



# An exploration of motivation and self-beliefs of first year students of German

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## Abstract

This article explores 59 university students' motivation for learning German as a foreign language over the course of one academic year. It sheds light on the role of the ideal L2 self, integrative and instrumental orientations, and task-based self-efficacy for students' motivation and pays particular attention to the relationship between the ideal L2 self and self-efficacy beliefs. With the exception of integrative orientation, all variables were significantly correlated with self-perceived effort and thus appeared to play a role in students' motivation to engage with language learning. While students could well imagine becoming proficient users of German, task based self-efficacy to deal with the specific language tasks required at university was relatively low at the beginning of the year, and self-efficacy beliefs for speaking and listening further declined over the course of the year. Given the significant correlations between the ideal L2 self and task based self-efficacy, it is proposed that attending to students' self-efficacy beliefs may also nourish students' ideal L2 self.

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## 1. Introduction

Motivation is considered by both researchers and practitioners as an important antecedent for successful learning (e.g., Schunk et al., 2008). While there are different understandings of motivation, there has seen a steady rise of the *self* as a motivational concept over the past decades in mainstream motivational literature (see Pajares and Schunk, 2002). There is a parallel development in L2<sup>1</sup> motivational research, where increased attention has been paid to notions of self and identity in recent years (e.g., Csizér and Lukács, 2010; Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2009; Kormos and Csizér, 2008; Taylor et al., 2012). The notion of integrative and instrumental orientations (e.g., Gardner and Lambert, 1972; Tremblay and Gardner, 1995), which were traditionally key components in L2 motivation research, have slowly given way to newer concepts such as the ideal L2 self (e.g., Dörnyei, 2009). This article is a tentative exploration of

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<sup>1</sup> In the following, L2 motivational research will be used to refer to research on language learning motivation in general. It is important, however, to distinguish at times between second language learning motivational research and foreign language (FL) learning motivational research. In these instances, I will refer explicitly to FL motivational research.

some of the factors involved in first year students' motivation to study German at university level. It draws on data derived from a longitudinal mixed-methods study involving 59 first year students enrolled on German degree courses at two major UK universities. It focuses in particular on students' ideal L2 self, integrative and instrumental orientations, and self-efficacy beliefs, the latter of which were measured in a task-sensitive manner geared to the particular tasks students had to engage with during their first year at university.

## 2. Literature review

For many years, integrative and instrumental orientations, originally introduced by Canadian social psychologists Gardner and Lambert (1972), were an integral part of L2 motivational research. Orientations are clusters of reasons for studying an L2; an integrative orientation refers to a positive attitude towards and a genuine interest in the speakers and the culture of the target language, while an instrumental orientation is concerned with the practical purposes and other advantages that the learning of the language might bring about. Over the years, the original ideas have undergone some modifications (Gardner, 2001), yet the social-psychological view and with it the idea of integrativeness has had a prevailing influence on L2 learning motivation theory and research (for an overview, see Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011). In the context of the UK, for instance, it has been observed, that modern foreign languages students have a low level of integrative orientation, which has given rise to concern (Coleman, 1996).

However, in recent years, theorists' attention has shifted towards the concept of the self in L2 motivational research (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011). Dörnyei (2005) proposes that the process of imagining oneself as a successful language learner is an important motivational force which influences an individual's engagement with language learning. In order to accommodate this line of thought, he introduced the ideal L2 self. The conceptualisation of the ideal L2 self draws on possible selves theory (e.g., Markus and Nurius, 1986) and self-discrepancy theory (e.g., Higgins, 1987), as motivated behaviour is hypothesised to emerge from people's desire to bridge the gap between their actual self and a desired future self, i.e. the person one would like to become. (Note that the actual/ideal dichotomy had already appeared in the literature much earlier, Rogers, 1951; Rogers and Dymond, 1954). If language learners have a future vision of themselves that entails speaking a foreign language, this so-called ideal L2 self serves as a motivator to learn this language as the student desires to reduce the discrepancy between the actual and ideal self. It is worth highlighting that several studies (e.g., Al-Shehri, 2009; Csizér and Kormos, 2009; Ryan, 2009; Taguchi et al., 2009) have revealed significant correlations between the ideal L2 self and self-perceived effort. However, the bulk of empirical research is based on learning English (with the exception of a study based on Hungarian learners of German and English by Csizér and Lukács, 2010). Little is therefore known about the extent to which the ideal self can play a part in learning a foreign language other than English. Given the severe challenges that modern foreign languages face in English-speaking countries such as the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom in general, and the critical state of non-world languages such as German and French in the United Kingdom in particular (Coleman, 2005; Dörnyei and Csizér, 2002; Graham, 2004), an exploration of the role of ideal L2 self for the learning of languages other than English is timely.

It is important to point out that not all future visions lead to motivated behaviour. One important factor in this respect is the strength of the person's imagination and the vividness of the vision: as Markus and Nurius (1986) highlight, an imagined possible self needs to be conjured up in great detail if it is to unfold its motivational potential. That is, the more elaborated the possible self, the more motivating it is (Cross and Markus, 1991). The role of imagination in possible selves theory has become noteworthy in L2 motivational research (see Dörnyei, 2009), and pedagogical suggestions have been developed to stimulate mental imagery use in the L2 classroom (Arnold et al., 2007; Dörnyei, 2008; Dörnyei and Kubanyiova, in press; Magid and Chan, 2011). It is hoped that mental imagery use can strengthen the vividness of students' L2 ideal selves and thereby support language learning motivation beyond the actual language lesson.

There are, however, other factors that influence whether possible selves can exert influence on an individual's motivation. Possible selves need to be situated within a person's realistic potential. As Oyserman and Markus (1993) point out, unless a vision is likely to some extent, changes in behaviour are not triggered, a fact that has attracted attention in the area of sports psychology, where the relationship between possible selves, imagery use and self-efficacy is explored. The latter refers to human capability beliefs, i.e. people's perceptions of their ability to perform well in a given task (Bandura, 1995, 1997). It seems likely that an individual's self-efficacy beliefs play a role in whether an individual judges a particular possible self to be attainable. Bandura (1997) hypothesises that self-efficacy has an effect on mental imagery, i.e. that individuals with high levels of self-efficacy find it easier to

visualise an action which, in turn, increases motivation. Recent studies have found consistent links between self-efficacy beliefs, mental imagery use and motivated behaviour (Beauchamp et al., 2002; Cumming, 2008; Munroe-Chandler et al., 2008; Wesch et al., 2006). Although no causal claims can be made on the basis of correlational studies, it seems plausible to argue that higher levels of self-efficacy will make the attainment of visions more likely and will thereby increase students' motivation.

