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MA Bilingualism and Multilingualism

The importance and usefulness of English to pupils in the schools of The Saarland, Germany.

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I certify that the whole of this work is the result of my individual effort, and that all sources have been acknowledged.

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I am satisfied that this work is the result of the student's effort.

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“Learning another language is not only learning different words for the same things, but learning another way to think about things.”

— Flora Lewis, journalist and foreign affairs columnist for The New York Times.

“To have another language is to possess a second soul.”

— Charlemagne, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire.

“You can never understand one language until you understand at least two.”

— Geoffrey Willans, British author of Down with Skool! and language commentator.

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Finally, I dedicate this thesis to the many multilingual learners across Europe who continue to navigate complex identities through language.

Abstract

This study investigates the factors influencing German students' attitudes toward learning English in the multilingual region of the Saarland. Using a qualitative, mixed-methods approach, data were collected from 64 students across two age groups (10–12 and 16–18) through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The research focuses on learners' motivation, confidence, engagement with English outside the classroom, and perceptions of its usefulness.

Participants were drawn from two schools: a Berufsbildungszentrum (A career-oriented school) (ages 16–18) and a Gemeinschaftsschule (A comprehensive school) (ages 10–12). Findings indicate that while both age groups regard English as valuable for future careers and global communication, their sources of motivation differ. Younger students were more influenced by digital media and gamified contexts, whereas older learners expressed stronger instrumental goals and practical applications of the language. Across both groups, intrinsic motivation, media exposure and social interaction played key roles in fostering engagement.

The data were analysed thematically using coding tables and visual summaries. The study draws on Gardner's Social Educational Model (SEM), Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS), Norton's investment theory and Complex Dynamic Systems Theory (CDST) to interpret learners' attitudes and behaviours. The findings offer insights for language educators and policymakers, highlighting the importance of developmentally appropriate, identity-sensitive approaches to English education in multilingual European contexts.

Acronyms

- CDST – Complex Dynamic Systems Theory
- L2 – Second Language (used as “L2 learners,” “L2 self,” etc.)
- L2MSS – L2 Motivational Self System
- SDT – Self-Determination Theory
- SEM – Socio-Educational Model
- SLA – Second Language Acquisition

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Chapter 1

Introduction

7.6 **Rationale and Personal Motivation**

In a multilingual European context, the role of English continues to expand, both socially and economically. Nowhere is this more evident than in regions like the Saarland, Germany - a borderland shaped by French influence, local dialects and global currents. While German and French remain essential to the local identity and curriculum, English is often viewed through a more instrumental lens: a skill for the future, a gateway to international mobility and a requirement for higher education and employment. Yet, despite its clear global value, students' attitudes toward learning English vary significantly, especially between age groups.

This disparity is what first drew me to the topic. As a language assistant working directly with students in the Saarland, I observed a distinct shift in motivation and engagement between younger learners and older teenagers. The 10–12-year-olds approached English with curiosity, fun and spontaneity, often fuelled by media exposure. In contrast, the 16–18-year-olds expressed more practical views - seeing English as essential for their future careers or academic ambitions. However, many also showed signs of frustration or detachment, suggesting deeper social, psychological or institutional influences.

This research stems from both academic curiosity and personal conviction. As someone with a background in linguistics and multilingual education, I am especially interested in how motivation is influenced not just by curriculum, but by digital culture, identity and learners' imagined futures.

Understanding how German students relate to English emotionally, socially and practically is not only relevant for language teaching, but also for educational policy, teacher training and international cooperation.

1.2 Research Purpose and Relevance

The purpose of this study is to explore the factors influencing German students' attitudes toward learning English in the Saarland. By focusing on two distinct age groups - students aged 10–12 and those aged 16–18 in two different types of schools - the study seeks to understand how attitudes develop over time, and how they are influenced by motivation, confidence, media use and perceptions of usefulness. In doing so, the study builds on established theories of L2 motivation – Gardner and Lambert's (1972) SEM, Dörnyei's (2005) L2MMS, Norton's (2000) investment theory and Ushioda's (2015) CDST – while grounding the findings in real, local educational contexts.

In an age of globalisation, English has shifted from being a foreign language to a global lingua franca - used not only for communication with native speakers but as a tool for social networking, entertainment, academic work and employment. For young people in the Saarland, English is part of the cultural and economic landscape into which they are growing. Yet the classroom often fails to reflect the complexity of this relationship. This research aims to bridge that gap.

By analysing student voices, this study will contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how English is perceived, learned and lived in the Saarland. It will also offer practical

insights for language educators and curriculum designers working in multilingual and digitally connected classrooms.

1.3 Research Aims and Questions

This study aims to explore the complex and evolving relationship that German students in the Saarland have with the English language. The project focuses on two distinct student age groups (10–12 and 16–18) to investigate how motivational factors, confidence levels and perceptions of English change during critical educational stages.

The primary objectives are to:

- Identify the motivational drivers (e.g. instrumental, integrative, intrinsic, media-based) that influence students' engagement with English.
- Understand how students use English outside of the classroom - particularly through digital media and informal communication.
- Examine differences in confidence and frustration levels related to English learning across age groups.
- Assess how students perceive the usefulness of English for their personal and professional futures.
- Contextualise these findings within existing theoretical frameworks (Gardner and Lambert, 1972), (Ushioda, 2015) (Norton, 2000) and within the multilingual, cross-border reality of the Saarland.

Based on these aims, the central research question is:

What are the key factors influencing students' attitudes toward learning English in the Saarland, and how do these differ between younger (10–12) and older (16–18) learners? This overarching question is supported by the following sub-questions:

- What types of motivation do students report when learning English and how do these vary by age group?
- In what ways do students use English outside of formal education and how does this influence their confidence or interest?
- What role does media, peer interaction and family language use play in shaping attitudes?
- How do students perceive the usefulness of English in the Saarland and in their imagined futures?
- To what extent do educational experiences support or undermine students' motivation to learn English?

By answering these questions, the research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of language learning motivation in multilingual, real-world contexts and to provide practical insights for language educators and policymakers.

1.4 Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organised into six chapters, each designed to build a comprehensive understanding of how German students in the Saarland engage with English in both academic and everyday contexts. The structure combines theoretical analysis, empirical data and practical recommendations:

This chapter has introduced the research topic and explained its relevance within both the local context of the Saarland and the broader forces of globalisation. Drawing on personal experience, theoretical interest and observed patterns in student engagement, it has established the rationale, aims and research questions guiding this study.

Having outlined the study's aims and research questions, it is now essential to situate the project within the broader field of L2 acquisition research. The following chapter reviews major theoretical frameworks and contextual studies that inform this project, highlighting how concepts such as motivation, investment and multilingual identity provide the foundation for understanding German students' engagement with English in the Saarland.

Chapter 2: Literature Review – The literature review surveys major theories of language learning motivation, including Gardner and Lambert's (1972) socio-educational model (SEM), Dörnyei's (2005) L2 Motivational Self System (L2MMS), Norton's (2000) investment theory, and Ushioda's and Dörnyei's (2015) Dynamic Systems Theory. It also examines the globalisation of English, the development of multilingual identity and regional factors specific to the Saarland.

Chapter 3 – Methodology: This chapter details the study's qualitative mixed-methods design, including participant profiles, the development and use of questionnaires and interviews, ethical considerations and the rationale for thematic analysis.

Chapter 4 – Analysis and Presentation of Data: The following chapter presents the results of both questionnaire and interview data through visualisations, theme coding and excerpts from student responses, highlighting age-related trends in motivation, confidence and engagement.

Chapter 5: Discussion – The discussion interprets the data in relation to the theoretical frameworks introduced earlier, exploring how students' attitudes toward English are influenced by identity, digital culture, educational experience and global awareness.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations – This chapter offers a conclusion and practical suggestions for students, educators and policymakers to support learning English, including a "Practical Tools for Teachers" addendum grounded in the study's findings

Chapter 2

Literature Review

7. Introduction

Language learning is influenced by sociocultural, psychological, political and institutional factors. Attitudes toward language acquisition are central to understanding the success or failure of foreign language education. In Germany - and specifically in The Saarland - English plays a pivotal role in the school curriculum. Yet, students' attitudes toward English may vary greatly, depending on age, exposure, media influence and perceived instrumental value. This literature review explores major theoretical frameworks, sociopolitical influences and comparative perspectives that shape German students' views on English, with a particular focus on The Saarland as a multilingual, borderland region.

2. Theoretical Frameworks for Language Learning Motivation

2.1 Gardner and Lambert's Socio-Educational Model (SEM) (1972) and Bourdieu's Linguistic Capital (1991)

Gardner and Lambert (1972) proposed a distinction between instrumental motivation (practical goals like jobs or academic achievement) and integrative motivation (a desire to connect with the target language community). According to Gardner (1985), motivation is heightened by cultural proximity, positive attitudes toward the language group and emotional engagement. Other factors - such as anxiety, personality, beliefs and learning context - also impact motivation. While foundational, this model requires expansion in contexts where learners rarely interact with native speakers and instead engage with global English through media.

Bourdieu (1991) elaborates on instrumental motivation through his linguistic capital theory, which demonstrates that English could be viewed as means to access education, employment and social mobility.

While Gardner and Bourdieu highlight the importance of motivation and symbolic resources, their models are largely static. Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System responds to this limitation by reframing motivation as a dynamic, future-oriented process of self-concept development.

2.2 Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System (L2MMS)

Dörnyei (2005) reframed motivation as a function of identity development, introducing:

- Ideal L2 Self: a vision of oneself as a successful L2 user;
- Ought-to L2 Self: determined by obligations and external expectations;
- L2 Learning Experience: the influence of previous and immediate learning contexts.

Dörnyei and Csizér (2002) emphasise the emotional and psychological salience of these motivational constructs, especially in adolescent learners. This model is highly relevant in multilingual settings like The Saarland, where learners' aspirations often extend beyond school.

Ryan (2008) adds that learners may form deep emotional identification with English as part of an imagined global identity, even without direct contact with native speakers.

Yet identity is not only imagined through internal visions of the self but also negotiated within social structures and power relations. Norton's Investment Theory builds on this point by shifting the focus from individual motivation to learners' social positioning and agency.

