participation is optional. If at any point you wish to withdraw your data from the study you can do so by telling Mrs Whitehouse in person or emailing REDACTED. You do not need to provide a reason. Teaching will continue in the usual way but no data will be collected from you in the form of questionnaire or focus group.

Anonymity and confidentiality, storing and using your data

The data that you provide will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet and password protected computer. There will be no information that identifies you. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time during data collection.

Anonymised data will be kept until 2026, after which time it will be destroyed.

Questions or concerns

If you have any questions about this participant information sheet or concerns about how your data is being processed, please feel free to contact the project supervisor, Dr Ursula Lanvers, by email u.lanvers@york.ac.uk , or the Chair of Ethics Committee via email

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education-research-admin@york.ac.uk. If you are still dissatisfied, please contact the University's Data Protection Officer at dataprotection@york.ac.uk

Please tick each box if you are happy to take part in this research.

Statement of consent	Tick each box
I confirm that I have read and understood the information given to me about the above-named research project and I understand that this will involve me taking part as described above.	
I understand that participation in this study is voluntary.	
I understand that my data will not be identifiable and the anonymous data may be used in publications, presentations and online.	
I confirm that I have read the information about GDPR	

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Thank you for taking the time to read this information.

Yours sincerely

Jane Whitehouse

9/11/23

Appendices

Appendix E



An Intervention Study on Task-Based Language Teaching in the UK Key Stage 3 MFL Classroom to ascertain the impact on pupil motivation

Dear Headteacher,

Mrs Jane Whitehouse is currently carrying out the above research project. I would like to invite your school to take part.

Before agreeing to take part, please read this information sheet carefully and let me know if anything is unclear or you would like further information.

For information about General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) please follow the link https://www.york.ac.uk/education/research/gdpr_information/

Purpose of the study

The study is designed to measure motivation towards Spanish and to see how a task-based teaching methodology can impact this.

What would this mean for your school?

Your pupils will be taught Spanish by their usual teacher using either a traditional or task-based approach. Pupils will be asked to fill in a questionnaire at the beginning and end of the intervention to indicate their level of motivation towards Spanish. All questionnaire data will be collected anonymously. Some pupils will be asked to participate in an audio recorded focus group which will also be anonymised.

All pupils will follow the same teaching over the course of the year so no pupils will be disadvantaged through taking part in this study.

Participation is voluntary

Participation is optional. If you do decide to take part, you will be given a copy of this information sheet for your records and will be asked to complete a consent form. If you change your mind at any point during the study, you will be able to withdraw your participation without having to provide a reason.

Anonymity and confidentiality, storing and using data

The data that your school provides will be securely stored. Your pupils are free to withdraw from the study at any time during data collection. Data will be secured in locked filing cabinets and a password protected computer. All data is fully anonymised.

Anonymised data will be kept until 2026, after which time it will be destroyed.

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Questions or concerns

If you have any questions about this participant information sheet or concerns about how your data is being processed, please feel free to contact the project supervisor, Dr Ursula Lanvers, by email u.lanvers@york.ac.uk, or the Chair of Ethics Committee via email education-research-admin@york.ac.uk. If you are still dissatisfied, please contact the University's Data Protection Officer at dataprotection@york.ac.uk

I hope that you will agree to your school taking part. If you are happy for your school to participate, please complete the enclosed form and send to REDACTED by 16/12/2022
Please keep this information sheet for your own records.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information.

Yours sincerely

Jane Whitehouse

Consent Form

Please tick each box if you are happy to take part in this research.

Statement of consent	Tick each box
I confirm that I have read and understood the information given to me about the above-named research project and I understand that this will involve my school taking part as described above.	
I understand that participation in this study is voluntary.	
I understand that the data will not be identifiable and the anonymous data may be used in publications, presentations and online.	
I confirm that I have read the information about GDPR	

Name:

Signature:

Role in organisation:

Date:

Appendix F



An Intervention Study on Task-Based Language Teaching in the UK Key Stage

3 MFL Classroom to ascertain the impact on pupil motivation

Dear parents,

Mrs Jane Whitehouse is currently carrying out the above research project with all the pupils across your child's year group.

Please read this information sheet carefully and let me know by email if anything is unclear or you would like further information. If you wish to withdraw your child's data from the study, please email [REDACTED](#)

For information about General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) please follow the link https://www.york.ac.uk/education/research/gdpr_information/

Purpose of the study

The study is designed to measure motivation towards Spanish and to see how a task-based teaching methodology can impact this.

What would this mean for your child?

Your child will be taught Spanish by their usual teacher using either a traditional or task-based approach. Pupils will be asked to fill in a questionnaire at the beginning and end of the intervention to indicate their level of motivation towards Spanish. All questionnaire data will be collected anonymously. Some pupils will be asked to participate in an audio recorded focus group which will also be anonymised.

All pupils will follow the same teaching over the course of the year so your child will not be disadvantaged through taking part in this study.

Participation is voluntary

Participation is optional. If at any point you wish to withdraw your child's data from the study you can do so by emailing REDACTED. You do not need to provide a reason. Teaching will continue in the usual way but no data will be collected from your child in the form of questionnaire or focus group.

Anonymity and confidentiality, storing and using your data

The data that your child provides will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet and password protected computer. There will be no information that identifies your child. Your child is free to withdraw from the study at any time during data collection.

Anonymised data will be kept until 2026, after which time it will be destroyed.

Questions or concerns

If you have any questions about this participant information sheet or concerns about how your data is being processed, please feel free to contact the project supervisor, Dr Ursula

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Lanvers, by email u.lanvers@york.ac.uk , or the Chair of Ethics Committee via email education-research-admin@york.ac.uk. If you are still dissatisfied, please contact the University's Data Protection Officer at dataprotection@york.ac.uk
I hope that you will agree to your child taking part. Please keep this information sheet for your own records.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information.