Of course, it is not yet clear how and to what extent these results can be transferred to language learners. Based on existing evidence one may hypothesise that there is a link between students' self-efficacy beliefs for language tasks and their ability to imagine themselves as successful users of a foreign language. In the L2 motivational field, however, little attention has been paid to the relationship between students' self-efficacy beliefs and their ability to conjure up an ideal L2 self. This fact is all the more surprising given that the motivational impetus of the ideal L2 self is hypothesised to stem from an individual's desire to bridge the gap between a current and a possible self (Dörnyei, 2009). Yet the actual self has received very little attention in recent studies (but see Mercer, 2011; Taylor, 2010).

This article addresses this gap by paying attention to the relationship between students' actual self and their ideal self. However, the scope of the article is limited to exploring the relationship between the ideal L2 self and one aspect of students' actual self, i.e. students' self-efficacy beliefs. This choice is justified by the pedagogical focus of the overall study, and the importance of self-efficacy beliefs for learner motivation, which has been well-researched in the school and higher education sector more generally (Lent et al., 1984; Schunk et al., 2008; Shell and Husman, 2008). For instance, students with a strong sense of self-efficacy show stronger effort and persist longer in a task (Bandura and Cervone, 1983, 1986; Schunk, 1995). They are more likely to use self-regulatory strategies (Pintrich and De Groot, 1990) and achieve better results even if prior achievement and cognitive skills are controlled for (Schunk, 1996, 1984). While it would go beyond the scope of the paper to review the substantial body of evidence in this field, it is worth highlighting that self-efficacy beliefs appear to exert influence on the effort university students expend on home assignments, which, in turn, has a significant impact on the final examination performance (Kitsantas and Zimmerman, 2009). Self-efficacy has also been found to have a predictive value for university students' adjustment to higher education and their subsequent academic performance (Chemers et al., 2001). There is also empirical evidence for the importance of self-efficacy beliefs for language learning (Cheng, 2002; Ehrman, 1996; MacIntyre et al., 2001; Mills et al., 2007; Mori, 2002; Tremblay and Gardner, 1995). However, as Mills et al. (2007) rightly points out, methodological difficulties are not uncommon among existing investigations. Bandura (1997) states that self-efficacy has to be measured in a situationally sensitive fashion and at a microanalytic level, for instance self-efficacy for special academic areas. If self-efficacy is measured in too broad a manner, it cannot capture any task-specific beliefs about capability. In other words, if beliefs of self-efficacy are to be measured and their relationship with the ideal L2 self is to be explored, task/situational sensitivity is crucial.

### 3. Research questions

The overall aim of the article is to explore four aspects of students' motivation in depth: the ideal L2 self, integrative and instrumental orientations, and self-efficacy beliefs. In particular, the paper seeks to answer three research questions:

- What is the perceived role of students' ideal L2 self beliefs, integrative and instrumental orientations, and task-based self-efficacy (for reading, writing, listening, speaking, grammar and translation) at the beginning and at the end of the academic year?
- How do these four aspects of students' motivation relate to students' self-perceived effort for language learning?
- How does the ideal L2 self relate to students' self-efficacy beliefs?

### 4. Materials and methods

#### 4.1. Participants

Participants in the study were first-year students studying German as a foreign language (FL) at two major English universities with large German language departments. University A is a long-established and highly reputable university; University B is a more recently-established university, but with a similarly high academic reputation. Both universities

belong to the Russell Group<sup>2</sup> of twenty-four leading UK universities. The two language departments obtained comparable results in the UK Research Assessment Exercise 2008,<sup>3</sup> with University A scoring slightly higher for publications with international impact. In the Teaching Quality Assessment,<sup>4</sup> University B scored slightly better. Both universities have a similar student intake and students can study German either as a single subject or in combination with another language or another subject. As is common practice in the UK and in many universities in continental Europe, the first language (in this case, English) is the language of instruction for literature classes and for classes on the linguistic aspects of the second language. Students at both universities receive 3 h of German language instruction per week.

#### 4.2. *Sampling for questionnaire*

At the beginning of the academic year, the whole first-year German cohort of both universities ( $n = 142$ ; 72 students at University A and 70 students at University B) was invited to participate in the questionnaire study. 97 students (University A: 56; University B: 41) accepted the invitation, at an overall response rate of 68.3% (University A: 77.8%; University B: 58.6%). From all appearances, the profiles of responders vs. non-responders did not differ systematically. Of the original 97, three students (all from University A) were native speakers of German, and their reasons for studying German were considerably different from those of the other students. They were therefore excluded from the data set. Of the remaining 94 participants, respondents' ages ranged from 18 to 20 years. They had studied German for an average of 6.46 years (SD 2.18). There were more female students in the sample ( $f = 53$ ;  $m = 36$ ); however, five students did not indicate their gender. The majority of students were of British nationality (71 students) and had English as their mother tongue (81 students). At time point 2, attrition had reduced the cohort to 59 students, 38 students from University A and 21 students from University B. Therefore, all statistical procedures comparing data from time point 1 and time point 2 are based on the reduced sample of 59 students. Table 1 displays the number of participants per university at time points 1 and 2. Table 2 provides the breakdown of participants by gender and school background at time point 1; Table 3 provides the information at time point 2.

#### 4.3. *Sampling for interviews*

Questionnaire respondents were invited to volunteer for follow-up interviews. Twenty-eight students from University A and 14 students from University B did so. Study participants were chosen from this cohort of volunteers in order to achieve gender balance (with three female and three male students from each university) and to assure representation of a range of perceived levels of motivation and self-efficacy as operationalised by the questionnaire. At University A, two students from private/independent schools were chosen to reflect the large number of students from the private/independent schools at University A. Both were women; no male student from a private school had volunteered. At University B, none of the students who had attended a private/independent school volunteered for an interview; the resulting bias towards interviewees from state schools at University B merely reflects the sample population at University B. An overview of the interviewees is given in Table 4.

#### 4.4. *Instrumentation*

The study was informed by the exploratory interviews and mainstream motivational research and L2 motivational research. Methodologically, it drew partially on existing research instruments, particularly questionnaires and interview techniques. These instruments are described in the following sections.

##### 4.4.1. *Questionnaire*

Questionnaire items for the present study were developed on the basis of the relevant literature and the pilot study or adapted from validated research instruments. Questionnaire items for measuring the ideal L2 self and an

<sup>2</sup> The Russell Group represents the 24 leading UK universities.

<sup>3</sup> The Research Assessment Exercise 2008 was one of a series of exercises which is undertaken approximately every five years by the UK national funding councils to assess the quality of research in higher education institutions (HEIs). The exercise that will be reported in 2014 has been renamed the Research Excellence Framework.

<sup>4</sup> The Teaching Quality Assessment is a six-yearly national institutional evaluation of UK HEIs' teaching provision, last completed in 2011.

Table 1  
Numbers of respondents to questionnaire by university and time point.

University	Time point 1	Time point 2
A	53	38
B	41	21
Total	94	59

instrumental orientation were adapted from Ryan (2008) while items for measuring integrative orientation were adapted from Gardner et al. (1997). An overview of questionnaire items can be found in Appendix A (for a discussion of the scales, see also Busse and Williams, 2010; Busse and Walter, in press). The last section of the instrument collected details about gender, school background, years of German study, and language background. Except for the background information, scales consisted of summative Likert scales. The scales rendered satisfactory reliability coefficients as presented in Table 5.