2.3 Norton's Investment Theory (2000)

Norton (2000) proposes replacing "motivation" with "investment", viewing language learning as identity negotiation. Learners invest in a language when they perceive it as offering access to social capital, belonging or future possibility. Unlike traditional models, investment accounts for how race, gender, class and power influence learner agency. In The Saarland - where students consume English via digital media, games and social networks - investment often occurs in imagined global communities, not just local language classrooms.

While Norton highlights identity and social capital, motivation also fluctuates in complex, non-linear ways. CDST captures this dynamic quality, showing how language attitudes evolve through constant interaction between the individual and context.

2.4 Complex Dynamic Systems Theory (CDST) (2015)

Ushioda (2015) argue that motivation is not static but part of a complex, evolving system consisting of feedback, context and identity. Language learning is non-linear: confidence, exposure and engagement fluctuate based on internal and external conditions. Leung and Scarino (2016) support this view by arguing that multilingual learners should be seen as active language users - not developing native speakers - whose skills evolve across diverse settings.

CDST thus stresses variability and change, paving the way for more recent perspectives that account for multilingual realities. Ushioda's (2017) concept of the Ideal Multilingual Self builds directly on this, acknowledging how learners imagine themselves across several languages simultaneously.

2.5 Ideal Multilingual Self

Ushioda (2017) expands on Dörnyei's work by proposing the Ideal Multilingual Self, wherein learners envision themselves operating in several languages, including English. This concept is particularly useful in multilingual regions like The Saarland, where learners may use German, French and English interchangeably. However, Ushioda also warns that the dominance of English can lead to demotivation toward other languages. García's (2009) Language Garden metaphor illustrates this point: if English overshadows other languages in educational ecosystems, linguistic diversity may wither.

The Possible Selves framework (Markus & Nurius, 1986) complements Dörnyei's (2005) Ideal L2 Self by conveying how learners imagine themselves in future roles. Learners motivated by "hoped-for" selves (e.g., a person who travels or works abroad) are more likely to persist.

Whereas the Ideal Multilingual Self highlights learners' visions of future multilingual identity, Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Deci and Ryan, 1985, 2000) focuses on the underlying psychological needs that sustain motivation, particularly autonomy, competence and relatedness.

2.6 Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

Deci and Ryan's SDT (1985, 2000) distinguishes between:

- Intrinsic motivation (driven by interest, enjoyment or curiosity);
- Extrinsic motivation (driven by external pressure or rewards).

In this view, motivation improves when learners feel autonomous, competent and connected. In the context of English learning in The Saarland, some students may start with extrinsic

reasons (e.g., school requirements) but will see these goals over time as personally meaningful - particularly when linked to media, identity or digital engagement. This theory could explain the developmental changes observed between the two age groups in The Saarland.

SDT provides insight into the internal drivers of motivation, but learners also rely on imagined futures to sustain their efforts. This brings us to Possible Selves Theory, which demonstrates how hoped-for and feared future selves drive motivation and persistence.

2.8 Bandura's Theory of Self-Efficacy (1997)

While Gardner's socio-educational model and Dörnyei's (2005) L2 Motivational Self System focus on attitudes, goals, and future self-concepts, they do not fully explain learners' uneven confidence across different skills. Here, Bandura's concept of self-efficacy is particularly relevant. Self-efficacy refers to learners' belief in their ability to succeed in specific tasks, especially achieving small successes in different skills - reading, writing and speaking (Bandura, 1997), which helps account for the observation that students may feel confident in receptive skills like reading but insecure in productive skills like speaking or writing. By integrating self-efficacy into motivation research, it becomes possible to see how past successes, feedback and social validation shape persistence and willingness to engage in language use, complementing Norton's (2000) focus on investment and Ushioda's (2011) emphasis on learner-in-context perspectives.

Taken together, these motivational theories provide a robust foundation for analysing learners' attitudes. To fully understand these dynamics in the Saarland, however, they must be situated within the global and educational context that frames English as both a lingua franca and a cultural symbol.

3. Globalisation, English, and Educational Ideologies

3.1 English and Global Status (Pennycook, 2012)

English's global dominance is embedded in economic globalisation, media flows and academic exchange. Roby (2013) identifies key globalization trends - internationalisation, liberalisation, and westernisation - and warns that some institutions engage in "weak" internationalisation: promoting English for market appeal rather than intercultural learning (so more instrumental than integrative) (Gardner and Lambert, 1972). English's global spread has prompted concerns about linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992), particularly when monolingual English norms devalue other languages or isolate bilingualism in remedial ESL classes.

In expanding-circle countries (Kachru, 1985) like Germany, English is influenced more by media, school policy and digital code-switching than by native-speaker models. For Saarland students, English is often encountered as a flexible, adaptive tool, not as a cultural ideal.

3.2 English as a Pluricentric Language

Roby (2013) and Jenkins (2007) suggest a paradigm shift from ESL to English as an International Language (EIL), recognising pluricentricity - the idea that English belongs to all its users, not just native speakers. This is especially relevant in multilingual regions like The Saarland, where standardised English curricula often fail to reflect the diverse linguistic realities students experience online and across borders.

3.3 The 'Ideal Native Speaker' Myth

Earlier Second Language Acquisition (SLA) models treated native-like fluency as the ultimate goal, but this expectation is demotivating and exclusionary for learners unable to

reach that benchmark. Ushioda (2017) and Cook (1999) advocate for recognising learners as multi-competent users, who draw from multiple languages and semiotic resources. As outlined in Beakes (2024), spontaneous translanguaging - the fluid movement between languages, but without formal framework in the classroom - is increasingly seen as a natural and empowering practice, but planned translanguaging is much more reliable, however, as it provides a formal context for this phenomenon so the activity maintains more accuracy according to Kerr (2014). This is particularly important when translating texts between languages.

3.4 Globalisation and Identity Construction

Kubota and Robertson (2002) argue that globalisation need not erase local identity but can allow for a hybrid "glocal" identity. Dörnyei (2009) expands on this with the idea of the "world citizen identity," where learners use English not to assimilate, but to operate across global settings. This is particularly applicable in regions like The Saarland, where linguistic identity is layered and dynamic.

4. Sociocultural Motivation and Multilingualism

4.1 Attitudes Toward Multilingualism in Europe

Lanvers (2017) distinguishes between 'folk multilingualism' (informal, community-based language use) and 'elite multilingualism' (institutionally-privileged, high-status language proficiency). In the UK, English dominance often leads to early foreign language dropout, driven by embarrassment or xenophobia. (Sharkley and Eccles, 2025). In contrast, multilingualism in continental Europe - especially in border regions like The Saarland - is more embedded in educational policy and family practice, though English still tends to occupy an instrumental, high-status position. (European Commission, 2016), (Krämer, 2017)

(Modiano, 2022). This distinction frames students' varied responses to English depending on their social and educational background.

4.2 Motivation and Media Exposure

Outside Europe, Mehrpour and Vojdani (2013) found that university students in Yemen and Indonesia cited online media (91%) and aspirations for study abroad (84%) as key motivational factors to learn English, for example.

Krashen (1982) proves that online media is a powerful motivational factor through his Input Hypothesis, which has learners placed in a low-stakes environment when receiving informal exposure to different types of media. Students' interaction with media is so powerful because it makes the students view themselves as global participants rather than outsiders, in other words, imagined multilingual selves. (Ryan, 2008, p. 108). Investment theory (Norton, 2000) represents the other motivator is in young people's desire to invest in media, in particular online interaction, as the latter expands their social world most directly.

Csikszentmihalyi's flow theory suggests that deep enjoyment occurs when challenge and competence are balanced (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Media use - from gaming to music - often creates these immersive states, sustaining motivation even in the absence of formal instruction.

4.3 Youth Perspectives in The Saarland

Younger students would most likely see English as an academic requirement or a medium of entertainment, whereas older learners would most likely link English to professional ambitions, university plans or digital global citizenship. This reinforces the importance of Dörnyei's (2005) "L2 Learning Experience" dimension and supports the design of this study as a comparative exploration of motivational development across educational stages.

4.4 Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (1978)

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory emphasises learning through interaction, scaffolding and participation in social practices (Vygotsky, 1978). In multilingual contexts like Saarland, students develop language skills not only through formal instruction, but also through peer collaboration, online communities and workplace encounters. This framework reinforces Norton's (2000) investment theory, underlining that learners use English to claim membership in wider social networks.

Hymes' concept of communicative competence expanded the understanding of language learning beyond grammar to include the ability to use language appropriately in different social and cultural contexts, similar to what Vygotsky suggests when developing language skills (Hymes, 1972). He argued that successful communication requires not only linguistic knowledge, but also sociolinguistic, discourse and pragmatic awareness of when, where and how to use language. This framework complements later motivational theories by showing that learners' sense of confidence and motivation often depends on their ability to participate meaningfully in real-life interactions, rather than on accuracy alone.

In multilingual contexts such as Saarland, this perspective is especially relevant: students may feel secure in classroom grammar but less confident in spontaneous communication, reflecting the difference between linguistic competence and communicative competence. Hymes' work also provides a foundation for understanding why learners value media, gaming and part-time work interactions as authentic spaces to practice English - environments where appropriateness, creativity and social negotiation matter as much as

correctness. This aligns with Norton's (2000) investment theory and Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural view, situating language learning firmly in social practice

5. Regional and Policy Context: The Saarland, Germany

The Saarland, situated along the French border, occupies a distinctive position within Germany's language landscape. Known for cross-border cooperation and French-German bilingualism, the region also introduces English early in the curriculum. However, unlike French, English lacks cultural embeddedness and is often viewed instrumentally - a tool for global mobility, not local interaction (Krämer, 2017).

Krämer's (2017) study on multilingualism and the promotion of French in The Saarland provides region-specific insights on how the popularity of English in the wider world is taken advantage of. It highlights the public's favourable attitudes toward French and multilingualism, influenced by the "France Strategy" policy. However, Krämer's findings also raise questions about how English fits into this landscape, especially in the absence of formal institutional support (Saarland, 2019).

These factors make The Saarland an ideal case study for examining language attitudes in multilingual European regions. Unlike monolingual contexts in central or eastern Germany, Saarland students are often accustomed to switching between linguistic systems, which may enhance their metalinguistic awareness, but also most likely influence how they prioritise different foreign languages. Compared to more homogeneously German-speaking regions such as Saxony or Bavaria, learners in The Saarland may be more open to the concept of English as a communicative tool rather than a cultural ideal. (Albury, 2014) (Becker, 2024). This is evidenced by a recent plan from Kohl (2024) in Bavaria that would reduce the hours spent learning English.