Yours sincerely

Jane Whitehouse

9/11/23

Appendices

Appendix G

Table 1 - Descriptive statistics (control groups - pilot)

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Amotivation 1	9.32	44.00	5.92	.89
	Amotivation 2	9.89	44.00	6.27	.95
Pair 2	External regulation 1	11.89	44.00	4.38	.66
	external regulation 2	11.73	44.00	3.80	.57
Pair 3	introjected regulation 1	8.73	44.00	4.05	.61
	introjected regulation 2	7.80	44.00	3.79	.57
Pair 4	identified regulation 1	12.68	44.00	4.19	.63
	identified regulation 2	11.77	44.00	4.40	.66
Pair 5	IM-K1	12.70	44.00	5.45	.82
	IM-K2	12.27	44.00	5.18	.78
Pair 6	IM-A1	12.77	44.00	5.23	.79
	IM-A2	12.30	44.00	4.89	.74
Pair 7	IM-S1	11.61	44.00	5.10	.77
	IM-S2	11.52	44.00	4.92	.74
Pair 8	GCSE1	3.07	44.00	2.04	.31
	GCSE2	2.86	44.00	1.95	.29

Table 2 - Wilcoxon Signed Rank test (control groups - pilot)

Test Statistics^a

	amotivation2 - amotivation1	externalregulation2 - externalregulation1	introjectedregulation2 - introjectedregulation1	identifiedregulation2 - identifiedregulation1	IMK2 - IMK1	IMA2 - IMA1	IMS2 - IMS1	GCSE2 - GCSE1
Z	-2.588 ^b	-1.266 ^c	-2.896 ^c	-1.619 ^c	-1.983 ^c	-.992 ^c	-.836 ^c	-1.508 ^c
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.010	.206	.004	.105	.047	.321	.403	.132

^a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

^b. Based on negative ranks.

^c. Based on positive ranks.

Table 3 - control group effect sizes (pilot)

Appendices

Paired Samples Effect Sizes

			Standardizer ^a	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower	Upper
Pair 1	Amotivation 1 - Amotivation 2	Cohen's d	1.16933	-.486	-.796	-.171
		Hedges' correction	1.19023	-.477	-.782	-.168
Pair 2	External regulation 1 - external regulation 2	Cohen's d	2.38155	.067	-.229	.362
		Hedges' correction	2.42412	.066	-.225	.356
Pair 3	introjected regulation 1 - introjected regulation 2	Cohen's d	1.26487	.737	.400	1.067
		Hedges' correction	1.28748	.724	.393	1.048
Pair 4	identified regulation 1 - identified regulation 2	Cohen's d	1.85294	.491	.175	.801
		Hedges' correction	1.88607	.482	.172	.787
Pair 5	IM-K1 - IM-K2	Cohen's d	1.10806	.390	.081	.694
		Hedges' correction	1.12787	.383	.080	.682
Pair 6	IM-A1 - IM-A2	Cohen's d	1.69113	.282	-.021	.582
		Hedges' correction	1.72136	.277	-.020	.572
Pair 7	IM-S1 - IM-S2	Cohen's d	1.65400	.055	-.241	.350
		Hedges' correction	1.68357	.054	-.237	.344
Pair 8	GCSE1 - GCSE2	Cohen's d	.66750	.306	.002	.607
		Hedges' correction	.67943	.301	.002	.597

^a The denominator used in estimating the effect sizes.

Cohen's d uses the sample standard deviation of the mean difference.

Hedges' correction uses the sample standard deviation of the mean difference, plus a correction factor.

Appendices

Appendix H

Table 3 - Descriptive statistics (intervention groups - pilot)

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	amotivation1	9.17	66.00	5.39	.66
	amotivation2	7.55	66.00	5.07	.62
Pair 2	externalregulation1	11.73	66.00	5.01	.62
	externalregulation2	13.38	66.00	4.69	.58
Pair 3	introjectedregulation1	9.64	66.00	4.28	.53
	introjectedregulation2	11.17	66.00	4.15	.51
Pair 4	identifiedregulation1	11.44	66.00	5.37	.66
	identifiedregulation2	12.76	66.00	4.97	.61
Pair 5	IMK1	11.58	66.00	5.06	.62
	IMK2	13.20	66.00	4.69	.58
Pair 6	IMA1	12.12	66.00	5.13	.63
	IMA2	13.64	66.00	4.82	.59
Pair 7	IMS1	10.52	66.00	5.35	.66
	IMS2	11.83	66.00	5.18	.64
Pair 8	GCSE1	3.21	66.00	2.23	.27
	GCSE2	3.95	66.00	2.04	.25

Table 4 - Wilcoxon signed rank test (intervention groups - pilot)

Test Statistics^a

	amotivation2 - amotivation1	externalregulation2 - externalregulation1	introjectedregulation2 - introjectedregulation1	identifiedregulation2 - identifiedregulation1	IMK2 - IMK1	IMA2 - IMA1	IMS2 - IMS1	GCSE2 - GCSE1
Z	-4.564 ^b	-4.956 ^c	-4.337 ^c	-5.001 ^c	-5.515 ^c	-5.155 ^c	-4.873 ^c	-4.695 ^c
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001

^a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

^b. Based on positive ranks.

^c. Based on negative ranks.

Table 5 - intervention groups effect sizes (pilot)

Appendices

Paired Samples Effect Sizes

			Standardizer ^a	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower	Upper
Pair 1	amotivation1 - amotivation2	Cohen's d	2.64	.62	.35	.88
		Hedges' correction	2.67	.61	.35	.87
Pair 2	externalregulation1 - externalregulation2	Cohen's d	2.16	-.76	-1.04	-.49
		Hedges' correction	2.18	-.76	-1.03	-.48
Pair 3	introjectedregulation1 - introjectedregulation2	Cohen's d	2.56	-.60	-.86	-.33
		Hedges' correction	2.59	-.59	-.85	-.33
Pair 4	identifiedregulation1 - identifiedregulation2	Cohen's d	1.85	-.71	-.98	-.44
		Hedges' correction	1.87	-.70	-.97	-.43
Pair 5	IMK1 - IMK2	Cohen's d	1.86	-.87	-1.15	-.58
		Hedges' correction	1.88	-.86	-1.14	-.58
Pair 6	IMA1 - IMA2	Cohen's d	2.05	-.74	-1.01	-.47
		Hedges' correction	2.07	-.73	-1.00	-.46
Pair 7	IMS1 - IMS2	Cohen's d	1.75	-.75	-1.03	-.48
		Hedges' correction	1.77	-.75	-1.01	-.47
Pair 8	GCSE1 - GCSE2	Cohen's d	1.04	-.71	-.98	-.44
		Hedges' correction	1.05	-.70	-.97	-.43

^a The denominator used in estimating the effect sizes.