#### 4.4.2. Interviews

The semi-structured interview protocol was determined by the overall aims of the study and informed by a qualitative study on L2 motivation involving Irish university students studying French in higher education (Ushioda, 1996). Five interviews were held with each interviewee from December 2008 to May 2009 at University B and from December 2008 to June 2009 at University A. Interview questions were chosen so as to capture motivation and motivational change from the point of view of the students (Radnor, 2001); follow-up questions were posed as issues emerged. The interview protocol can be found in Appendix B.

### 4.5. Data analysis

#### 4.5.1. Questionnaire

Questionnaire data were analysed with SPSS version 14.0; answers were coded along a scale of 1 (very much), 2 (quite a lot), 3 (so-so), 4 (not really), to 5 (not at all). The polarities of negatively worded items were reversed. The principal statistical procedures used for analysis of the data were factor analysis, correlation analysis, and *t*-tests. Reliability analysis confirmed the reliability of the scales. Principal components analysis (PCA) explored the internal structure of the larger scales designed especially for this study (*self-efficacy* and *effort*). It revealed two effort scales (targeted effort and general effort) and four self-efficacy scales self-efficacy for reading, self-efficacy for writing, self-efficacy for listening and speaking, self-efficacy for grammar and translation (see Busse, 2011a; for details).

#### 4.5.2. Interviews

Interviews were fully recorded and immediately transcribed. The transcripts were sent to interviewees for possible correction, giving them a chance to amend what they had wanted to say. Each transcript was carefully re-read prior to the next interview and possible future themes were noted: For example, if a student mentioned a possible future career path, the remaining interviews probed whether and how the path had subsequently taken further shape or, in reverse, had been dismissed over the course of the year. This procedure enabled the researchers to keep close track of qualitative changes in students' motivational development, an enhancement of existing L2 motivational research. At the

Table 2  
Numbers of respondents to questionnaire by gender and school background at time point 1.

University	Gender			School background		
	Male	Female	Missing	State	Private	Other
A	24	28	1	30	22	1
B	12	25	4	34	5	1

Table 3  
Numbers of respondents to questionnaire by gender and school background at time point 2.

University	Gender			School background		
	Male	Female	Missing	State	Private	Other
A	13	24	1	25	12	1
B	7	13	1	16	4	1

same time, this procedure resulted in an overall interview protocol that was followed by all students and a separate protocol with additional themes and questions tailored to each individual student.

To preserve the internal coherence of the narratives, short vignettes based on the longer transcripts were created. Analysis of interview transcripts was informed by the six-step analysis procedure proposed by Radnor (2001), consisting of topic ordering, category constructing, reading for content, completing coded sheets, generating coded transcripts, and analysis and interpretation of the data. The qualitative software programme MAXQDA was used for steps four and five. Interviews were reread several times as whole texts. This preliminary step allowed descriptive categories to emerge. Based on these, a list of topics emerged on reading the whole texts, as for instance, enjoyment of/dissatisfaction with specific language tasks. After analysing the data in more depth, each statement was linked to the descriptive categories. Subheadings for each topic were then written, and the main quotes were highlighted in MAXQDA for quick reference for the writing-up process. A number of the categories were predetermined by the interview questions, but care was taken to include additional themes that emerged. A thematic analysis was performed to explore conceptual overlap of the categories. Finally, the descriptive categories were compared and matched (where appropriate) to the categories focused on in the questionnaire. In addition, frequencies were counted to identify the most frequent recurrent themes: however, these quantifications were not seen as an end in themselves, but rather as additional tools for a systematic approach to analysing the data a device to help detect the emphasis that interviewees placed on certain factors.

Table 4  
Overview of 12 interviewees by school background, motivation, and self-efficacy.

Name (University) Course of study	School background	Motivation	Self-efficacy
Jane (A) German single subject	Private	So-so	Quite high
Tom (A) German and Portuguese	State	So-so	Diverse
Jebedee (A) German and Arabic	State	Quite high	So-so (speaking high)
Jayanthi (A) German and French	State	So-so	Diverse
Valda (A) German single subject	Private	Very high	Quite high, most items
Samuel (A) German and French	State	So-so	Very high, most items
Marc (B) German and French	State	Quite high	Quite high, most items
Susan (B) German and History	State	Very high	Quite high, most items
Peter (B) German and Italian	State	Quite high	Quite high (writing low)
Richard (B) German single subject	State	Quite high	Diverse
Heather (B) German and French	State	Quite high	So-so, most items
Lindsey (B) German and French	Comprehensive	So-so	Diverse

Note. "Diverse" means that students showed diverse levels of self-efficacy ranging from not confident to very confident depending on tasks.

Table 5  
Questionnaire scales with internal consistency coefficients, aggregated means, and standard deviations at time point 1 and time point 2.

Scale (Number of Items)	Internal consistency Cronbach's $\alpha$	Mean	SD
(IS) Ideal L2 self (4)	.79 (Time 1) .81 (Time 2)	1.82 1.82	.60 .68
(INSTO) Instrumental orientation (4)	.75 (Time 1) .73 (Time 2)	2.14 2.06	.71 .65
(INTEO) Integrative orientation (4)	.64 (Time 1) .77 (Time 2)	2.38 2.32	.62 .62
(SE/R) Self-efficacy reading (3)	.74 (Time 1) .77 (Time 2)	1.88 1.99	.65 .68
(SE/W) Self-efficacy writing (3)	.81 (Time 1) .85 (Time 2)	2.31 2.42	.72 .82
(SE/LS) Self-efficacy listening and speaking (3)	.91 (Time 1) .88 (Time 2)	2.33 2.51	.72 .73
(SE/GT) Self-efficacy grammar and translation (3)	.75 (Time 1) .85 (Time 2)	2.34 2.36	.78 .85
(GE) General effort (7)	.86 (Time 1) .91 (Time 2)	1.99 2.14	.57 .70
(TE) Targeted effort (4)	.72 (Time 1) .68 (Time 2)	2.64 2.62	.75 .68

Note. Each contributing item was rated on a 5-point Likert scale where 1 = very much agree, 2 = agree quite a lot, 3 = agree so-so, 4 = don't really agree, and 5 = don't agree at all.

## 5. Results

### 5.1. Research question 1: what is the perceived role of students' ideal L2 self beliefs, integrative and instrumental orientations, and task-based self-efficacy at the beginning and at the end of the academic year?

The mean values of the motivational variables, as shown in Table 5, suggest that the ideal L2 self, i.e. envisioning yourself as a competent speaker of the language, is consistently perceived by students as important (at both time points 1.82 where 1 = *very much agree* and 2 = *agree quite a lot*). Students also felt motivated by an instrumental orientation (2.06 at time point 1 and 2.05 at time point 2). However, an integrative orientation appeared to play a relatively less important role (2.32 at time point 1 and 2.42 at time point 2 where 2 = *agree quite a lot* and 3 = *so-so*).