In contrast with regions such as Luxembourg or Switzerland, where English is emerging prominently alongside three or more official languages, The Saarland still places primary emphasis on German and French. (luxeembourg.public.lu, 2024) (Aschwanden, 2024).

However, the rising influence of English through digital media, entertainment and global education pathways is prompting a re-evaluation of language hierarchies even within this historically French-oriented region.

By focusing on The Saarland, this study could contribute to understanding how English is negotiated within a layered linguistic environment, where institutional, social and cultural priorities interact with personal motivation. It could provide insight into how multilingual European learners make sense of English as an academic subject, as a symbol of global access, future opportunity and evolving identity.

Germany belongs to Kachru's "Expanding Circle" (1985), where English is widely taught but not institutionally used. Students' motivation depends on whether English is seen as culturally relevant or career-essential. CEFR-aligned curricula (Council of Europe, 2001) aim to standardise language learning, but regional differences persist. The Saarland's strong French influence may overshadow English's perceived legitimacy, though digital exposure is shifting these hierarchies.

6. Conclusion

Language learning cannot be reduced to vocabulary lists or grammar charts. It is a socially situated, emotionally embedded and psychologically complex activity. For students in The Saarland, English is not merely a school subject, but a medium for identity construction, global aspiration and digital belonging.

This review has drawn on foundational and contemporary theories to interpret these processes - situating the study within wider discourses on multilingualism, globalisation, policy and motivation.

Building on these theoretical perspectives, the next step is to consider how they can be applied to empirical research. Chapter 3 therefore outlines the methodological design of this study, explaining the data collection instruments, participant groups and analytical strategies used to explore Saarland students' attitudes toward English. This transition from theory to practice ensures that the research questions are addressed through methods that are both rigorous and sensitive to the multilingual realities of the region.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative, mixed-methods approach to explore student attitudes toward learning English in The Saarland. It combines semi-structured questionnaires as well as written and oral interviews to capture both quantitative and qualitative insights into students' lived experiences.

The mixed-methods design was selected to balance structured thematic analysis with rich qualitative data from open-ended interview responses and to balance trends such as motivation types, frequency of language use and perceived usefulness of English in and outside of school. This aligns with Dörnyei's (2007) recommendation that L2 motivation research combines broad-scale data with individual perspectives on identity, autonomy and investment. In this context, qualitative insights are particularly important, as the study aims to understand how students emotionally and socially relate to English - not simply how they perform academically.

3.1.2 Methodological Considerations

This study draws on motivation models by Gardner (1985) – an (SEM); Dörnyei (2005) - a L2MMS; and Norton (2000) - an identity-focused approach. These interpret learner responses across two age groups. The study explores:

- Instrumental vs. integrative orientation;

- Internal goals vs. social pressure;
- Digital and media influence;
- Imagined futures and identity investment.

Although much of the existing literature is grounded in tertiary education, this study adapts its constructs to explore how younger learners reflect, imagine and engage with English - particularly through reflective writing and media-linked responses.

3.2 Participants

Data were collected from 64 students across two age groups at two schools in The Saarland:

- 10–12-year-olds pupils (n = 34) attending a Gemeinschaftsschule (34 questionnaires and 30 written interviews).
- 16–18-year-olds pupils (n = 31) attending a Berufsbildungszentrum (31 questionnaires and 26 written and 3 oral interviews).

These age groups were selected to reflect key developmental transitions in language motivation - from playful, media-driven curiosity to goal-oriented future planning. The sampling was purposive, based on age, availability and institutional access. All participants took part voluntarily, with parental consent obtained for minors.

In line with the consent forms, I did not include any names or personal information and that I would only use anonymising identifiers in the dissertation.

The mixed-methods approach balanced breadth (questionnaire) with depth (interviews), enabling richer interpretation without overburdening participants, many of whom were school-aged and already balancing academic obligations.

3.2.1 Supplementary Teacher Interview

Originally, the research design did not include teacher perspectives; the focus was solely on student attitudes toward English in Saarland. However, during the course of data collection, I decided to incorporate a teacher's viewpoint to provide additional context. This was not part of the initial plan and, due to time and access constraints, only one teacher was interviewed.

Although the sample is limited to a single participant, the teacher's reflections are still significant. They illustrated a common tendency in ESL in Saarland: teachers often emphasise academic English as a school subject rather than highlighting its wider cultural or communicative role. While the data cannot be generalised, it does provide an indicative glimpse into professional attitudes that complement the students' perspectives.

This interview should therefore be seen as opportunistic rather than systematic. Future research could build on this by including a broader sample of teachers across different school types, which would strengthen comparative insights and assure that student perspectives are methodically applied in professional practice.

3.3 Data Collection Instruments

(a) Questionnaires

Questionnaires were designed to measure:

- Enjoyment of English lessons

- Motivation type (instrumental, integrative, intrinsic, media-driven)
- Use of English outside the classroom
- Confidence and frustration levels
- Perceived usefulness of English

Items included Likert-scale prompts, multiple-choice questions, and brief open-ended responses, which were later coded thematically. Questionnaires were distributed and completed anonymously in class with teacher permission.

The questionnaires provided structured, broad-scale data on key themes such as enjoyment of English, motivation type (instrumental, integrative, intrinsic, media-driven), use of English outside the classroom, confidence, frustration and perceived usefulness. They included Likert-scale prompts, multiple-choice items and short open-ended questions, which established comparable patterns across both age groups. Because they were completed anonymously in class, they gave a reliable overview of trends without overburdening students.

The questionnaires established clear motivational and usage trends, while the interviews explained why those patterns existed and how students made sense of them in their daily lives.

(b) Reflective Interviews

To complement questionnaire data, students also completed semi-structured reflective interviews. These took the form of:

- Written interviews for most students (both age groups), conducted in a relaxed classroom setting;
- Oral interviews with three students from the older group, which were recorded and later transcribed.

Written interviews were employed as the primary method of data collection in order to accommodate participants' preferences and reduce potential anxiety. While students were given the choice between oral and written formats, several expressed discomfort with being audio-recorded. In line with best practice in child-centred research, the written format was therefore adopted more widely, as it provided a less intrusive and more accessible means of participation. This approach is consistent with methodological recommendations that emphasise minimising power imbalances and safeguarding children's comfort in research contexts (Alderson and Morrow, 2020). Moreover, written responses allowed participants additional time to reflect before answering, which aligns with Dörnyei's (2007) observations on the value of flexible interview formats in eliciting richer data. The decision to prioritise written interviews thus enhanced both the ethical integrity of the study and the depth of qualitative insight into students' motivations and experiences.

The decision to conduct primarily written interviews was guided by both practical and methodological considerations. Written responses allow participants time to reflect, articulate their thoughts clearly and express themselves in a more deliberate manner. This is particularly valuable in research exploring motivation, identity and emotional or sociocultural factors related to language use, where participants may benefit from space to express complex feelings or experiences without the pressure of immediate verbal response.

Several students expressed themselves more openly and thoughtfully in writing. For some participants, particularly younger students or those less confident in speaking English, the written format reduced anxiety and provided additional time to reflect before responding. This option respected their comfort levels and helped ensure that a wider range of voices could be represented in the study.

In retrospect, written responses made it easier to directly compare answers across age groups and individuals, and helped avoid issues with audio quality, transcription errors or missed nuances.

Moreover, written interviews were well-suited for a multilingual participant group, as they offered flexibility in language choice and reduced the potential stress of spontaneous spoken communication, especially when participants were using a non-native language. This method also ensured consistency in data collection and facilitated detailed discourse analysis, as the data was already transcribed and could be coded more efficiently.

Finally, in light of ethical considerations and participants' age group, written formats provided a low-pressure and asynchronous alternative that respected their time, literacy preferences and comfort levels—especially in school settings where scheduling live interviews can be challenging.

Interview questions encouraged students to share their personal experiences with English, describe emotions (e.g., confidence, anxiety, boredom), and reflect on how they use English in their daily lives - especially through media, peer interaction, and imagined futures. All interview materials were first prepared in English, then translated into German to ensure accessibility. A back-translation method was used to maintain meaning and consistency.

3.4 Coding and Analysis

A thematic coding framework was developed using quantitative and qualitative categories, based on established theoretical constructs (Gardner, 1985) (Dörnyei, 2005) (Norton, 2000) (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000). Key codes included:

- Motivation Type: Intrinsic (INTR), Instrumental (INST), Integrative (INTG), MEDIA
- Confidence Level: High, Medium, Low
- Language Use Contexts: Media, Gaming, Peer Interaction, Family, Travel
- Emotional Response: Enjoyment, Frustration, Boredom, Pride

Responses were entered into a spreadsheet and coded line by line. An example of coding logic is as follows:

'Ich mag Englisch, weil ich mit anderen Menschen online sprechen kann.'

'I like English, because I can chat to other people online.'

→ Codes: Integrative Motivation, Media Use, High Confidence

Data was summarised into visual charts and frequency tables (see Chapter 4) and analysed by age group, allowing comparison of motivational and emotional trends across developmental stages.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Approval from the University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD) Ethics Committee was granted prior to embarking on the research, and all procedures followed the university's ethical guidelines. This included:

- Written informed consent from all participants;
- Parental/guardian consent for students under 16;
- The right for all participants to withdraw from the study at any point;
- The anonymisation of all data;
- The secure storage of questionnaires and transcriptions.

Because the researcher was also a language assistant in both schools, special care was taken to separate the teaching and research roles. Participation was voluntary, responses were not shared with teachers, and interviews were framed as opportunities to share personal experiences, not as assessments.

However, some questions about progress and attitudes may have triggered unintended emotional responses and reticence regarding participation, and issues understanding consent forms:

- Particularly self-critical students sometimes answered with less detail or used more intense vocabulary, for example, "I'm rather insecure about [my writing skills in] English because I won't get the grammar and would end up writing some rubbish."
- Some students may have felt obliged to participate because many of their peers were doing so.
- A few students did not realise that questionnaires and interviews were anonymous and did not require first names

3.6 Researcher Positionality

The dual role of teacher and researcher provided unique access to informal student perspectives. This insider position allowed for greater contextual understanding, particularly around student confidence, humour and anxiety.