Cohen's d uses the sample standard deviation of the mean difference.

Hedges' correction uses the sample standard deviation of the mean difference, plus a correction factor.

Appendices

Appendix I

Table 5 - Mann-Whitney-U test, control group pre-intervention (pilot)

Test Statistics^a

	Amotivation 1	External regulation 1	introjected regulation 1	identified regulation 1	IM-K1	IM-A1	IM-S1	GCSE1
Mann-Whitney U	227.000	229.500	220.000	229.500	226.500	222.000	179.000	183.000
Wilcoxon W	503.000	505.500	496.000	505.500	436.500	498.000	455.000	393.000
Z	-.074	-.012	-.244	-.012	-.086	-.195	-1.250	-1.198
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.941	.990	.807	.990	.932	.845	.211	.231

^a. Grouping Variable: gender

Table 6 - pre-intervention control group effect sizes (pilot)

Appendices

Independent Samples Effect Sizes

			95% Confidence Interval		
		Standardizer ^a	Point Estimate	Lower	Upper
Amotivation 1	Cohen's d	5.97	-.07	-.67	.53
	Hedges' correction	6.09	-.07	-.65	.52
	Glass's delta	6.57	-.06	-.66	.54
External regulation 1	Cohen's d	4.49	.02	-.58	.62
	Hedges' correction	4.57	.02	-.57	.60
	Glass's delta	4.38	.02	-.58	.62
introjected regulation 1	Cohen's d	4.14	.13	-.47	.73
	Hedges' correction	4.22	.12	-.47	.71
	Glass's delta	3.80	.14	-.46	.74
identified regulation 1	Cohen's d	4.25	.02	-.58	.62
	Hedges' correction	4.33	.02	-.57	.61
	Glass's delta	4.41	.02	-.58	.62
IM-K1	Cohen's d	5.57	-.05	-.65	.55
	Hedges' correction	5.68	-.05	-.64	.54
	Glass's delta	5.85	-.05	-.65	.55
IM-A1	Cohen's d	5.36	.02	-.58	.62
	Hedges' correction	5.46	.02	-.57	.61
	Glass's delta	5.32	.02	-.58	.62
IM-S1	Cohen's d	5.13	.37	-.24	.97
	Hedges' correction	5.22	.36	-.23	.96
	Glass's delta	5.08	.38	-.24	.98
GCSE1	Cohen's d	1.99	-.42	-1.03	.19
	Hedges' correction	2.03	-.41	-1.01	.18
	Glass's delta	2.25	-.37	-.98	.24

^a. The denominator used in estimating the effect sizes.

Cohen's d uses the pooled standard deviation.

Hedges' correction uses the pooled standard deviation, plus a correction factor.

Glass's delta uses the sample standard deviation of the control (i.e., the second) group.

Appendices

Appendix J

Table 7 Mann-Whitney U tests, control group post-intervention (pilot)

Test Statistics^a

	Amotivation 2	external regulation 2	introjected regulation 2	identified regulation 2	IM-K2	IM-A2	IM-S2	GCSE2
Mann-Whitney U	230.000	215.000	222.500	212.500	220.000	207.000	179.000	180.500
Wilcoxon W	506.000	425.000	498.500	488.500	430.000	483.000	455.000	390.500
Z	.000	-.368	-.184	-.427	-.244	-.562	-1.247	-1.261
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	1.000	.713	.854	.669	.807	.574	.213	.207

^a. Grouping Variable: gender

Table 7 post-intervention control group effect sizes (pilot)

Independent Samples Effect Sizes

		Standardizer ^a	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Amotivation 2	Cohen's d	6.33	-.06	-.66	.54
	Hedges' correction	6.44	-.06	-.64	.53
	Glass's delta	6.91	-.05	-.65	.55
external regulation 2	Cohen's d	3.88	-.13	-.73	.47
	Hedges' correction	3.95	-.13	-.72	.46
	Glass's delta	3.95	-.13	-.73	.47
introjected regulation 2	Cohen's d	3.88	.05	-.55	.65
	Hedges' correction	3.95	.05	-.54	.64
	Glass's delta	3.77	.05	-.55	.65
identified regulation 2	Cohen's d	4.47	.13	-.47	.73
	Hedges' correction	4.55	.12	-.47	.71
	Glass's delta	4.52	.13	-.48	.72
IM-K2	Cohen's d	5.27	-.07	-.67	.53
	Hedges' correction	5.37	-.06	-.65	.52
	Glass's delta	5.39	-.06	-.66	.54
IM-A2	Cohen's d	5.00	.05	-.55	.64
	Hedges' correction	5.10	.04	-.54	.63
	Glass's delta	4.97	.05	-.55	.64
IM-S2	Cohen's d	4.93	.38	-.22	.99
	Hedges' correction	5.03	.38	-.22	.97
	Glass's delta	4.85	.39	-.22	1.00
GCSE2	Cohen's d	1.83	-.48	-1.08	.13
	Hedges' correction	1.87	-.47	-1.06	.13
	Glass's delta	2.12	-.41	-1.02	.20

^a. The denominator used in estimating the effect sizes.

Cohen's d uses the pooled standard deviation.

Hedges' correction uses the pooled standard deviation, plus a correction factor.

Glass's delta uses the sample standard deviation of the control (i.e., the second) group.