Interestingly, although these students could envision themselves as proficient users of German, they did not seem very confident about their ability to deal with the specific language tasks required at university level: the highest mean values of the four self-efficacy factors were obtained for *self-efficacy for reading* (at both time points <2, where 1 = *very confident* and 2 = *quite confident*), while levels of *self-efficacy for writing*, *self-efficacy for grammar and translation*, and *self-efficacy for listening and speaking* were perceivably lower (at both time points <3, where 3 = *so-so*). On the grounds of the qualitative data, one may hypothesise that many of the language learning tasks given in university were new to students, for instance translation tasks, explicit grammar tuition and writing practice and this might have influenced their self-efficacy for these activities. Paired-samples *t*-tests further revealed that students' self-efficacy for speaking and listening decreased over the course of the year. The degree courses at both universities focus primarily on reading and writing skills, and relatively less attention is paid to the development of speaking and listening skills during the first year at university, which may explain this result. Paired-samples *t*-tests also showed that students' perceived general effort decreased, although targeted effort remained stable. When interpreting this result, one may bear in mind that targeted effort was already lower than perceived general effort as it included tasks that were unpopular among students Table 6.

### 5.2. Research question 2: how do these four aspects of students' motivation relate to students' self-perceived effort for language learning?

#### 5.2.1. Ideal L2 self

In line with findings from other studies, the ideal L2 self was significantly correlated with self-perceived effort (see Tables 7 and 8). The ideal L2 self showed moderate correlations with both effort factors at both time points ranging

Table 6

Paired-samples *T*-test between motivational and effort variables at time point 1 and time point 2 (*N* = 59).

Scale	Time	Mean	SD	SE	<i>T</i>	<i>df</i>	Effect size ( <i>r</i> )	Sig (2-tailed)
SE/LS	1	1.99	.72	.07	2.73	58	.34	.008
	2	2.14	.73					
GE	1	1.99	.57	.07	2.24	58	.28	.024
	2	2.14	.70					

Note. No other differences in the variables considered here were significant. SE/LS = Self-Efficacy for Listening and Speaking, GE = General Effort, SD = Standard Deviation, SE = Standard Error (of Mean), *df* = Degrees of Freedom.

from .37 to .41. The correlations are therefore somewhat weaker than those reported by other studies on the ideal L2 self (e.g., Al-Shehri, 2009; Ryan, 2009; Taguchi et al., 2009). However, in the present study, the relationship between the ideal L2 self and both aspects of effort was very stable: the same correlation values were found at time point 1 and at time point 2 (general effort .37 and targeted effort .41), which suggests that the ideal L2 self is a substantial component in these students' motivation to study German and their continued motivation to engage with German over the course of the academic year. The qualitative data supported and enriched this impression, and three sample cases will be discussed in relation to research question 3.

### 5.2.2. Instrumental orientation

An instrumental orientation was also positively correlated with both effort factors at time point 1 (.34 and .35). However, at time point 2 an instrumental orientation was only correlated with targeted effort (.45), i.e. effort expended on unpopular learning tasks. The qualitative data shed light on this relationship: the interviews suggest that career goals were not the primary reason for students to study German (also see Busse and Williams, 2010), but that they can become important in motivational lean periods and may influence whether students continue with tasks they find less motivating. For instance, career prospects did not play a role for Susan when she first started to study German. After a slight motivational low in January, she went to a careers meeting in March, where she was informed about the various job possibilities that a language degree could lead to. She explained:

I think yeah, that could possibly be the reason why I was a bit down towards the beginning of the year, because I just came back and was like, Oh, I don't really know what I'm doing with this [...] everyone else it felt like they had a path they were going down, whereas my own was just a bit random, which I now understand it's not because it just allows me to open more branches, more doors.

Susan would remind herself of the fact that "German is a really useful thing to have" whenever she questioned whether or not to continue with the degree course. She felt that the career orientation was helpful in keeping her motivation up. In our interview in April, Susan had started looking for internships in Germany. By our last interview, an internship was already organised and Susan spent a great deal of her summer holiday working in Germany, which, she felt, had an extremely positive impact on her motivation.

I would also like to draw attention to Jebedee's motivational profile. In the very first interview, Jebedee stressed that language skills were very useful as they are a rare commodity in England. Interestingly, his declining enjoyment of learning German went hand in hand with a professional re-orientation towards the Middle East. I would argue that the lack of enjoyment of learning German played a role in this re-orientation: in our first interview, Jebedee could imagine working in Germany. In January, Jebedee still had firm plans to go to Germany over the summer for a work experience.

Table 7

Correlation matrix of motivational variables and effort at time point 1.

	SE/R	SE/W	SE/LS	SE/GT	IS	INSTO	INTEO
GE		.31**	.33**		.37**	.34**	
TE	.40**	.59**	.51**	.29	.41**	.35**	

Note. GE = General Effort, TE = Targeted Effort, SE/R = Self-Efficacy Reading, SE/W = Self-Efficacy Writing, SE/LS = Self-Efficacy Listening and Speaking, SE/GT = Self-Efficacy Grammar and Translation, IS = Ideal L2 Self, INSTO = Instrumental Orientation, INTEO = Integrative Orientation. Coefficients have been omitted where no significant correlation was found.

\*\*Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).



Table 8  
Correlation matrix of motivational variables and effort at time point 2.

	SE/R	SE/W	SE/LS	SE/GT	IS	INSTO	INTEO
GE	.52**	.48**	.42**	.42**	.37**		
TE	.53**	.56**	.49**	.52**	.41**	.45**	

Note: GE = General Effort, TE = Targeted Effort, SE/R = Self-Efficacy Reading, SE/W = Self-Efficacy Writing, SE/LS = Self-Efficacy Listening and Speaking, SE/GT = Self-Efficacy Grammar and Translation. Coefficients have been omitted where no significant correlation was found.

\*\*Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

In March, he affirmed that he liked learning Arabic more than learning German, and even started to consider dropping German altogether. He also started to see his future in the Middle East:

I prefer the Arabic now, and on one hand I would quite like to drop the German at the end of the year. I don't think they would let me, though, unless I did really well in the Arabic and then just did rubbish in the German. So I want to drop it because I would like to concentrate on learning Arabic, and I see that's where my future lies. [...] Yeah, career-wise it would be in the Middle East. I don't know; I don't think I'd like to do banking or anything like that, but I wouldn't mind working for somebody in the Foreign Office. That sort of thing.

The sequence of events suggests that lack of enjoyment of learning German contributed to a professional re-orientation towards the Middle East. The motivational dynamic as apparent in Jebedee's story is therefore different to the one in Susan's story: Susan countered declining enjoyment of learning German by contemplating future career options. Jebedee countered declining enjoyment of learning German by a professional re-orientation towards a context where his preferred language, Arabic, would be useful. Yet both stories stressed the importance of future orientations and appear to suggest that career goals can become incorporated into students' ideal L2 self (in the case of Jebedee, his ideal L2 self for Arabic).