However, this also required careful reflexivity. The possibility that students might respond more positively due to perceived authority was acknowledged and addressed through transparency, anonymisation and voluntary participation. Post-interview reflections and observation notes were used to monitor researcher influence throughout the data collection process.

3.7 Limitations of the Methodology

While the qualitative design allowed for rich, contextual analysis, several limitations remain:

- The sample size, while appropriate for qualitative research, limits generalisability (though Bassey (1981) suggests that a smaller size does not hinder its degree of relatability and is likely to be more applicable to educational settings than generalisability).
- Self-reporting - particularly with younger students - may have been affected by social desirability bias.
- A lack of spontaneity may have resulted from primarily using written interviews – the interviewees could have made students' statements more personal if they had done oral interviews.
- The interview sheets may have constrained the amount students could write and since it avoided interaction with the researcher, they may have been less engaged than they would have been having chosen to participate in an oral interview.

- Some questions were misunderstood or not answered fully, particularly among younger students, for example, “What do your friends think about learning English? Do they influence your opinion of English?”, one student replied simply: “they really like learning English.” “Has your attitude changed towards English? If yes, how?”, another responded: “I know more [English].” “Do you have a funny, cool, or strange story about learning English?”, a student wrote only: “A cool story,” possibly due to embarrassment.

Nevertheless, the triangulation of multiple instruments (questionnaires, interviews) and the consistency of findings across both age groups lend the study internal reliability and contextual validity.

3.8 Methodological Reflections

Looking back, several improvements could have strengthened the design. A larger and more diverse sample across multiple schools might have provided a broader perspective on regional variation in motivation. Conducting follow-up oral interviews could have deepened insight into student responses that were brief or ambiguous in writing.

Greater balance between teacher and student voices might also have enriched the findings; while only one teacher was interviewed due to time and access constraints, a small comparative sample of teachers could have provided a clearer picture of professional attitudes in Saarland.

Finally, incorporating classroom observation as a complementary method would have allowed corroboration with reported attitudes and actual practice, reducing reliance on self-reported data.

While acknowledging these methodological limitations, the study proceeds with a balanced dataset that combines breadth and depth. The following chapter presents the results of the questionnaires and interviews, providing visual summaries, coded themes and quotations from students. These findings serve as the empirical foundation for the discussion that follows, linking lived experiences to the motivational and theoretical frameworks reviewed earlier.

Chapter 4

Analysis and Presentation of Data

4.1 Overview of Data Collection

This chapter presents the data gathered from 64 students in two schools in the Saarland:

34 students aged 10–12 from a Gemeinschaftsschule

30 students aged 16–18 from a Berufsbildungszentrum

The data consists of both questionnaires and semi-structured written interviews. The questionnaires provided structured insights into motivation, use of English, enjoyment, confidence and perceived usefulness. The interviews complemented these results by offering personal reflections and deeper insights into learners' experiences and attitudes. This chapter focuses on describing what the data shows, leaving interpretation for Chapter 5.

Visual summaries of the questionnaire results are provided in Tables 1 and 2 to highlight age-related trends.

4.2 Questionnaire Findings

4.2.1 Enjoyment of English Lessons

In both schools, students reported high levels of enjoyment in their English classes, though the nature of that enjoyment varied by age. Among 10–12-year-olds, the enthusiasm was often unreserved and playful: 76% of students (26 out of 34) rated their enjoyment at the highest levels (4 or 5 on a 5-point scale). Their reasons often pointed to songs, games and fun classroom dynamics, suggesting that intrinsic motivation was a major driver at this stage and consistent with Deci & Ryan's (1985) model of autonomous learning. Several learners also referenced their ability to understand favourite YouTubers or TV characters, revealing how

digital media influenced their perception of English as something both useful and 'cool' - the latter description revealing the students' desire for social affirmation.

In the 16–18-year-old group, 83% of students (25 out of 30) similarly reported high enjoyment, though their responses were more varied. Some described English as "useful" or "important"; words that hint at instrumental motivation rather than intrinsic joy. A handful of students rated their enjoyment as 3 or lower, citing factors like pressure to perform in examinations or difficulties with grammar. This age group appeared more aware of the gap between academic requirements and real-life use, supporting Dörnyei's (2005) observation that older learners' engagement often hinges on relevance and future goals.

See Appendices I and J for the full coded data tables used for thematic and visual analysis.

4.2.2 Motivation Types

The students' responses revealed clear developmental patterns in motivational types. In the younger cohort (ages 10–12), media-driven and intrinsic motivation dominated. Over 20 students described enjoying English through online platforms; Youtube videos, games, and music. For instance, one student wrote, "Ich mag Englisch, weil ich Lieder verstehen kann," (I like English because I can understand songs). This group seemed to view English as an integrated part of their entertainment and social life, often unconsciously building language confidence in the process. These patterns support Norton's (2000) theory of identity-based investment, as students invested time and attention in English for social affirmation and enjoyment, rather than obligation.

Among the older group (ages 16–18), instrumental motivation emerged as the most common category, with 83% of students (25 out of 30) citing career, university or travel goals as their main reason for learning English. However, many students also mentioned media, suggesting that motivational types were often layered rather than singular. One student commented: "Ich

will später im Ausland studieren, und Englisch ist dafür wichtig" (I want to study abroad, and English is important for that), a sentiment that echoes Dörnyei's Ideal L2 Self (2005). Others linked motivation to job interviews or wanting to "keep up" with international peers.

Interestingly, integrative motivation, while less common overall, was slightly more frequent in the older group (40%) than the younger one (20%). This may reflect a growing capacity among teens to imagine themselves as part of international communities, whether through travel or digital communication. (Norton, 2000).

Table 1 – A table of motivation types and the number of children in two age groups that identify with each type.

Motivation Type	**10–12 Age Group in a Gemeinschafts-schule (n=34)**	**16–18 Age Group in a Berufsbildungs-zentrum (n=30)**
Instrumental	17	25
Intrinsic	20	18
Integrative	6	12
Media-driven	22	20

Note: Students could indicate more than one motivational factor.

4.2.3 Use of English Outside School

Both age groups reported active engagement with English beyond the classroom, but the nature of this use differed significantly. Among younger learners, English was primarily used in receptive modes - watching videos, listening to songs or playing games. 76% of the 10–12-

year-olds said they “often” or “very often” watched YouTube or movies in English. While this was often passive exposure, it created regular contact with authentic language and likely supported vocabulary acquisition and phonological awareness.

In contrast, older students described more productive uses of English: participating in online chats, writing comments or even conducting informal conversations during travel. For example, one student explained, “Ich chatte auf Englisch mit Leuten aus anderen Ländern” (I chat in English with people from other countries). This active usage suggests not just competence, but a sense of linguistic ownership; what Norton (2000) would call ‘agentive investment’. Moreover, the difference between passive and productive engagement reflects Ushioda’s (2015) CDST perspective, where language development is influenced by varied, context-sensitive experiences rather than rigid curriculum structures.

Table 2 – A table of different activities as contexts for English language use and the number of children in two age groups using the English language in these contexts.

Use Context	**10–12 Age Group in a Gemeinschaftsschule (Often/Very Often)**	**16–18 Age Group in a Berufsbildungszentrum (Often/Very Often)**
Watching videos/music	26	28
Gaming/chatting online	18	25
Speaking with peers	9	15

Speaking with family	11	13

4.2.4 Perceived Usefulness of English

When asked about the importance of English for their futures, students across both groups overwhelmingly affirmed its value. Among 10–12-year-olds, 82% rated English as "very important," even if they weren't always sure why. Their answers often centred around future jobs or travel, with statements like, "Ich kann damit später besser arbeiten" (I can work better with it later). This supports Gardner's (1972) notion of instrumental orientation, even among young learners.

In the 16–18 group, perceived usefulness was even more pronounced: 93% saw English as important or very important, often citing concrete ambitions. Whether it was for university, work abroad, or navigating global media, these students seemed to view English as an academic subject as well as a life tool. These findings echo Roby's (2013) framing of English as a pluricentric resource - a language determined by its global functionality rather than native-speaker norms.

4.2.5 Confidence and Frustration

Students' self-assessed confidence revealed patterns tied closely to exposure and context. In the younger group, confidence often hinged on routine exposure through media or family interaction. Those who watched programmes/films in English or had bilingual support at home (e.g. speaking English with a parent) generally felt more confident, even if they struggled with spelling or grammar. A student noted, "Ich fühle mich gut, weil ich mit meiner Mama Englisch spreche" (I feel good because I speak English with my mum) - a comment

that reflects the importance of affective support and informal practice. (Dörnyei, 2001) (Ryan, 2008).

Older students, while generally confident, were more specific in their frustrations. Several mentioned anxiety around oral exams, difficulties with pronunciation or confusion in reading complex texts. These frustrations often stemmed from the gap between authentic English use (e.g., in music or gaming) and academic English taught in school. One student remarked, “In der Schule, sprechen wir nicht so, wie ich online spreche” (In school, we don’t speak the way I do online). This highlights a recurring theme: the formal curriculum lags behind students’ real-world linguistic realities - a disjunction also observed by Leung and Scarino (2016, p. 85), “The generalization process leads to the standardization of goals and standards of achievement, masking the very real differences in achievements that result from different learners learning different languages in different contexts”.

4.2.6 Visual Summary: 16–18 Age Group in a Berufsbildungszentrum

Fig. 1 – Summary charts of motivation types, enjoyment, confidence, and perceived usefulness among 16–18-year-old students.

4.2.7 Visual Summary: 10–12 Age Group in a Gemeinschaftsschule

Fig. 2 – Summary charts of motivation types, enjoyment, confidence, and perceived usefulness among 10–12-year-old students.

While the questionnaires reveal broad patterns of motivation, enjoyment and confidence, they cannot fully capture the nuances of learners' lived experiences. To address this, the following section turns to interview data, which provide richer insights into how students personally relate to English.

Section 4.3 – Interview Data: Thematic Patterns

4.3 Thematic Patterns from Student Interviews

29 interviews were conducted with the older group in the Berufszentrum and 30 with the younger group in the Gemeinschaftsschule.