Appendices

Appendix K

Table 8 - Mann-Whitney U tests, intervention group pre-intervention (pilot)

Test Statistics^a

	amotivation1	externalregulation1	introjectedregulation1	identifiedregulation1	IMK1	IMA1	IMS1	GCSE1
Mann-Whitney U	400.500	382.500	396.500	388.000	413.000	316.000	308.500	242.500
Wilcoxon W	676.500	658.500	1062.500	664.000	1079.000	592.000	584.500	518.500
Z	-.212	-.491	-.273	-.405	-.016	-1.527	-1.645	-2.738
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.832	.623	.785	.685	.988	.127	.100	.006

^a. Grouping Variable: gender

Table 9 - intervention group pre-intervention effect sizes (pilot)

Independent Samples Effect Sizes

			95% Confidence Interval		
		Standardizer ^a	Point Estimate	Lower	Upper
amotivation1	Cohen's d	5.42	-.08	-.61	.44
	Hedges' correction	5.49	-.08	-.60	.43
	Glass's delta	5.56	-.08	-.61	.44
externalregulation1	Cohen's d	5.22	-.10	-.62	.42
	Hedges' correction	5.29	-.10	-.62	.42
	Glass's delta	5.29	-.10	-.62	.42
introjectedregulation1	Cohen's d	4.47	.02	-.50	.54
	Hedges' correction	4.53	.02	-.50	.54
	Glass's delta	4.42	.02	-.50	.54
identifiedregulation1	Cohen's d	5.41	-.14	-.67	.38
	Hedges' correction	5.48	-.14	-.66	.38
	Glass's delta	5.26	-.15	-.67	.38
IMK1	Cohen's d	5.26	-.02	-.54	.50
	Hedges' correction	5.33	-.02	-.54	.50
	Glass's delta	5.63	-.02	-.54	.51
IMA1	Cohen's d	5.09	-.36	-.89	.16
	Hedges' correction	5.16	-.36	-.88	.16
	Glass's delta	5.28	-.35	-.88	.18
IMS1	Cohen's d	5.37	-.43	-.96	.10
	Hedges' correction	5.44	-.42	-.94	.10
	Glass's delta	5.60	-.41	-.94	.12
GCSE1	Cohen's d	2.17	-.70	-1.24	-.16
	Hedges' correction	2.20	-.69	-1.22	-.16
	Glass's delta	2.21	-.69	-1.23	-.14

^a. The denominator used in estimating the effect sizes.

Cohen's d uses the pooled standard deviation.

Hedges' correction uses the pooled standard deviation, plus a correction factor.

Glass's delta uses the sample standard deviation of the control (i.e., the second) group.

Appendices

Appendix L

Table 10 - Mann-Whitney U tests, intervention group, post intervention (pilot)

Test Statistics^a

	amotivation2	externalregulation2	introjectedregulation2	identifiedregulation2	IMK2	IMA2	IMS2	GCSE2
Mann-Whitney U	399.500	371.500	388.500	392.000	408.500	318.500	303.500	254.000
Wilcoxon W	1065.500	647.500	664.500	668.000	1074.500	594.500	579.500	530.000
Z	-.230	-.663	-.398	-.343	-.086	-1.489	-1.724	-2.529
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.818	.508	.691	.732	.932	.136	.085	.011

^a. Grouping Variable: gender

Table 11 - Effect sizes in the intervention group, post intervention (pilot)

Independent Samples Effect Sizes

		Standardizer ^a	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
amotivation2	Cohen's d	5.23	.04	-.49	.56
	Hedges' correction	5.30	.04	-.48	.55
	Glass's delta	5.12	.04	-.49	.56
externalregulation2	Cohen's d	4.83	-.13	-.65	.40
	Hedges' correction	4.90	-.13	-.64	.39
	Glass's delta	4.95	-.12	-.65	.40
introjectedregulation2	Cohen's d	4.29	-.17	-.69	.36
	Hedges' correction	4.35	-.16	-.68	.35
	Glass's delta	4.02	-.18	-.70	.35
identifiedregulation2	Cohen's d	5.17	-.14	-.66	.38
	Hedges' correction	5.24	-.14	-.66	.38
	Glass's delta	5.10	-.14	-.67	.38
IMK2	Cohen's d	4.88	.00	-.53	.52
	Hedges' correction	4.95	.00	-.52	.51
	Glass's delta	5.26	.00	-.53	.52
IMA2	Cohen's d	4.90	-.36	-.89	.17
	Hedges' correction	4.97	-.36	-.87	.17
	Glass's delta	5.15	-.34	-.87	.19
IMS2	Cohen's d	5.28	-.47	-.99	.07
	Hedges' correction	5.36	-.46	-.98	.06
	Glass's delta	5.38	-.46	-.99	.08
GCSE2	Cohen's d	2.04	-.66	-1.19	-.12
	Hedges' correction	2.07	-.65	-1.18	-.12
	Glass's delta	2.06	-.65	-1.19	-.10

^a. The denominator used in estimating the effect sizes.

Cohen's d uses the pooled standard deviation.

Hedges' correction uses the pooled standard deviation, plus a correction factor.

Glass's delta uses the sample standard deviation of the control (i.e., the second) group.

Appendices

Appendix M

Table 12 Non parametric descriptive statistics, control group

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Percentiles		
						25th	50th (Median)	75th
amotivation1	34	9.00	4.72	3.00	20.00	4.75	9.00	12.00
externalregulation1	34	11.50	4.37	3.00	21.00	8.00	11.50	14.00
introjectedregulation1	34	9.26	4.32	4.00	19.00	4.75	9.00	12.00
identifiedregulation1	34	12.24	4.16	4.00	21.00	8.75	13.00	15.00
IMK1	34	12.29	4.74	3.00	21.00	8.75	12.00	15.25
IMA1	34	12.41	4.72	3.00	21.00	10.00	13.00	14.25
IMS1	34	12.32	4.63	3.00	21.00	9.00	13.00	14.00
GCSE1	34	3.35	1.81	1.00	6.00	1.00	3.50	5.00
amotivation2	34	9.35	5.10	3.00	21.00	4.75	9.00	14.00
externalregulation2	34	11.26	3.94	3.00	21.00	8.75	11.00	14.00
introjectedregulation2	34	8.38	4.09	3.00	19.00	5.00	8.00	11.25
identifiedregulation2	34	11.50	4.24	5.00	20.00	7.75	12.00	14.00
IMK2	34	11.82	4.73	3.00	21.00	8.75	12.00	14.25
IMA2	34	12.15	4.54	3.00	21.00	9.75	12.00	14.00
IMS2	34	12.18	4.51	3.00	21.00	10.00	12.00	14.25
GCSE2	34	3.18	1.87	1.00	7.00	1.00	3.00	4.25

Table 13 – control group Wilcoxon Signed Rank test statistics

Test Statistics^a

	amotivation2 - amotivation1	externalregulation2 - externalregulation1	introjectedregulation2 - introjectedregulation1	identifiedregulation2 - identifiedregulation1	IMK2 - IMK1	IMA2 - IMA1	IMS2 - IMS1	GCSE2 - GCSE1
Z	-1.754 ^b	-1.034 ^c	-2.984 ^c	-2.585 ^c	-2.385 ^c	-.866 ^c	-1.260 ^c	-1.414 ^c
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.079	.301	.003	.010	.017	.386	.208	.157

^a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

^b. Based on negative ranks.