### 5.2.3. Integrative orientation

An integrative orientation was not correlated with self-perceived effort at all. In other words, an integrative orientation had little explanatory power for exploring these students' motivation to engage with language learning tasks. The qualitative data supported this impression. It was striking that eleven students out of the twelve had no or very little contact with native speakers of German apart from their language teachers over the year. Some students lamented the lack of contact with Germans, as it deprived them of the opportunity to practise their spoken German, others did not mention it so negatively. Importantly, however, the lack of contact with German native speakers did not appear to have a negative effect on students' motivation.

### 5.2.4. Self-efficacy beliefs

The correlations between the two effort factors and the four self-efficacy variables show that self-efficacy is consistently linked to students' self-perceived effort to engage with language learning. The findings therefore tie in with a substantial body of evidence obtained in mainstream motivational research showing a link between self-efficacy beliefs and learning behaviour (e.g., Schunk et al., 2008).

### 5.3. Research question 3: how does the ideal L2 self relate to students' self-efficacy beliefs?

In line with the research hypothesis, significant correlations were found between students' ideal L2 selves and their self-efficacy for language tasks (see Table 9). The ideal L2 self showed moderate correlation with students' self-efficacy for writing (.49 at time point 1 and .34 at time point 2), students' self-efficacy for reading (.46 and .37), students' self-efficacy for speaking and listening (.52 and .40) and students' self-efficacy for grammar and translation (.38 and .56). This provides support for the thesis that students' ability to envisage themselves as proficient users of a language is related to their perceived capability for language learning tasks in an educational environment.

The qualitative data shed light on the relationship between the ideal L2 self and self-efficacy beliefs. Eight of the interviewees seemed to have increasing difficulties conjuring up a vivid image of a proficient L2 user. They also suffered from increasing academic self-doubt in general and lowered self-efficacy beliefs in particular. Only two interviewees appeared to have a more vivid L2 self by the end of the year. In the following, the motivational

Table 9  
Correlation matrix of ideal L2 self and self-efficacy at both time points.

	SE/R	SE/W	SE/LS	SE/GT
IS (Time 1)	.46**	.49**	.52**	.38**
IS (Time 2)	.37**	.34**	.40**	.56**

Note. GE = General Effort, TE = Targeted Effort, SE/R = Self-Efficacy Reading, SE/W = Self-Efficacy Writing, SE/LS = Self-Efficacy Listening and Speaking, SE/GT = Self-Efficacy Grammar and Translation, IS = Ideal L2 Self.

\*\*Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

trajectories of three students will be traced in detail to illustrate the relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and students' ideal L2 visions.

### 5.3.1. Heather

The questionnaire characterised Heather as a first-year student with medium levels of self-efficacy in all language areas, paired with a medium to strong ideal L2 self. At the beginning of the year, it became clear that Heather saw her ideal L2 self vision as a significant factor in overcoming the daily chores of language learning:

Sometimes with sort of grammar things or written work, you know, there's always mistakes so it can get you a bit down but sort of looking to the future and thinking, you know, one day I'll be able to go to Germany and just speak with people there has always motivated me. That's what I really want to be able to do.

However, envisioning herself as a proficient speaker of German was not easy. In the first questionnaire, Heather judged her self-efficacy beliefs to be "so-so" in most areas. Over the course of the year, Heather seemed to become increasingly insecure about her language skills. In the follow-up interviews, she appeared to lack confidence, in particular with regard to her speaking skills, stating that her "confidence in speaking isn't that great at the moment". She also complained about lack of progress with regard to her writing skills, which she attributed to difficulties with a particular language class, called large language class, and the feedback she had received in that class. Heather started to doubt whether she would be able to reach the level of proficiency she had initially aimed for. When asked in one of the fourth interviews whether "looking to the future" and imagining herself speaking German still helped her to deal with the set-backs encountered in language learning, she answered:

I think it's related to the large language class thing. I think it's knocked my confidence a little bit. I still think I will be able to in the future, but it's gonna be quite a big mountain to climb, so I don't wanna be sort of too overconfident about it yet.

It does not seem surprising that Heather's insecurity with regard to academic tasks makes her aware of the scale of the challenge posed by her objective to become a proficient user of German. As Bandura (1997) asserts, decreasing self-efficacy can lead individuals to lower their aspirations, it may also weaken their commitment to these aspirations. It is also worth pointing out that Heather's effort to engage with language tasks seemed to decline over time; for instance, with reference to language assignments she affirmed that she had come to be "a bit lazy about it." However, towards the end of the academic year, Heather felt motivated to pursue her course of study and made concrete plans to keep up her German during the summer holidays. The second questionnaire showed that her self-efficacy beliefs had slightly improved in the area of writing. In the final interview, Heather confirmed that she felt more confident about her writing skills, which she attributed to good marks and the positive outcome of a language project:

So you are saying that your confidence for your writing has improved?

Yeah, I think so. I think from getting back the language project, it improved. Because apart from that, the only written German I have marked is in the large language class [...] which is very unhelpful. So it was nice to get that back, and that really boosted me. And it did make me think, Yeah, well, maybe my written German's okay. 'Cause I also felt that my German hasn't really improved that much since A level. [...] I really love the buzz I get when I do well with it. And I'm really looking forward to my year out and the thought of being able to go to another culture and country and speak to people and understand when they speak to me

Students' problems with feedback on writing assignments on the one hand and the positive impact of this specific language project in place at University B on the other is explored in Busse (2011b, submitted for publication), and will not be discussed in detail here. Instead attention is drawn to the fact that all interviewees attributed a lot of importance to the feedback they received. It is known that self-efficacy beliefs can be affected by feedback (Bandura, 1995), and on the basis of the qualitative data one could suggest that first-year students in particular depend on positive appraisal to maintain existing capability beliefs. In Heather's case, strengthened self-efficacy beliefs appear to go hand in hand with a revived wish to interact in the German language. Noticeably, one item in Heather's second questionnaire (*Being able to converse in another language is an important part of the person I want to become*) had moved up two scale points in the second questionnaire. When asked about this change, Heather explained:

Yeah, I think it has become more important to me this year. And my sister's been living in Paris this year; and [...] like, we were chatting together, and I realised it's part of who I am, the fact that I can do languages. And once I finish this degree, I'd like to learn more languages, and I think languages is something I really wanna do and always have. Yeah. I think that's sort of my — I think it sounds a bit weird but sort of my identity for the future. That'll be part of my life sort of thing.

Over the Easter holidays, Heather had visited her sister in Paris. The visit seemed to have been a very significant experience for her, as it was recalled in great detail. The close relationship to the sister was repeatedly mentioned, which may explain why this visit had been so important to Heather: research on possible selves has shown that peers/friends play a crucial role in late adolescents' identity formation and that they can influence whether a possible self is further pursued or abandoned (Kerpelman and Pittman, 2001).