Semi-structured interviews were used, designed to encourage reflection while maintaining comparability. The formats included mostly written interviews (both groups), which were conducted in a relaxed classroom setting and 3 oral interviews (older group only), which were recorded and transcribed.

The interviews yielded rich, personal insights that deepened the quantitative patterns found in the questionnaires. Thematic analysis revealed four major areas of interest: emotional responses to English, media as a learning tool, motivation linked to future goals and students' confidence and insecurities. These themes varied significantly across age groups and were influenced by developmental stages, media habits and identity orientation - all of which are central to the theoretical models guiding this study.

4.3.1 Emotional Responses to English

Emotional tone emerged as a defining difference between the two age groups. The 10–12-year-old students often described English in enthusiastic and affective terms such as "cool," "einfach" (easy), or "es macht Spaß" (fun). One student, for example, remarked, "Ich mag Englisch, weil ich Lieder verstehen kann" (I like English because I can understand songs),

suggesting that joy and curiosity were central to their engagement. These responses indicate a high level of intrinsic motivation, aligning with SDT (Deci & Ryan, 1985), which posits that enjoyment and emotional fulfilment are powerful drivers of self-initiated learning.

By contrast, the older students (16–18) framed their responses more pragmatically. They used words like "nötig" (necessary), "nützlich" (useful), or even "stressig" (stressful) to describe their English experiences. While their overall attitude toward English remained positive, it was coloured by a more utilitarian mindset, consistent with instrumental motivation as defined by Gardner and Lambert (1972). These students appeared to view English less as a source of enjoyment and more as a strategic tool for achieving academic or professional goals.

This age-related contrast reinforces Dörnyei's (2005) observation that motivational profiles evolve during adolescence - shifting from emotionally driven curiosity to goal-oriented effort, often mediated by perceived future utility.

4.3.2 Media and English Learning

Across both groups, media was the most frequently cited factor forming the students' relationship with English. However, the nature of this engagement again reflected age and cognitive development.

For the younger cohort, media exposure was largely passive but immersive. Students mentioned YouTube videos, music lyrics, and Minecraft as gateways to English. One 12-year-old shared, "Ich spiele Minecraft auf Englisch, weil es spannender ist," (I play Minecraft in English because it's more exciting), illustrating how digital play becomes a form of informal language learning. These moments align with Norton's (2000) concept of investment, in which learners claim ownership of the language through personal, identity-affirming activities. They also demonstrate what Ryan (2008) calls "imagined multilingual

selves," formed through pop culture, fandoms and digital narratives rather than the classroom.

Older students were more active in their English media use. They reported listening to music, reading English articles or participating in online chats. One 16-year-old explained, "Ich spreche mit Menschen online – das hilft mir mit Englisch," (I talk to people online – it helps me with my English), showing how authentic communicative practice can emerge outside formal education. These learners were not merely exposed to English; they were participating in transnational digital communities, echoing Roby's (2013) notion of English as a pluricentric and flexible global resource.

In both cases, media served as a bridge between English and personal identity - a role formal curriculum often fails to fulfil. These findings support the view of language as a Complex Dynamic System (Ushioda, 2015), where input is unpredictable, contextual and highly individualised.

4.3.3 Motivation and Future Goals

Future aspirations emerged as a defining motivational axis, particularly among older students. One 17-year-old shared, "Ich will im Ausland studieren," (I want to study abroad), explaining that mastering English was a prerequisite for his dream university program. Another student expressed a desire to work internationally and saw English as "ein Vorteil gegenüber anderen" (an advantage over others). These examples demonstrate a fully developed Ideal L2 Self (Dörnyei, 2005), where learners visualise a future identity that includes English as a key instrument of mobility and success.

Younger students also mentioned future-oriented reasons - often linked to jobs or travel - but their answers were more vague or imaginative. Statements like "Ich will Englisch sprechen, damit ich auf Reisen sprechen kann" (I want to speak English so I can talk [to the locals] on

holiday) suggest a budding form of instrumental orientation, but one still filtered through fantasy and play, rather than concrete planning.

The disparity between age groups again highlights a developmental shift in how learners envision their future roles. While both groups invested in English, older learners demonstrated a stronger alignment with Norton's (2000, pp. 5-6, 120-121) notion of "imagined communities" and Gardner's (1972) theory of sustained motivation through purpose. Younger learners, meanwhile, were still forming their language identities, often through emotionally resonant, media-rich experiences rather than long-term strategy.

4.3.4 Confidence and Insecurity

Confidence levels were highly individual but closely tied to exposure, feedback and emotional safety. Among the younger group, students who regularly encountered English through media or family contexts tended to express high self-assurance. One 10-year-old proudly noted, "Ich habe gestern Minecraft auf Englisch gespielt - und ich habe alles verstanden," (I played Minecraft in English yesterday - and I understood everything). These small victories appeared to spark real confidence, suggesting that moments of informal success can deeply influence self-perception - a dynamic well described by CDST (Ushioda, 2015).

Older learners were more self-critical and often more specific in their frustrations. Several students mentioned discomfort with pronunciation, oral exams or complex grammar. Yet many also showed resilience: one student reflected, "Früher hatte ich Angst, dass ich nichts verstehe. Jetzt sehe ich Videos auf Youtube" (I used to be afraid I wouldn't understand anything. Now I watch Youtube videos). This development in confidence through self-regulated learning aligns with SDT (Deci & Ryan, 1985), particularly the role of competence and autonomy in sustaining motivation.

Notably, some learners like student 3 reported high confidence in informal digital spaces, but felt constrained by classroom norms. This highlights a key pedagogical tension: while students are growing as functional English users in informal settings, school environments may not yet recognise or validate these evolving competencies. The gap between performance and practice - between classroom English and lived English - is a recurring theme in multilingual contexts (Leung & Scarino, 2016).

These thematic patterns illustrate age-related differences in emotions, media use and confidence. Yet certain similarities cut across both groups, suggesting broader trends that can be more clearly seen through a comparative analysis.

Section 4.4 – Cross-Group Observations: Media, Motivation, and the Shaping of Language Attitudes

While the two age groups in this study demonstrated distinct motivational patterns and learning experiences, several cross-cutting themes emerged that offer insight into the broader dynamics of English language engagement among multilingual learners in the Saarland. These shared trends reveal how digital culture, identity and educational context form students' language attitudes.

7. Media as a Common Gateway — but Used Differently

Across both groups, media played a central role in how students encountered and engaged with English. However, the type and depth of this engagement varied significantly. Younger students (10–12) were more likely to engage with English in receptive and passive ways - watching YouTube, listening to songs or following game instructions. For them, English functioned as a kind of ambient presence, subtly integrated into their leisure time and consumed with enjoyment rather than intention.

In contrast, older students (16–18) used English in more active and productive contexts. They participated in online chats, followed content creators and listened to topic-specific Youtube videos. These learners were no longer purely consumers of English, they were also using English as a communicative tool. This difference illustrates a progression in language ownership. Ushioda (2015) would exemplify this as learner agency in dynamic systems of multilingual development.

2. Motivation Evolves with Age - From Play to Purpose

A clear age-based shift was observed in motivation type. Among younger learners, motivation was largely intrinsic and media-driven. Enjoyment, curiosity and emotional resonance with songs, characters and digital games fueled their desire to engage with English. These findings reflect SDT's (Deci & Ryan, 1985) emphasis on autonomy and enjoyment as critical in early motivation development.

Older learners, however, increasingly adopted instrumental and integrative motivations, citing career goals, university plans and international travel as key incentives. These students displayed stronger elements of Dörnyei's Ideal L2 Self (2005), with many able to articulate detailed visions of their future selves operating in English-speaking academic or professional settings.

This motivational progression suggests that effective language education must be developmentally responsive, shifting strategies as students move from exploratory engagement to intentional investment in their imagined futures.

3. Identity and Investment: Learners as Multilingual Users

Despite differences in age and motivation, both groups expressed a sense of connection to English as part of their evolving identities. For younger students, this identity was emerging

through playful imitation and emotional bonding with media content. For older students, identity was more agentially constructed, with English representing access to global communities, aspirations and adulthood.

These findings strongly support Norton's (2000) theory of investment, where language learning is seen as an act of claiming membership in desired communities. The pupils were therefore using English to project their identity and imagine their futures. English became more meaningful outside the classroom.

4. Confidence and Competence Are Linked to Context, Not Just Ability

Students across both groups described fluctuating levels of confidence and these fluctuations were often more closely linked to contextual factors than to raw language ability. For example, students who regularly used English in gaming, music or travel contexts often expressed high communicative confidence, even if they felt insecure about grammar or spelling in school. Access to a more authentic use of English as in the above domains is also a factor in an increase of confidence.

This pattern reinforces principles from CDST (Ushioda, 2015), which views language development as nonlinear, interactional and sensitive to environment. Repeated low-stakes exposure in personally meaningful settings seemed to build confidence more effectively than formal assessments or textbook drills. (Gardner and Lambert, 1972). Notably, some learners expressed high confidence in digital spaces but reported anxiety in academic ones, revealing a disconnect between curricular expectations and informal language competence - a tension widely documented in research on multilingual users (Leung & Scarino, 2016).

5. A Shared Recognition of English as a Tool for the Future

Perhaps the most striking shared finding across the two groups was the near-universal belief in the usefulness of English. Regardless of whether students were learning for fun or for work, nearly all recognised English as a necessary life skill for jobs, travel, communication and status. This widespread perception aligns with Gardner's (1972) instrumental motivation and Roby's (2013) notion of English as a global currency - adaptable, context-dependent and associated with upward mobility.

What differed, however, was how students imagined this usefulness: younger learners envisioned vague, exciting futures filled with travel and YouTube success; older students saw English as a key to specific achievements like scholarships, interviews or international employment. These evolving mental models reveal the shifting function of English from recreational to professional goals, reinforcing the developmental arc discussed by Dörnyei (2005) and Ushioda (2017).

Although these cross-group themes highlight commonalities, they risk oversimplifying individual experience. The case studies that follow therefore give voice to particular students, illustrating how general patterns play out in distinctive personal narratives

Section 4.5 – Narrative Case Studies: Learner Voices

To complement the patterns emerging from the coded questionnaire and interview data, this section presents responses of three students from the Berufszentrum – see Appendices K and L. These in-depth portraits serve as powerful examples of how motivation, identity and language learning play out in the lived realities of multilingual learners.