^c. Based on positive ranks.

Appendices

Table 14 - control group effect sizes

Paired Samples Effect Sizes

			Standardizer ^a	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower	Upper
Pair 1	amotivation1 - amotivation2	Cohen's d	1.10	-.32	-.66	.03
		Hedges' correction	1.12	-.31	-.65	.03
Pair 2	externalregulation1 - externalregulation2	Cohen's d	1.95	.12	-.22	.46
		Hedges' correction	2.00	.12	-.21	.45
Pair 3	introjectedregulation1 - introjectedregulation2	Cohen's d	1.49	.59	.22	.95
		Hedges' correction	1.53	.58	.22	.93
Pair 4	identifiedregulation1 - identifiedregulation2	Cohen's d	1.90	.39	.04	.73
		Hedges' correction	1.94	.38	.04	.72
Pair 5	IMK1 - IMK2	Cohen's d	1.05	.45	.09	.80
		Hedges' correction	1.08	.44	.09	.78
Pair 6	IMA1 - IMA2	Cohen's d	1.64	.16	-.18	.50
		Hedges' correction	1.68	.16	-.17	.49
Pair 7	IMS1 - IMS2	Cohen's d	1.31	.11	-.23	.45
		Hedges' correction	1.34	.11	-.22	.44
Pair 8	GCSE1 - GCSE2	Cohen's d	.72	.25	-.10	.59
		Hedges' correction	.73	.24	-.09	.57

^a. The denominator used in estimating the effect sizes.

Cohen's d uses the sample standard deviation of the mean difference.

Hedges' correction uses the sample standard deviation of the mean difference, plus a correction factor.

Appendices

Appendix N

Table 15 - intervention groups non-parametric descriptive statistics

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Percentiles		
						25th	50th (Median)	75th
amotivation1	56	8.79	5.29	3.00	21.00	3.50	8.00	13.00
externalregulation1	56	12.20	4.75	3.00	21.00	9.00	13.00	15.00
introjectedregulation1	56	9.88	4.24	3.00	21.00	7.00	9.50	13.00
identifiedregulation1	56	12.05	5.05	2.00	21.00	9.00	12.00	15.75
IMK1	56	12.05	4.94	3.00	21.00	9.00	11.50	16.00
IMA1	56	12.77	4.90	3.00	21.00	10.00	13.00	16.75
IMS1	56	11.11	5.15	3.00	21.00	8.00	10.00	14.00
GCSE1	56	3.30	2.20	1.00	7.00	1.00	3.00	5.00
amotivation2	56	6.96	4.72	3.00	20.00	3.00	5.00	9.00
externalregulation2	56	13.96	4.29	3.00	21.00	11.25	14.00	17.00
introjectedregulation2	56	11.48	3.99	3.00	21.00	9.00	12.00	14.00
identifiedregulation2	56	13.43	4.54	3.00	21.00	12.00	14.00	16.00
IMK2	56	13.82	4.34	3.00	21.00	11.00	13.00	17.75
IMA2	56	14.34	4.51	3.00	21.00	12.00	14.00	18.00
IMS2	56	12.48	4.88	3.00	21.00	9.00	12.00	16.00
GCSE2	56	4.13	1.94	1.00	7.00	3.00	4.00	5.00

Table 16 - intervention groups Wilcoxon Signed Rank test statistics

Test Statistics^a

	amotivation2 - amotivation1	externalregulation2 - externalregulation1	introjectedregulation2 - introjectedregulation1	identifiedregulation2 - identifiedregulation1	IMK2 - IMK1	IMA2 - IMA1	IMS2 - IMS1	GCSE2 - GCSE1
Z	-4.467 ^b	-4.737 ^c	-4.226 ^c	-5.015 ^c	-5.460 ^c	-4.719 ^c	-4.693 ^c	-4.607 ^c
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001

^a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

^b. Based on positive ranks.

^c. Based on negative ranks.

Appendices

Table 17 - intervention groups effect sizes

Paired Samples Effect Sizes

			Standardizer ^a	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower	Upper
Pair 1	amotivation1 - amotivation2	Cohen's d	2.76	.66	.37	.95
		Hedges' correction	2.80	.65	.36	.93
Pair 2	externalregulation1 - externalregulation2	Cohen's d	2.21	-.80	-1.10	-.50
		Hedges' correction	2.24	-.79	-1.08	-.49
Pair 3	introjectedregulation1 - introjectedregulation2	Cohen's d	2.61	-.62	-.90	-.33
		Hedges' correction	2.64	-.61	-.89	-.32
Pair 4	identifiedregulation1 - identifiedregulation2	Cohen's d	1.81	-.76	-1.05	-.46
		Hedges' correction	1.84	-.75	-1.04	-.45
Pair 5	IMK1 - IMK2	Cohen's d	1.84	-.96	-1.28	-.64
		Hedges' correction	1.86	-.95	-1.26	-.63
Pair 6	IMA1 - IMA2	Cohen's d	2.17	-.72	-1.02	-.43
		Hedges' correction	2.20	-.71	-1.00	-.42
Pair 7	IMS1 - IMS2	Cohen's d	1.73	-.79	-1.09	-.49
		Hedges' correction	1.76	-.78	-1.08	-.48
Pair 8	GCSE1 - GCSE2	Cohen's d	1.08	-.76	-1.06	-.46
		Hedges' correction	1.10	-.75	-1.04	-.45

^a. The denominator used in estimating the effect sizes.

Cohen's d uses the sample standard deviation of the mean difference.