While it would be difficult to infer cause-and-effect relationship from Heather's motivational account given that Heather's ideal L2 self had already been invigorated through the trip to Paris, one may still speculate that Heather's confidence-boost towards the end of the academic year conferred her ideal L2 vision more attainable.

To sum up, Heather's had elaborated her ideal L2 self vision over the course of the year. Self-efficacy beliefs had also improved in the areas of writing. The change in the ideal L2 self visions could be linked to events outside the institutionalised learning context (visit to sister), while the change in self-efficacy beliefs could be linked to the institutionalised learning context (good mark and positive feedback received for a language project). In other words, higher levels of self-efficacy went hand in hand with an invigorated ideal L2 self vision, but the trajectory did not allow to ascertain whether a causal relationship between these two motivational factors existed. Less ambiguous in this respect were the motivational trajectories of those students whose self-efficacy beliefs went down over the course of the year. Two of these will be explored below.

### 5.3.2. Jane

In the first interview, Jane affirmed that she felt quite confident about her language skills and the questionnaire identified her as a student with high levels of self-efficacy. She also felt confident that she would be able to become proficient in German and she could even imagine living in Germany:

By the time I finish this course [...] I would like to have achieved a good solid level of fluency. [...] Yeah, that's something that I would really, really like to achieve and I hope that I can do it. [...] I see myself wanting to live in Germany because I think living abroad gives you such a wide perspective. It just builds up the amount that you've experienced and just allows you to have a broader vision of the world.

However, Jane felt increasingly insecure about her language skills; she particularly struggled with grammar and writing tasks and felt uneasy about her speaking skills. She explained that she was trapped in a motivational downwards spiral:

I'm not so confident about my speaking and writing abilities in German. It's a vicious circle almost. Because I don't enjoy it, I don't put as much work into it [...] which makes me less confident and I don't wanna do it and so that just repeats itself.

The quote illustrates well the interactive relationship between Jane's decreasing self-efficacy beliefs and her diminishing effort to engage in language learning tasks. It may also be worth noting here that Jane received the lowest mark on her written exam at the end of the year of all interviewees, although she had the second best score in the

grammar diagnostic test taken at the beginning of the year. Noticeably, Jane's initial vision of herself as a proficient user of German also seemed to suffer. She complained:

I think I have a mental picture of what I want to be like. But it always just seems quite far off, and I'll never be quite as fluent as I want to be.

In spring, Jane started to organise internships in Germany in areas that could become possible career paths. Interestingly, when asked whether contemplating new career paths had any effect on her motivation, she answered:

Not really on my language because it's a completely different style of motivation I think. [...] I wouldn't say it had that much effect on my motivation; it just made me more determined to pursue this and get that going rather than work on my language more. I think just feeling more secure about what you want in the future does have a big effect on how you are in day-to-day life. You're just a lot more relaxed. You just have that security of idea rather than just sort of floating out into the ethers and what. You have an idea of where you want to go, and you just feel more secure.

Jane's statement is worth looking at in detail. Firstly, Jane seems to define motivation as her immediate motivation to engage with language learning, which, she admitted, was rather low at the moment. Reasons such as lack of enjoyment of language classes and low confidence beliefs played an important role in this respect. Future plans, then, do not seem to incentivise her to "work on language", that is to engage more in language learning within the framework of the curriculum; a perception that foreshadows the low mark she received in the end-of-term test. Nevertheless, she felt that looking to the future made her "more determined" to continue with her degree course. Her plans also provided her with a sense of security. It may therefore be concluded that although this future orientation did not manifest itself in immediate engagement with language learning, it had a positive long-term effect in that this student, unlike other interviewees, did not consider dropping the course.

However, the final interview revealed that Jane's increasing insecurity exerted a considerable influence on her imagined future self, and high proficiency in the L2 German played an increasingly minor role in it. She stated:

I'm just sort of trying things out at the moment [...] next year I'm production-managing a play [...] which is something that I've recently found and absolutely love, so I don't know if I'd want to incorporate that in my future. [...] But I think that all the German would do would be to complement that and just give me more freedom to travel around [...] I very much doubt in my future life that I will do a language-specific job. I very much doubt that I will, say, be a translator or interpreter. I don't think that I have the language skills to hack that, and I think you have to be very confident and very gifted in your language abilities, and I just don't have the confidence for that at the moment I don't think.

Jane did not seem to perceive reaching high proficiency in German within the realms of possibility anymore, which may have led to above changes in her future aspirations. It has been pointed out that possible selves are often adjusted in order to reduce the discrepancy between the actual self and the possible self (e.g., Higgins et al., 1985). Jane's story suggests that decreasing levels of self-efficacy can make the attainment of a former ideal L2 self vision less likely; they may also lead to a gradual exclusion of possible career paths directly related to the L2.

### 5.3.3. Samuel

Samuel is characterised by the first questionnaire as a student with very high levels of self-efficacy in all language areas, paired with a very strong ideal L2 self. Over time, however, Samuel's academic self-efficacy decreased. Problems with feedback practices appeared to be one source of decreasing self-efficacy beliefs as discussed elsewhere (Busse, submitted for publication). On the basis of the interviews one may further hypothesise that the learning environment of an elite university such as University A poses high challenges and may make it harder to maintain self-efficacy beliefs developed at school level. Samuel repeatedly commented on the competition at University A, which caused him strong academic self-doubt:

When you come to University A, in a way, you are competing against your peers, you are competing against all the other people, all the famous along the line that came here before. [...] I think you have to have in a certain sense an armour around you. And remind yourself: you got in, so obviously they thought that you should be here.

The importance of the frame of reference for students' self beliefs has been amply documented in general motivational literature, and there is very robust evidence to suggest that equally able students have lower academic self-concepts in high-ability than in low-ability educational institutions (Marsh, 1987; Marsh and Hau, 2003; Marsh et al., 2000, 2008). Although difficulties in this respect seemed to be more pronounced at University A, it is worth stressing that interviewees from both universities seemed to be strongly affected by the transition experience. In Samuel's case, however, this negative development was particularly pronounced. The high-ability environment seemed to have instilled strong academic self doubt, while the feedback he received for particular tasks and his perceived educational disadvantage undermined his self-efficacy beliefs for language learning tasks, in particular for writing tasks, an impression supported by Samuel's questionnaire at time point B. His following comment may highlight how closely interwoven the process of language learning is with students' perceived capability for language tasks, their present self and imagined future self: they should think of what they prepare students for: are they preparing civil servants, are they preparing us to become translators, are they preparing authors. I think the career which the course most of all prepares us for is just being academic (...) I want to learn more on the actual content of German language, why certain words are used, why ideas were involved. But then I get stuck in my German, because I can't write. If I am asked at what level do you write in German, I would probably say, just like a fourteen years old like. Which we need to get up and starting because we are adults. So we need to write like someone of the same age also in German.