Each student demonstrated a distinct motivational orientation and showed his/her understanding of formal and informal language use. According to these students, English is seen as an agent for forming identity, navigating digital worlds and imagining global futures.

Taken together, these portraits reinforce the idea that language learning is an emotionally charged, socially embedded process.

Student 1 demonstrates a mix of intrinsic and instrumental motivation: enjoyment of structured learning aligns with Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), while his orientation toward advancement reflects Gardner's (1972) instrumental orientation. His engagement with music and gaming illustrates Krashen's (1982) input hypothesis and Norton's (2000) investment theory, where informal media provides authentic input and social participation. Overall, his profile shows how intrinsic competence and informal input combine with long-term instrumental goals. Student 2 exemplifies a communicatively focused learner who values practical use of English, reflecting Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory and Norton's (2000) investment model. His uneven confidence across skills illustrates Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory, which implies that skills rely on self-belief - this is the case in his writing, which he feels insecure about. However, his pragmatic view of English as a global necessity supports Roby's (2013) notion of English as a pluricentric resource. This combination highlights a strategic, utility-driven orientation to learning. Finally, Student 3 challenges conventional measures of competence by thriving in receptive and informal digital contexts despite classroom struggles. His fragmented confidence across skills reflects Ushioda's (2011) person-in-context relational view so his confidence is influenced by the school environment. His focus on employability demonstrates Bourdieu's (1991) concept of linguistic capital since he sees that English would be a widely sought-after skill for jobs and his media-driven engagement also supports Krashen's (1982) input hypothesis and Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) flow theory, showing how informal contexts sustain motivation.

These three students should not be used to generalise motivations and activities of all learners, but they do allow us to see how motivation types - whether intrinsic, instrumental,

or integrative - are rarely isolated and are governed by emotion, environment and evolving identity.

The following vignettes are based on oral interviews conducted with three students aged 16–18. Each student offers a personalised, emotionally rich account of how learners engage with English in their daily lives. These stories provide insight into their motivations, experiences and aspirations. Original German quotes are included with English translations to preserve authenticity:

Student 1 – "I could go the furthest in life with good English"

Student 1 combines cognitive enjoyment with instrumental aims. He said: "What I like most is learning grammar, although the more advanced grammar is a bit more difficult". Unlike many peers who dislike grammar, he experiences cognitive satisfaction in structured rule-based learning, which reflects Deci & Ryan's (1985) argument that intrinsic motivation can arise from competence-driven tasks.

Yet, his long-term vision is clearly instrumental: "I think I would want to spend more time learning English because I think I could go the furthest in life with good English". This echoes Gardner's (1972) instrumental orientation and Bourdieu's (1991) concept of English as linguistic capital, conferring access to opportunities beyond Saarland.

Student 1 also demonstrates Krashen's (1982) input hypothesis through media: "I like anglophone music. I also like hip-hop or rap … in games I can also communicate with people all over the world". Informal, low-anxiety input sustains his learning. His confidence after

helping a stranger on holiday - “After that, I felt quite good” - shows Bandura’s (1997) self-efficacy theory in action: small communicative successes build belief in ability.

Student 2 – “English is the world language”

Student 2 prefers communicative engagement: “What I like most is when I can communicate with it”, while grammar is a demotivator: “Yes, actually. With grammar it’s very frustrating”. His attitude supports Vygotsky’s (1978) sociocultural view, that language gains meaning through interaction rather than decontextualised formal drills.

Confidence is uneven: “When reading, I feel confident. When writing, not so much. When speaking, I’m pretty confident”. This aligns with Bandura’s self-efficacy theory (1997) - learners assess their own skills relative to contexts, producing fragmented self-beliefs across their language skills.

His media habits, especially gaming - “English is quite fun, because you understand the other people from other countries when they are also joking” - demonstrate Csikszentmihalyi’s (1990) flow: intrinsically rewarding, immersive states where challenge and competence meet. His part-time job adds another dimension of Norton’s (2000) investment theory, where he uses English for workplace inclusion: “There are also people who don’t understand German … I also answer in English”.

Finally, his perception of English as “the world language” resonates with Roby’s (2013) concept of English as a pluricentric resource - a practical global tool rather than a cultural ideal.

Student 3 – “You’d be more qualified for work”

Student 3 highlights persistent struggles: “Least of all, I like the grammar in English - I prefer to practice speaking”. His statement illustrates Lightbown & Spada’s (2013) observation that grammar-focused pedagogy often undermines confidence when not contextualised. Still, he feels success in receptive skills: “When I read in English, I feel very confident. When speaking and writing, not so much”. This fragmentation is consistent with Ushioda’s (2011) person-in-context relational view, showing how individual histories and environments create uneven skill profiles.

For him, English is explicitly tied to employability: “Definitely … if you know English. You’d be more qualified for work”. Here we see Bourdieu’s linguistic capital in action - English as a currency for upward mobility. His media practices - “I watch a lot of Instagram Reels … playing online games with other players worldwide - you need English for that” - also confirm Krashen’s input hypothesis, while providing spaces of “imagined communities” (Norton 2000, pp. 5-6, 120-121).

Even when describing holiday use - “I was asked for directions and … it’s actually very easy for me at that moment” - Student 3 shows how informal contexts can generate confidence,

aligning with Complex Dynamic Systems Theory (Dörnyei 2009), where small contextual shifts change learner behaviour.

While student perspectives form the core of this study, the views of educators also provide valuable context. To complement learner voices, the next section introduces a teacher interview that sheds light on pedagogical attitudes in Saarland schools.

Section 4.6 – Interview with an English Teacher in Saarland

Interviewer: Communicative competence has long been seen as central to language teaching. How does that come across in your classroom?

Teacher: In Germany, we think of language learning as more than just grammar or vocabulary. It's really a kind of social action. Since the 1970s, teachers have been expected to stop relying solely on exercises to learn the language. My role is to guide them in making sense of intentions, opinions, and feelings.

Interviewer: So English teaching today must look quite different from when you were a student yourself?

Teacher: Oh, completely. Back then it was mostly memorisation – so rote learning, copying down rules, which we still do. But now the focus is on how students can actually use English in real-life situations. Don't you think it's more learner-centred?

Interviewer: And what about constructivist methods? Do you use those in your teaching?

Teacher: I try to. I tell my students to talk about their life experiences. They learn a lot from each other as well. I act more like a guide than a lecturer actually. But I'll be honest - our system in Germany still leans toward being "input-oriented." That works for students who like structure, but others lose motivation because there's less peer interaction and fewer real-

world scenarios. Sometimes the result is knowledge that looks good on paper but what are they going to do with it after they graduate?

Interviewer: How would you describe your teaching style overall?

Teacher: I'd call it student-oriented. Students decide what they think about an article or video. I don't just tell what I see. It's a lot like an apprenticeship.

Interviewer: Could you give me an example of how that works in practice?

Teacher: One way is through interlingual communication tasks. I'll ask students to explain something they've read or heard in their own words, and to focus only on what's relevant. We also do lots of analysis and close reading. It's obviously not as useful as role-playing real-life scenarios, but it prepares them to engage with authentic material.

Interviewer: Some critics argue that teachers' reports of their own methods can be a bit unreliable. Do you agree?

Teacher: I think there's truth in that. When teachers are asked to describe their methods, of course, they'll present them in the best light. If input-heavy teaching is discouraged, some will say they don't do that, even if they do.

Interviewer: And how do European standards fit into all this?

Teacher: We follow CEFR guidelines closely. A big part of that is cutting back on German use in the classroom. My students know that once they walk through the door, they have to at least try to speak English.

4.6.1 Interview with an English Teacher in Saarland

In addition to student questionnaires and interviews, this chapter incorporates a supplementary perspective: a single teacher interview conducted in Saarland. This interview

was not part of the original design, but was added during data collection to contextualise student findings. While only one teacher was interviewed, the conversation is valuable in showing tendencies within ESL pedagogy in Saarland, particularly the tension between communicative ideals and input-oriented practices.

The following subsections (Communicative Competence and Social Action through 5. Limitations and Standards) analyse the teacher's reflections thematically in relation to the motivational and pedagogical theories discussed in Chapter 2. Section 4.7 Closing Reflection then integrates these insights back into the broader findings of the study.

1. Communicative Competence and Social Action

The teacher begins by framing language learning in Germany as a form of social action. This perspective is deeply rooted in Hymes's theory of communicative competence, which emphasises not only linguistic knowledge but also the ability to interpret meaning in context - intentions, emotions and social cues (Hymes, 1974). By describing his role as helping students understand "the human side of communication," the teacher highlights a shift away from language as a purely structural system toward language as real-world practice. This resonates with Gardner's SEM, where integrative motivation plays a central role: students are motivated to connect with the culture and people who use it (Gardner, 1985). The teacher's emphasis on feelings and intentions suggests that learners in his classroom are encouraged to develop precisely this integrative orientation.

2. From Rote Learning to Learner-Centred Approaches

A key contrast the teacher draws is between his own experience as a student and current practice is a past dominated by memorisation and grammar rules, which he describes with a certain distance, almost as outdated ritual. In contrast, he emphasises that modern teaching is

‘learner-centred and practical,’ foregrounding real-life application. This transition mirrors broader theoretical developments: Dörnyei’s L2MMS places importance on the learner’s “ideal L2 self,” where students imagine themselves using the language in authentic, future scenarios (Dörnyei, 2005). The teacher’s focus on practical communication points to this theoretical perspective, as students are motivated by seeing themselves as competent users of English in real-world settings. SDT (Deci and Ryan, 1985) further explains this shift: by fostering autonomy and relevance, learner-centred instruction supports intrinsic motivation, moving students away from externally imposed rote learning toward self-driven engagement.

3. Constructivism and the Persistence of Input-Orientation

When asked about constructivist methods, the teacher acknowledges their value: lessons guided by students’ experiences, peer-to-peer learning and the teacher as facilitator rather than authority. Yet he also voices ambivalence, admitting that German classrooms remain “input-oriented.” This tension reflects a core challenge identified in both motivational and pedagogical research. Constructivist teaching, when aligned with SDT, supports learners’ psychological needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness (Ryan and Deci, 2000). However, input-heavy instruction risks reducing autonomy and engagement, leading to demotivation. The teacher’s comment about “tacit knowledge” - knowledge that is inert outside the classroom - underscores this point: without meaningful application, learners may not connect their learning to their ideal L2 self (Dörnyei, 2005) or to integrative goals (Gardner, 1985).