Hedges' correction uses the sample standard deviation of the mean difference, plus a correction factor.

Appendices

Appendix O

Table 18 - Intervention groups pre-test samples descriptive statistics

Group Statistics

	gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
amotivation1	1.00	20	8.20	4.95	1.11
	2.00	30	8.77	5.46	1.00
externalregulation1	1.00	20	12.10	4.99	1.12
	2.00	30	12.27	4.93	.90
introjectedregulation1	1.00	20	10.00	4.70	1.05
	2.00	30	9.80	4.24	.77
identifiedregulation1	1.00	20	11.80	5.63	1.26
	2.00	30	13.03	4.37	.80
IMK1	1.00	20	11.85	4.87	1.09
	2.00	30	12.43	5.23	.95
IMA1	1.00	20	11.65	4.73	1.06
	2.00	30	13.90	4.69	.86
IMS1	1.00	20	10.00	5.02	1.12
	2.00	30	12.50	5.06	.92
GCSE1	1.00	20	2.30	1.95	.44
	2.00	30	4.23	2.08	.38

Table 19 - Intervention groups pre-test Mann-Whitney U test statistics

Test Statistics^a

	amotivation1	externalregulation1	introjectedregulation1	identifiedregulation1	IMK1	IMA1	IMS1	GCSE1
Mann-Whitney U	286.000	285.000	290.000	268.000	280.500	206.000	211.500	143.500
Wilcoxon W	496.000	495.000	755.000	478.000	490.500	416.000	421.500	353.500
Z	-.281	-.298	-.199	-.636	-.387	-1.867	-1.758	-3.167
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.779	.766	.842	.525	.699	.062	.079	.002

^a. Grouping Variable: gender

Appendices

Table 20 = Intervention groups pre-test effect sizes

Independent Samples Effect Sizes

		Standardizer ^a	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
amotivation1	Cohen's d	\$5.26	-\$0.11	-\$0.67	\$0.46
	Hedges' correction	\$5.35	-\$0.11	-\$0.66	\$0.45
	Glass's delta	\$5.46	-\$0.10	-\$0.67	\$0.46
externalregulation1	Cohen's d	\$4.95	-\$0.03	-\$0.60	\$0.53
	Hedges' correction	\$5.03	-\$0.03	-\$0.59	\$0.52
	Glass's delta	\$4.93	-\$0.03	-\$0.60	\$0.53
introjectedregulation1	Cohen's d	\$4.43	\$0.05	-\$0.52	\$0.61
	Hedges' correction	\$4.50	\$0.04	-\$0.51	\$0.60
	Glass's delta	\$4.24	\$0.05	-\$0.52	\$0.61
identifiedregulation1	Cohen's d	\$4.91	-\$0.25	-\$0.82	\$0.32
	Hedges' correction	\$4.99	-\$0.25	-\$0.80	\$0.31
	Glass's delta	\$4.37	-\$0.28	-\$0.85	\$0.29
IMK1	Cohen's d	\$5.09	-\$0.11	-\$0.68	\$0.45
	Hedges' correction	\$5.17	-\$0.11	-\$0.67	\$0.45
	Glass's delta	\$5.23	-\$0.11	-\$0.68	\$0.46
IMA1	Cohen's d	\$4.70	-\$0.48	-\$1.05	\$0.10
	Hedges' correction	\$4.78	-\$0.47	-\$1.03	\$0.10
	Glass's delta	\$4.69	-\$0.48	-\$1.06	\$0.10
IMS1	Cohen's d	\$5.04	-\$0.50	-\$1.07	\$0.08
	Hedges' correction	\$5.12	-\$0.49	-\$1.05	\$0.08
	Glass's delta	\$5.06	-\$0.49	-\$1.07	\$0.09
GCSE1	Cohen's d	\$2.03	-\$0.95	-\$1.55	-\$0.35
	Hedges' correction	\$2.06	-\$0.94	-\$1.52	-\$0.35
	Glass's delta	\$2.08	-\$0.93	-\$1.54	-\$0.31

^a. The denominator used in estimating the effect sizes.

Cohen's d uses the pooled standard deviation.

Hedges' correction uses the pooled standard deviation, plus a correction factor.

Glass's delta uses the sample standard deviation of the control (i.e., the second) group.

Appendices

Appendix P

Table 21 - Intervention groups post-test samples descriptive statistics

Group Statistics

	gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
amotivation2	1.00	20	7.20	5.15	1.15
	2.00	30	6.83	4.63	.85
externalregulation2	1.00	20	13.50	4.56	1.02
	2.00	30	14.20	4.33	.79
introjectedregulation2	1.00	20	11.00	4.62	1.03
	2.00	30	11.60	3.77	.69
identifiedregulation2	1.00	20	12.90	5.16	1.15
	2.00	30	14.23	4.23	.77
IMK2	1.00	20	13.50	4.36	.97
	2.00	30	14.13	4.54	.83
IMA2	1.00	20	13.05	4.47	1.00
	2.00	30	15.40	4.45	.81
IMS2	1.00	20	11.00	5.19	1.16
	2.00	30	13.87	4.61	.84
GCSE2	1.00	20	3.15	1.84	.41
	2.00	30	4.83	1.86	.34

Table 22 - Intervention groups post-test Mann-Whitney U test statistics

Test Statistics^a

	amotivation2	externalregulation2	introjectedregulation2	identifiedregulation2	IMK2	IMA2	IMS2	GCSE2
Mann-Whitney U	283.500	266.500	281.500	262.500	285.000	201.500	204.500	143.500
Wilcoxon W	748.500	476.500	491.500	472.500	495.000	411.500	414.500	353.500
Z	-.334	-.666	-.368	-.746	-.298	-1.961	-1.898	-3.155
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.738	.505	.713	.455	.766	.050	.058	.002

^a. Grouping Variable: gender

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Table 23 - Intervention groups post-test effect sizes