As Samuel stressed at the beginning of the academic year, he envisioned his future as a bicultural representative of his country rather than in academia; an ideal L2 self guide which was curbed over the course of the year as a comparison of the first and the third interview illustrates:

I can kind of envisage myself as part of my career, whether, I don't know, whether I will be a kind of diplomat or – well, probably be something higher than that, an ambassador or something. Or foreign secretary would be pretty good. I can see myself as kind of bilingual – no, not bilingual, but bicultural as well. (December)

Because the difficulty that you'd experience getting a position like that, it's more who you know than what you know, and I don't really know anyone. [...] Most people who get a position in public office or any position, of which yet there is only one, not just working for a company, if you look at them, they've all been to really kind of prestigious schools [...] like Eton or Westminster [...] you don't open the newspaper and go to the job section and see "Job, Prime Minister". (April)

It does not seem surprising that Samuel comes to realise that reaching elite positions is not as easy as he formerly thought. What is striking, though, is that his ability to imagine himself as "bilingual/bicultural" also decreased. It may be worth pointing out in this vein that Samuel's engagement with language learning suffered noticeably over the course of the term, a judgement formed not only based on the self-report data from the questionnaire and the interviews, but also on his frequent absence from language classes and missing language assignments as reported by his tutor. Samuel's story thus reveals parallels with Jane's: in both cases, decreasing capability beliefs of the actual self appear to have curbed a further development of an existing ideal L2 self. In addition, engagement with language learning decreased over the course of the year.

## 6. Discussion

This article explored the motivation of first-year students of German at two UK universities by focussing in particular on four aspects of students' motivation: their ideal L2 self, integrative and instrumental orientations, and self-efficacy beliefs. The latter were measured in a task-sensitive manner geared to the particular tasks students had to engage with during their first year at university. The quantitative data show that the ideal L2 self plays a role in students' motivation and that it is significantly correlated with self-perceived effort at both time points. This result is noteworthy, because previous research has mostly concentrated on the ideal L2 self in EFL students. The study suggests that the ideal L2 self is also a useful concept when exploring motivation for studying other languages than the global language English.

Self-perceived effort was also significantly correlated with an instrumental orientation. The qualitative data suggest that career goals can be particularly important when overcoming motivational lean periods and may over time become incorporated into students' visions of their future self. With reference to Higgins (1987), Dörnyei (2009: 28) similarly

states that instrumental motives with a “promotion focus” — such as learning a language to improve career prospects — are related to the ideal L2 self. Career prospects should therefore not be underestimated as a motivator for first-year students.

Interestingly, students did not appear to have a strong integrative orientation, and the concept as such did not prove to be very useful in this context, as it was not correlated with self-perceived effort. The study therefore suggests that a focus on the role of the language for students’ self-concepts, as proposed by Dörnyei (2009), is more valuable than traditional concepts such as integrative orientations when exploring these students’ motivations for studying German. This is despite the fact that — unlike in the learning of a global language such as English — a clearly defined ethnolinguistic group exists, which students could potentially identify with. The qualitative data indicate that students have very little contact with German native speakers. The lack of an integrative orientation for German, however, did not appear to have a negative effect on students’ motivation to engage with language learning. Integrative orientations appear thus not to be the key to understanding modern foreign language students’ engagement in language learning, and concerns about a low level of emotional identification with the target culture (Coleman, 1996) may then be unfounded.

More worrying from a pedagogical point-of-view may be students’ relatively low levels of self-efficacy beliefs for language learning tasks. Recall that students’ self-efficacy beliefs did not improve over the course of the year, and that self-efficacy beliefs for speaking in German and listening to German decreased even further, and so did students’ self-perceived effort to engage with language learning tasks. The latter result ties in with the substantial body of research which has shown the importance of self-efficacy beliefs for learning engagement (for an overview, see Bandura, 1997; Schunk et al., 2008). The student interviews suggest that the ideal L2 self and career goals can indeed have a motivational long-term impact (i.e. motivate students to continue their course of study), yet self-efficacy are better at determining whether or not students engage with language learning tasks. However, the ideal L2 self and self-efficacy beliefs may not be independent of each other, as the significant correlations between the ideal L2 self and all self-efficacy factors show. While in the quantitative data no change in the ideal L2 self could be observed, the qualitative data indicate that self-efficacy beliefs play a role in whether students further elaborate an existing ideal L2 self. The interviews also reveal that decreasing self-efficacy beliefs can lead to important qualitative changes in students’ ideal L2 selves. In some cases, a gradual exclusion of high language proficiency from ideal self-beliefs and lowering effort to engage with language learning tasks could be observed. These findings would tie in with results obtained in mainstream motivational research, which suggest that self-efficacy beliefs play a role in whether a possible self seems attainable and therefore triggers motivated behaviour. It seems plausible to believe that self-efficacy beliefs influence whether a student perceives an ideal L2 self within her/his realistic potential and decides to invest effort into pursuing this ideal L2 self. Given that self-efficacy beliefs are not stable, decreasing self-efficacy beliefs can over time make a formerly plausible ideal L2 self seem unattainable. Drawing on self-discrepancy theory (Higgins, 1987), Dörnyei (2005) defines the motivational impact of the ideal L2 self as the desire to bridge the gap between a current and a possible self. The present study suggests that more data is needed on how beliefs held about the current self influence the construction of possible self beliefs.

Naturally, the small scale and exploratory nature of the present study poses strong limitations with regard to its generalisability, in particular because the study focuses on students of German only. More research is warranted to explore the role of ideal L2 self for non-ESL students and the relationship between the ideal L2 self and self-efficacy beliefs in general. In addition, sample attrition needs to be considered when interpreting the findings of this study. However, it is likely that those students who did not attend classes towards the end of the year (and therefore did not fill in the second questionnaire) felt even less motivated than their peers. The real picture regarding decreasing motivation and self-efficacy could therefore be even worse than the data suggest. Future studies may therefore not only include students of other languages in different universities across the country, but also try to include those students who drop out of language classes.

## 7. Pedagogical implications

The data suggest that there is a need to think of ways of increasing first-year students’ self-efficacy beliefs. Some ideas have already been outlined in previous articles (Busse, 2011b; Busse and Walter, *in press*). I will here engage with pedagogical suggestions aimed at nourishing ideal L2 self-beliefs. First ideas of how to sustain students’ ideal L2 self have already been suggested (e.g., Dörnyei, 2008, 2009), yet little is said about young adult learners. This is despite the fact that future self-beliefs are very dynamic around the ages of 18–22 years (Dunkel and Anthis, 2001; Waterman, 1982) and that these self-beliefs are most sensitive to feedback from the environment (Markus and Nurius, 1986). The present study suggests that more attention has to be paid to the particular needs of university students. With

reference to the European policy of mother-tongue-plus-two languages (European Commission, 2005), one may for example think of ways of stimulating students' visions of becoming multilingual European citizen. Given the recent surge of interest in the development of a European identity (European Commission, 2012), this is a timely approach, which could be complemented by raising first-year students' awareness of different career paths that involve foreign language skills. The stable relationship found between instrumental orientation and self-perceived effort in the present study suggests that such an approach could be promising.