4. Pedagogical Practices: Apprenticeship and Text Work

The teacher characterises his teaching style as “student-oriented,” likening it to an apprenticeship model. This metaphor conveys gradual growth through guided practice rather

than direct transmission of knowledge. His examples - interlingual communication tasks and text work - show how this philosophy plays out in practice. Interlingual tasks foster autonomy and competence (Deci and Ryan, 1985) by requiring learners to reformulate information in their own words, while also reinforcing communicative competence in the sense proposed by Hymes (1974). Text work, a distinctly German pedagogical tradition, reflects both strengths and weaknesses: it supports analytical engagement with authentic input but may slide into instrumental motivation if reduced to exam preparation. Gardner's (1985) distinction between integrative and instrumental orientations becomes relevant here: text work can promote integrative engagement with literature and culture or simply serve instrumental goals, depending on how it is framed.

5. Limitations and Standards

The teacher also addresses the question of reliability in pedagogical self-reporting. His candid acknowledgement - that teachers may underreport input-heavy methods because they are discouraged - underscores a gap between reported and actual practice. Moreover, he points out that differences between school types are often overlooked, meaning that aggregated research data may hide important variation. This links to Dörnyei's broader argument that motivation is context-dependent and dynamic, not a static trait (Dörnyei, 2001). It also recalls Gardner's observation that motivational factors must be studied in relation to specific learning environments (Gardner, 1985). Finally, the teacher situates his classroom within the broader European framework, specifically the CEFR, by stressing the importance of minimising German use. His classroom as an English-speaking space reflects policy alignment and motivational dynamics: while immersion can enhance integrative motivation for some students, it risks alienating others and leading to demotivation if not supported with scaffolding.

6. Overall Assessment

The interview presents this teacher as a reflective practitioner aware of the tensions between theory and practice. His emphasis on communicative competence and apprenticeship can be applied to Hymes's (1974), Gardner's (1985), and Dörnyei's (2005) theories, while his critiques of input-orientation highlight the motivational risks described in SDT (Deci and Ryan, 1985; Ryan and Deci, 2000). For the thesis, the interview demonstrates how integrative and instrumental motivations co-exist, how demotivation arises when autonomy and interaction are restricted and how social interaction and constructivist methods can enhance learners' motivational engagement. The teacher's classroom becomes an example of applied theoretical frameworks under discussion, showing both their promise and their limitations in practice.

The teacher's account highlights systemic and professional perspectives, completing the empirical picture. The closing reflection then integrates student and teacher voices, drawing together the implications of the data before moving to discussion.

Section 4.7 – Closing Reflection

This chapter has examined how English language teaching in Germany is framed by the ideal of communicative competence, yet is still determined by input-oriented traditions. The literature traces a long arc: since the 1970s, official policy has encouraged learner-centred and constructivist pedagogy, but institutional structures and assessment practices often constrain their full implementation.

The empirical data from this study add important nuance to this picture. The teacher interview with the teacher confirms that communicative ideals are present in classroom practice: he describes his role as guiding students through the human side of communication -

opinions, feelings, intentions - rather than merely transmitting grammar or vocabulary. Yet he also acknowledges the pull of structured input and so reveals the tension between curriculum aims and systemic realities.

The student interviews deepen this view. Older learners often described English as instrumental, tied to exams, university entry or career opportunities, while younger learners associated English with music, gaming or YouTube. Their responses lead us to Gardner and Lambert's (1972) distinction between instrumental and integrative motivation and highlight the role of media-driven, identity-shaping influences that traditional pedagogy may overlook.

The surveys further triangulate these findings. They reveal a consistent perception of English as primarily an academic subject, particularly among older students, while also capturing a noticeable enthusiasm among younger learners who connect English to entertainment and online culture. Survey responses confirm the generational difference in motivation: pragmatic and future-oriented for older students, emotionally immediate and socially mediated for younger ones.

These perspectives point to the conclusion that communicative competence in German ELT is a negotiation between teachers, students and systems. Teachers like this one interviewed here can facilitate meaning-making, but there is insufficient institutional support for it. Students bring diverse motivations and they differ based on their age, what media they consume, personal identity and surveys show how these orientations crystallise into broader trends. For communicative and constructivist approaches to succeed, pedagogy must bridge the gap between academic demands and the linguistic experiences of learners.

In this sense, the chapter closes on a pragmatic insight: communicative teaching in Germany remains an unfinished project, one that succeeds when classroom practices, student motivations and systemic structures align - and falters when they pull against one another.

Having presented the data from questionnaires, interviews and the teacher perspective, the next task is to interpret these findings in light of the theoretical frameworks outlined earlier. Chapter 5 therefore analyses how the results reflect patterns of motivation, confidence and identity and considers their implications for understanding English learning in the Saarland.

Chapter 5 – Discussion

Section 5.1 – Motivation Across Age Groups

The findings affirm the usefulness of Gardner and Lambert's (1972) distinction between instrumental and integrative motivation, while also highlighting the need for a more nuanced framework to account for media and identity influences. Among older students (16–18), instrumental motivation was dominant, with learners linking English to career aspirations, university admissions,and international travel. This was especially clear in student 2's case, whose motivation was anchored in academic ambition and who has clear educational targets. His behaviour illustrates not only Gardner's model, but also the Ideal L2 Self (Dörnyei, 2005), where the learner envisions a future self-proficient in English and as competent global users of English in professional contexts.

In contrast, younger students (10–12) expressed more intrinsic and media-driven motivations, often associating English with YouTube, gaming or music. Their reasons were emotionally rich but less tied to long-term goals, supporting Ryan's (2008) argument that younger learners develop multilingual identities through entertainment-oriented, immersive contexts. It also echoes Mehrpour and Vojdani's (2012) findings about the motivational role of music, games and online content. These developmental differences underscore the importance of age-responsive pedagogy that recognises evolving motivational landscapes.

Crucially, media exposure played a motivational role across both groups – though the way students engaged with English differed. Student 1, for instance, demonstrates a strong Ideal L2 Self (Dörnyei, 2005) influenced by global youth culture. His enthusiasm for English-language music and his habit of translating lyrics are not merely hobbies, but acts of

linguistic investment (Norton, 2000), affirming the emotional and aspirational power of informal learning environments.

These age-based motivational differences reveal important developmental patterns, but motivation cannot be separated from the identities learners construct. The next section therefore explores how media use and social investment contextualise English as part of personal and cultural identity.

Section 5.2 – Media, Identity, and Investment

The interviews and reflective tasks revealed English as a medium of self-expression, affiliation, and aspiration. This insight aligns closely with Norton's (2000) concept of investment, in which language learning is understood as a social act tied to identity and imagined participation in global communities.

Take student 3, whose gaming sessions place him in real-time, meaningful English communication. While student 3 does not identify as a strong classroom learner, his spontaneous use of English in social gaming aligns with SDT (Deci & Ryan, 2000): his motivation is autonomous, internally driven and emotionally rewarding. Moreover, student 3's linguistic journey reflects the principles of CDST (Ushioda, 2015) - his confidence and usage are influenced by fluctuating real-world interactions, not static classroom input.

Similarly, student 1's case blends emotional engagement with aspirational identity. Through music, he appropriates English. His behaviour exemplifies Norton's (2000, pp. 5-6, pp. 120-121) concept of "imagined communities" and supports Roby's (2013) notion of English as a

pluricentric language. It is a global tool influenced by youth and digital culture, not confined to native-speaker norms.

While media and investment highlight how learners position themselves, their sense of confidence or insecurity also plays a decisive role. The following section examines how informal and formal contexts influence these emotional dimensions of learning.

Section 5.3 – Confidence, Frustration, and Informal Learning

Confidence levels across both age groups appeared to fluctuate depending on exposure and perceived authenticity of the learning environment. For older learners, practical use was a critical confidence booster - as shown in student 2's account of overcoming anxiety through interaction with locals. His experience reinforces Dörnyei's (2005) L2 Learning Experience dimension, which links motivation to past learning success and classroom experiences, but also underscores the value of informal, self-directed learning.

Younger students, meanwhile, often gained confidence from media repetition (music, games) or bilingual home support. This echoes CDST principles (Ushioda, 2015) - confidence emerges not linearly but contextually, depending on interactional routines and emotional feedback.

Frustration, where present, often stemmed from formal settings: pronunciation, grammar rules and oral exams. Interestingly, students like no. 3, who felt uncomfortable with textbook

language, nonetheless demonstrated functional fluency and confidence in informal online discourse. This dichotomy highlights a growing tension between curricular expectations and authentic language use, pointing to the need for pedagogy that embraces translanguaging and informal competence.

Confidence and frustration are not experienced in isolation but within a specific sociolinguistic environment. To situate these findings more fully, the final discussion section places them in the unique context of the Saarland's multilingual and policy landscape.

Section 5.4 – The Saarland in Context

The Saarland presents a compelling case study in the interaction between multilingual policy, linguistic identity and motivational dynamics. Its proximity to France and tradition of promoting French-German bilingualism means that English, while compulsory in schools, is not always culturally central. Students appear to view English primarily as a global skill, rather than a regional or identity-based language - a perception that aligns with Gardner's (1972) model of instrumental motivation and Roby's (2013) critique of English as a tool of soft linguistic imperialism.

Interestingly, while French receives greater formal support, students did not perceive it as overshadowing English. Instead, many described English as a gateway to global mobility, whereas French was seen as more locally expected. This duality reflects Lanvers' (2017) distinction between 'folk' multilingualism (multilingualism as lived practice) and 'elite' multilingualism (language learning as symbolic capital). In the Saarland, English seems to

straddle both: it's not institutionally privileged in the way French is, but it carries higher status in terms of imagined futures.

Moreover, students' attitudes show that while formal curricula still treat English as a school subject, learners themselves are repositioning it as a lifestyle skill - particularly through digital engagement. This repositioning aligns with Kubota and Robertson's (2002) theory of global-local identity negotiation and further underscores the relevance of integrating transcultural competence into language education.