Independent Samples Effect Sizes

		Standardizer ^a	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
amotivation2	Cohen's d	4.84	.08	-.49	.64
	Hedges' correction	4.92	.07	-.48	.63
	Glass's delta	4.63	.08	-.49	.64
externalregulation2	Cohen's d	4.42	-.16	-.72	.41
	Hedges' correction	4.50	-.16	-.71	.40
	Glass's delta	4.33	-.16	-.73	.41
introjectedregulation2	Cohen's d	4.13	-.15	-.71	.42
	Hedges' correction	4.19	-.14	-.70	.42
	Glass's delta	3.77	-.16	-.73	.41
identifiedregulation2	Cohen's d	4.62	-.29	-.86	.28
	Hedges' correction	4.70	-.28	-.84	.28
	Glass's delta	4.23	-.32	-.88	.26
IMK2	Cohen's d	4.47	-.14	-.71	.43
	Hedges' correction	4.54	-.14	-.70	.42
	Glass's delta	4.54	-.14	-.71	.43
IMA2	Cohen's d	4.45	-.53	-1.10	.05
	Hedges' correction	4.52	-.52	-1.08	.05
	Glass's delta	4.45	-.53	-1.11	.06
IMS2	Cohen's d	4.85	-.59	-1.17	-.01
	Hedges' correction	4.93	-.58	-1.15	-.01
	Glass's delta	4.61	-.62	-1.20	-.03
GCSE2	Cohen's d	1.85	-.91	-1.50	-.31
	Hedges' correction	1.88	-.89	-1.47	-.31
	Glass's delta	1.86	-.91	-1.51	-.29

^a. The denominator used in estimating the effect sizes.

Cohen's d uses the pooled standard deviation.

Hedges' correction uses the pooled standard deviation, plus a correction factor.

Glass's delta uses the sample standard deviation of the control (i.e., the second) group.

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Appendix Q

Table 24 - Control groups pre-test samples descriptive statistics

Group Statistics

	gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
amotivation1	1.00	19	11.16	4.78	1.10
	2.00	15	6.27	2.96	.77
externalregulation1	1.00	19	9.89	3.83	.88
	2.00	15	13.53	4.27	1.10
introjectedregulation1	1.00	19	7.26	3.45	.79
	2.00	15	11.80	4.06	1.05
identifiedregulation1	1.00	19	10.32	3.92	.90
	2.00	15	14.67	3.13	.81
IMK1	1.00	19	10.05	4.27	.98
	2.00	15	15.13	3.74	.97
IMA1	1.00	19	10.37	4.49	1.03
	2.00	15	15.00	3.72	.96
IMS1	1.00	19	10.16	4.14	.95
	2.00	15	15.07	3.75	.97
GCSE1	1.00	19	2.95	1.78	.41
	2.00	15	3.87	1.77	.46

Table 25 - Control groups pre-test Mann-Whitney U test statistics

Test Statistics^a

	amotivation1	externalregulation1	introjectedregulation1	identifiedregulation1	IMK1	IMA1	IMS1	GCSE1
Mann-Whitney U	56.500	79.500	53.000	66.000	48.000	64.000	48.500	99.500
Wilcoxon W	176.500	269.500	243.000	256.000	238.000	254.000	238.500	289.500
Z	-3.002	-2.198	-3.132	-2.677	-3.292	-2.737	-3.292	-1.524
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.028	.002	.007	<.001	.006	<.001	.127
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	.002 ^b	.027 ^b	.001 ^b	.007 ^b	<.001 ^b	.006 ^b	<.001 ^b	.137 ^b

^a. Grouping Variable: gender

^b. Not corrected for ties.

Appendices

Table 26 - Control group pre-test effect sizes

Independent Samples Effect Sizes

				95% Confidence Interval	
		Standardizer ^a	Point Estimate	Lower	Upper
amotivation1	Cohen's d	4.08	1.20	.45	1.93
	Hedges' correction	4.18	1.17	.44	1.88
	Glass's delta	2.96	1.65	.73	2.54
externalregulation1	Cohen's d	4.03	-.90	-1.61	-.18
	Hedges' correction	4.13	-.88	-1.57	-.18
	Glass's delta	4.27	-.85	-1.58	-.09
introjectedregulation1	Cohen's d	3.73	-1.22	-1.95	-.47
	Hedges' correction	3.82	-1.19	-1.90	-.46
	Glass's delta	4.06	-1.12	-1.90	-.31
identifiedregulation1	Cohen's d	3.59	-1.21	-1.94	-.46
	Hedges' correction	3.68	-1.18	-1.90	-.45
	Glass's delta	3.13	-1.39	-2.22	-.53
IMK1	Cohen's d	4.05	-1.25	-1.99	-.50
	Hedges' correction	4.15	-1.23	-1.94	-.49
	Glass's delta	3.74	-1.36	-2.18	-.50
IMA1	Cohen's d	4.17	-1.11	-1.83	-.37
	Hedges' correction	4.27	-1.08	-1.79	-.37
	Glass's delta	3.72	-1.24	-2.05	-.41
IMS1	Cohen's d	3.97	-1.24	-1.97	-.49
	Hedges' correction	4.07	-1.21	-1.92	-.47
	Glass's delta	3.75	-1.31	-2.12	-.46
GCSE1	Cohen's d	1.77	-.52	-1.20	.17
	Hedges' correction	1.82	-.51	-1.17	.17
	Glass's delta	1.77	-.52	-1.21	.19

^a. The denominator used in estimating the effect sizes.

Cohen's d uses the pooled standard deviation.

Hedges' correction uses the pooled standard deviation, plus a correction factor.

Glass's delta uses the sample standard deviation of the control (i.e., the second) group.