It has also been suggested elsewhere to use imagery enhancement techniques to stimulate ideal L2 self beliefs (e.g., Arnold et al., 2007; Dörnyei, 2008). The data from the present study indicate that these may be more effective if they are coupled with techniques to stimulate self-efficacy beliefs for the particular language learning tasks students may feel insecure about. It can be noted in this respect that although verbal persuasion (feedback) can affect self-efficacy beliefs (e.g., Matsui et al., 1990), mastery experiences appear to be the most important source for self-efficacy beliefs (e.g., Fantuzzo and McWayne, 2002; Klassen, 2004). In other words, capability beliefs have to be stimulated through successful experience in a performance/learning task. Future research will have to explore how imagery enhancement techniques can best be combined with techniques to stimulate self-efficacy beliefs. For instance, the possibilities of play acting may be particularly interesting to investigate in this respect. Given that acting involves constant practice, the use of mental imagery and that it requires identification with characters, one could hypothesise that using drama for language learning may be a useful tool for stimulating students' ideal L2 self and their self-efficacy beliefs, a line of thought which would require empirical investigation.

## 8. Conclusion

The study indicates that the ideal L2 self is a useful concept when exploring non-ESL students' language learning motivation, while the traditional concept of integrative orientation appears to be less suited for this context. The ideal L2 self together with instrumental orientation and task-based self-efficacy clearly plays a role for students' engagement with language learning. The study also suggests that the relationship between the ideal L2 self and self-efficacy beliefs warrants further exploration. It appears that low self-efficacy beliefs may curb a further development of an existing ideal L2 self, and that first-year students of German may therefore benefit from pedagogical support aimed at sustaining ideal L2 self visions and increasing self-efficacy beliefs.

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## Appendix A

### *Questionnaire items*

Students rated their motivation on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 = very much agree to 5 = not agree at all.

### *Integrative orientation*

- I feel an affinity with the people who live in German-speaking countries
- I like to travel to German-speaking countries
- I like meeting people from German-speaking countries
- I would like to become more like people from German-speaking countries

### *Instrumental orientation*

- I think knowing German will help me to become a more knowledgeable person
- I think German will help in my future career
- My German ability will help me to obtain a better job

- Studying German is important to me because with a high level of proficiency in a foreign language I will be able to earn more money

### *Ideal L2 self*

- Whenever I think of my future, I imagine myself being able to use German
- I can imagine myself as someone who is able to use German well
- If my dreams come true, I will use German effectively in the future
- Being able to converse in another language is an important part of the person I want to become

### *Self-Efficacy*

How confident are you that by the end of this academic year you will be able to

- Write an essay in German?
- Write a short summary of a newspaper article in German?
- Write your opinion about an article in German?
- Read and understand the main ideas of a German poem?
- Read and understand a newspaper article?
- Listen to and understand a lecture in German?
- Listen to and understand a German native speaker in a tutorial?
- Listen to and understand a German film?
- Engage in a conversation with a native speaker about a novel?
- Speak about a film with a native speaker?
- Discuss a newspaper article with a native speaker?
- Do well in the grammar part of the classes?
- Do well when translating a short prose passage from German into English?
- Do well when translating a short prose passage from English into German?

### *Effort*

- I invest much time and effort on all written language assignments, such as German essays, etc.
- I am working hard at learning German
- I can honestly say that I put a lot of effort into German language classes
- RC\* I often feel that it takes too much effort to really engage with a piece of translation\*\*
- I put as much effort as possible into language assignments
- RC I think it would be too much effort to read anything other than set texts in German\*\*
- I spend a lot of time on translations
- I am the kind of person who makes great efforts to learn German
- I try very hard to read more than just set texts in newspapers/magazines
- I spend a lot of time on improving my grammar where I feel it to be necessary
- RC Honestly, I do not have much time to spend on language work\*\*
- I spend as much time as possible on language learning
- I try to learn as many new words as possible during language classes
- I can honestly say that I am really doing my best to learn German

### *Present motivation*

- I would describe my present state of motivation for studying German as high at the moment
- I would describe my present state of motivation for studying German as somewhat low at the moment

\*RC = reverse coded item.

\*\*not retained in the factors after exploratory factor analysis.



## Appendix B

### *Interview protocols*

#### *Interview protocol time point 1*

Why do you want to study German?

Follow-ups (depending on opening statement):

- Do you have any other reasons for studying German?
- Do you relate your reasons for studying to any long-term plans that you might have?
- Did job considerations play a role for you?
- Many people think about their future and imagine what they will probably be like in the future. Do you have a picture or a sort of vision of yourself with regard to German?
- If so, what does it look like? Does it affect your motivation?
- Do you envisage using German in the future?
- Can you imagine being fluent in German?
- What do you hope to gain from studying German at university level?
- Any other kind of expectations?
- How is your language learning going at the moment?
- How are the grammar classes/Lektorinnen classes/translation classes (University A) and large/small/oral classes going?
- How would you describe your engagement in grammar/Lektorinnen/translation class (University A) large language class/small language class/oral class (University B)?
- How confident do you feel about the following tasks (tasks mentioned in the questionnaire)?

Follow-up from questionnaire.

#### *Interview protocol, time points 2,3,4,5*

- How would you describe your present state of motivation for learning German?
- Have you experienced any motivational changes during the term?
- If so, to what factors would you attribute these changes?
- Have you experienced any changes in your ideas about future career plans? If so, do you think these have had any impact on the way you feel about studying German?
- Has anything happened in your personal life that has influenced the way you feel about your studies?

Questions about vision/ideal self depending on what students had stated earlier

- How is your language learning going at the moment?
- How are the grammar classes/Lektorinnen classes/translation classes (University A) and large/small/oral classes going?
- How would you describe your engagement in grammar/Lektorinnen/translation class (University A) large language class/small language class/oral class (University B)?
- To what factors would you attribute that classes are going well/that you made good/hardly any progress?
- Anything that you found particularly motivating/demotivating in these classes?
- Are there any particular tasks/conditions where you feel that your motivation is low?
- Why?
- (Depending on the previous interviews) Do you feel your confidence about any of the tasks discussed has changed? If yes, why?

Follow-up on feedback depending on what students had stated in the first interview.

- (Students and interviewer looked at writing tasks and the feedback received.) How do you feel about this piece? Did the feedback you received affect the way you feel about it?

### Additional Questions at time point 5

- In the first interviews you mentioned your teacher's influence; how would you evaluate your teacher's influence in retrospect?
- In retrospect, what were the biggest challenges of the first-year for you?
- Is there anything within the university environment that could be done to change your motivation?

Follow-up from questionnaire.

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