Appendices

Appendix R

Table 27 - Control groups post-test samples descriptive statistics

Group Statistics

	gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
amotivation2	1.00	19	11.53	5.28	1.21
	2.00	15	6.60	3.31	.86
externalregulation2	1.00	19	9.53	3.15	.72
	2.00	15	13.47	3.81	.98
introjectedregulation2	1.00	19	6.32	2.75	.63
	2.00	15	11.00	4.07	1.05
identifiedregulation2	1.00	19	9.58	4.18	.96
	2.00	15	13.93	2.91	.75
IMK2	1.00	19	9.89	4.47	1.03
	2.00	15	14.27	3.94	1.02
IMA2	1.00	19	10.32	4.38	1.01
	2.00	15	14.47	3.68	.95
IMS2	1.00	19	10.11	4.15	.95
	2.00	15	14.80	3.55	.92
GCSE2	1.00	19	2.95	1.93	.44
	2.00	15	3.47	1.81	.47

Table 28 - Control groups post-test Mann-Whitney U test statistics

Test Statistics^a

	amotivation2	externalregulation2	introjectedregulation2	identifiedregulation2	IMK2	IMA2	IMS2	GCSE2
Mann-Whitney U	67.000	59.000	48.500	60.000	62.500	61.000	52.000	116.000
Wilcoxon W	187.000	249.000	238.500	250.000	252.500	251.000	242.000	306.000
Z	-2.632	-2.926	-3.275	-2.876	-2.793	-2.842	-3.165	-.937
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.008	.003	.001	.004	.005	.004	.002	.349
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	.008 ^b	.003 ^b	<.001 ^b	.003 ^b	.004 ^b	.004 ^b	.001 ^b	.372 ^b

^a. Grouping Variable: gender

^b. Not corrected for ties.

Appendices

Table 29 - Control group post-test effect sizes

Independent Samples Effect Sizes

				95% Confidence Interval	
		Standardizer ^a	Point Estimate	Lower	Upper
amotivation2	Cohen's d	4.53	1.09	.35	1.81
	Hedges' correction	4.64	1.06	.34	1.76
	Glass's delta	3.31	1.49	.60	2.34
externalregulation2	Cohen's d	3.46	-1.14	-1.86	-.40
	Hedges' correction	3.54	-1.11	-1.82	-.39
	Glass's delta	3.81	-1.03	-1.79	-.24
introjectedregulation2	Cohen's d	3.39	-1.38	-2.13	-.62
	Hedges' correction	3.47	-1.35	-2.08	-.60
	Glass's delta	4.07	-1.15	-1.93	-.34
identifiedregulation2	Cohen's d	3.68	-1.18	-1.91	-.44
	Hedges' correction	3.77	-1.15	-1.87	-.43
	Glass's delta	2.91	-1.49	-2.35	-.61
IMK2	Cohen's d	4.25	-1.03	-1.74	-.30
	Hedges' correction	4.35	-1.01	-1.70	-.29
	Glass's delta	3.94	-1.11	-1.89	-.31
IMA2	Cohen's d	4.09	-1.01	-1.73	-.29
	Hedges' correction	4.19	-.99	-1.69	-.28
	Glass's delta	3.68	-1.13	-1.91	-.32
IMS2	Cohen's d	3.90	-1.20	-1.93	-.46
	Hedges' correction	3.99	-1.18	-1.89	-.45
	Glass's delta	3.55	-1.32	-2.14	-.47
GCSE2	Cohen's d	1.88	-.28	-.95	.41
	Hedges' correction	1.92	-.27	-.93	.40
	Glass's delta	1.81	-.29	-.97	.40

^a. The denominator used in estimating the effect sizes.

Cohen's d uses the pooled standard deviation.

Hedges' correction uses the pooled standard deviation, plus a correction factor.

Glass's delta uses the sample standard deviation of the control (i.e., the second) group.

Abbreviations

AFL	Assessment for Learning
ALL	Association for Language Learning
BERA	British Educational Research Association
BPNSFS	Basic Psychological Need Satisfaction and Frustration Scale
CALL	Computer Assisted Language Learning
CBI	Concept Based Instruction
CBLT	Content Based Language Teaching
CDST	Complex Dynamic Systems Theory
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference
CI	Comprehensible Input
CILT	Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research
CLA	Contrastive Lexical Approach
CLIL	Content and Language Integrated Learning
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service
DELE	<i>Diploma de Español como Lengua Extranjera</i>
DELFL	<i>Diplôme d'Études en Langue Française</i>
DfE	Department for Education
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
DMC	Directed Motivational Currents
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EBacc	English Baccalaureate
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
EEF	Education Endowment Foundation

Abbreviations

EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
EPI	Extensive Processing Instruction
ESEM	Exploratory Structural Equation Modelling
EU	European Union
EVT	Expectancy-Value Theory
F	Female
FG	Focus Group
GCE	General Certificate of Education
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
HHCLs	Home, Heritage and Community Languages
IB	International Baccalaureate
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ID	Individual Differences
IMA	Intrinsic Motivation (Accomplishment)
IMK	Intrinsic Motivation (Knowledge)
IMS	Intrinsic Motivation (Stimulation)
IOE	Institute of Education
IRLT	Institute for Research in Language Teaching
ISLA	Instructed Second Language Acquisition
IT	Information Technology
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
L2MSS	L2 Motivational Self System

Abbreviations

LDP	Language Driven Pedagogy
LEP	Language Education Policy
LFA	Languages for All
LL	Language Learning
LLOS IEA	Language Learning Orientations Scale – Intrinsic Motivation, Extrinsic Motivation, and Amotivation
LOTE	Languages other than English
LSEF	London Schools Excellence Fund
M	Male
MAT	Multi-Academy Trust
MEP	Mandarin Excellence Programme
MFL	Modern Foreign Languages
MKO	More Knowledgeable Other
MYP	Middle Years Programme
NB	Non Binary
NC	National Curriculum
NCELP	National Centre for Excellence in Language Pedagogy
NCLE	National Consortium of Linguistic Education
NI	Northern Ireland
OCRR	Ofsted Curriculum Research Review
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills
PBL	Project Based Learning
PGCE	Post Graduate Certificate of Education
PI	Processing Instruction
PP	Pupil Premium

Abbreviations

PPP	Presentation, Practice, Production
RQ	Research Question
RTG	Regression Towards the Mean
UK	United Kingdom
SCOBA	Schema for the Orienting Basis of Action
SDT	Self Determination Theory
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SES	Socioeconomic Status
SEVT	Situational Expectancy-Value Theory
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SLC	Specialist Language College
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths
TBLT	Task-Based Language Teaching
TPRS	Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling
TSC	Teaching Schools Council
TSLT	Task Supported Language Teaching
UCL	University College London
UK	United Kingdom
WAGOLL	What a Good One Looks Like
WOLLOW	World of Languages, Languages of the World
WTC	Willingness to Communicate
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

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