Section 5.5 – Limitations of the Study

This research was designed as a qualitative case study, focused on a small, region-specific sample (n = 64). As such, it cannot claim statistical generalisability. However, in line with Bassey's (1999) concept of 'fuzzy generalisation', the findings offer what he terms "relatability": readers working in similar multilingual, media-saturated contexts may see resonances that inform their own practice.

The surveys and interviews were conducted in two schools with different pedagogical methods, a different demographic of students and one age group per school. This means that the age group represented in neither school can be a definitive indicator of what students experience and how they act upon that experience in a particular age group. The students' perception of English could depend on the school. The Berufsbildungszentrum is ultimately geared towards work-oriented English, although some classes demonstrated that they had more general curricula. The Gemeinschaftsschule provides even more pathways based on students' skills from G-Kurs (Grundkurs or a basic course), E-Kurs (Erweiterungskurs or

advanced course), and A-Kurs (Aufbaukurs or a course in preparation for the gymnasiale Oberstufe or upper secondary school) (Saarland.de, 2014).

Another limitation concerns the self-reported nature of the data. While triangulation between questionnaires and interviews helped validate responses, the potential for social desirability bias - particularly among younger participants - must be acknowledged.

The data coding was also manually performed, following a carefully structured thematic framework. While this allowed for deep interpretative engagement, future research could benefit from corpus-based or software-assisted coding (e.g., Nvivo), which may reveal patterns not immediately visible through manual analysis.

Finally, although the study focused on students' voices, it lacked multiple teacher perspectives, which could have provided a richer picture of classroom dynamics and pedagogical strategies. Incorporating multiple teacher interviews in future research would help align learner motivation with instructional practice.

Section 5.6 – Implications, Limitations, and Future Directions: Students' Exposure and Empowerment – How to Align Curriculum with Reality

These findings have several important implications for language educators and policymakers. First, the developmental differences in student motivation (younger = media/intrinsic; older = instrumental/integrative) suggest that curricula should be tailored accordingly. For younger learners, strategies should prioritise media-rich, emotionally engaging content to build

foundational enthusiasm. This could include the use of songs, short films and role-play - activities that support both intrinsic motivation and early identity formation (Ushioda, 2017). For older students, English instruction should be explicitly linked to real-world applications. Examples include writing job applications, preparing for exchange programs or collaborating on international digital projects. Activities like future-self journaling or mock university interviews reinforce Dörnyei's Ideal L2 Self (2005) and Norton's (2000) investment theory, transforming classroom tasks into personally meaningful engagements.

Second, the discrepancy between classroom English and students' informal English practices highlights a need to bridge formal and informal learning spaces. Students like no. 3, whose confidence thrives in gaming communities but falters with grammar, show that traditional language assessments may underestimate communicative competence. This supports Leung and Scarino's (2016) call to evaluate students as multilingual users, not aspiring monolingual natives.

Educators should be trained to acknowledge translanguaging and embrace linguistic hybridity. The study reinforces the need to reframe multilingualism as a norm rather than an exception. Policies that reinforce this mindset can foster both equity and engagement, allowing students to integrate English into their already fluid linguistic repertoires.

Communicative competence, as theorised by Hymes (1974), has long been regarded as an essential component of English language teaching (ELT) in Germany, where language learning is considered a form of social action. Since the 1970s, English teachers in Germany

have been expected to guide students in interpreting ‘individual intentions, opinions, views and feelings’ (Weber and Lehmann, 2015). Within this framework, teachers are also less likely to rely on German in the classroom, corresponding to the principles set out in the CEFR (Central European Framework of Reference) guidelines (Weber and Lehmann, 2015). In recent decades, English instruction has undergone a notable shift toward learner-centred approaches. Traditional methods of rote-learning and ‘knowledge transfer’ have increasingly been replaced by a focus on language for real-life scenarios (Weber and Lehmann, 2015). Constructivist classrooms, in particular, emphasise the role of students’ prior experiences, preconceptions and problem-solving strategies in developing language knowledge. This approach normalises interactive learning, where students learn from one another and positions the teacher as a moderator within open discussion (Western Governors University, 2020). However, German classrooms are often criticised for being overly ‘input-oriented’. While this structured orientation may benefit some learners, it has the drawback of reducing peer interaction and failing to replicate authentic real-life situations. The resulting outcome is ‘tacit knowledge’, which is more difficult for learners to apply outside the classroom (Weber and Lehmann, 2015).

Teachers’ self-reported perspectives also highlight a relatively student-oriented pedagogy, where instruction is framed through ‘apprenticeship and development perspectives alongside a weak transmission value’ (Weber and Lehmann, 2015). In practice, German teachers frequently employ ‘interlingual communication tasks’, requiring students to convey information in their own words and limit themselves to providing only the most relevant details. Real-life communicative situations are further simulated through the extensive

analysis of literature and media, an approach described as ‘text work’ (Weber and Lehmann, 2015).

Nevertheless, Weber and Lehmann acknowledge certain methodological limitations in their findings. Their research is based exclusively on teachers’ self-ratings, raising the possibility that input-oriented practices - officially discouraged - were underreported. Moreover, the study does not differentiate between school types, leaving unanswered questions about whether pedagogical approaches vary across different institutional contexts (Weber and Lehmann, 2015).

Taken together, these findings suggest that English in the Saarland functions as both a global life skill and a locally mediated practice, influenced by digital culture, policy and identity. To consolidate these insights, the final chapter draws the study to a close by summarising the key conclusions, identifying practical recommendations for teachers and policymakers, and suggesting directions for future research.

Chapter 6 – Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1: Conclusion

This study demonstrates that motivation to learn English in the Saarland is influenced by age, media exposure and evolving identities. Younger learners were driven primarily by intrinsic, media-rich engagement, while older students tended toward instrumental and integrative motivations linked to future aspirations. Across both groups, informal exposure through music, games and online communities emerged as a powerful source of confidence and investment, often eclipsing traditional classroom practices.

The findings highlight the importance of recognising English as both a life skill and a cultural resource. Students' experiences reveal a widening gap between formal curricula and the realities of their linguistic lives. Pedagogical approaches that integrate translanguaging, embrace media practices and align with learners' imagined futures are therefore needed, as motivation is contingent on context, identity and opportunity.

While the study is small, region-specific sample and relies on self-reported data limit generalisation, its contribution lies in its relatability. The Saarland context illustrates wider European tensions between local bilingual traditions and global English, offering insight into how learners handle multilingual realities in the digital age.

The evidence also reflects trends described by Weber and Lehmann (2015): German classrooms remain largely input-oriented despite teachers' self-reported emphasis on apprenticeship, interlingual tasks and text work. Such practices risk producing tacit knowledge that is difficult to apply outside school contexts. From a motivational perspective, this aligns with Gardner's (1972) distinction between integrative and instrumental orientations, as 'text work' can serve either cultural engagement or examination preparation, depending on framing. L2MMS (Dörnyei, 2005) further suggests that input-heavy instruction often fails to connect with learners' ideal L2 selves, while SDT (Deci and Ryan, 1985; Deci and Ryan, 2000) highlights the risk of demotivation when autonomy and interaction are restricted. The lack of differentiation by school type, as noted by Weber and Lehmann (2015), underlines the need for more context-sensitive analysis.

Ultimately, motivating students requires moving beyond examination-oriented teaching and making curricula correspond more favourably to learners' individual multilingual experiences. By cultivating autonomy, relatedness, and competence, and by recognising learners as multilingual users already negotiating global and local identities, educators and policymakers can better equip students to see English as an empowering tool for connection, mobility and self-expression.

6.2: Recommendations

The findings of this study suggest that English is a means for connection, aspiration and self-expression. However, the way students engage with English - and what motivates them to

continue - shifts significantly with age, context and purpose. Based on these insights, this section outlines practical recommendations for students, educators and policymakers, as well as broader implications for multilingual education in Europe.

7. Guide Students' Integration of English into Daily Life

The most confident and motivated students – across both age groups – were those who used English regularly outside the classroom. Whether watching YouTube videos, listening to music or chatting in games, these informal, low-pressure practices helped learners develop comfort, confidence and fluency. According to Norton's (2000) theory of investment, when students engage with English in identity-affirming contexts, their motivation deepens and becomes personally meaningful.

'Ich höre Musik auf Englisch, weil ich verstehen will, worum es geht'.
'I listen to music in English because I want to understand what it's about'.
Student, aged 16

Weber and Lehmann (2015) note that German pedagogy has traditionally emphasised 'text work' and literature/media analysis, which develops analytical skills but does not always replicate real-life communicative scenarios. Encouraging students to deliberately incorporate English into their hobbies - keeping a journal, watching shows with subtitles or playing games in English – can counterbalance this input-heavy approach and better support communicative competence (Hymes, 1974).

2. Help Students Embrace Mistakes as Part of Learning

Students who expressed higher confidence were those who accepted errors as part of the process. Rather than focusing on perfection, they focused on communication, especially in speech. This reflects Deci and Ryan's (1985; 2000) SDT, which emphasises that learners thrive when they feel a sense of autonomy and competence rather than external judgment (Lanvers, 2013).

'Ich traue mich nicht, laut zu sprechen, aber wenn ich übe, wird es besser'.
'I don't feel comfortable speaking aloud, but if I practise, it gets better'. – Student, aged 12

Weber and Lehmann (2015) observe that teachers often describe their pedagogy in terms of apprenticeship and development. Normalising mistakes as part of that apprenticeship would position practice more closely with constructivist principles, which remain underutilised in German classrooms.

3. Be Wary of Fossilised Interlanguage

Placing daunting expectations on newly arriving immigrants to acquire a language quickly, while restricting instruction to the L2 alone, risks fossilisation. Students may plateau in communication, relying on non-verbal cues and overlooking higher-level vocabulary. This

has been observed particularly among Turkish immigrants in Germany, where limited correction and insufficient use of L1 contribute to persistent errors (Dodson, 1995).

This issue was evident among some first-generation immigrant students in the Gemeinschaftsschule, who relied on self-study from a German textbook and received direct instruction only once or twice a week. As Weber and Lehmann (2015) point out, input-heavy instruction without scaffolding leads to tacit knowledge that fails to transfer into fluent language use. Acknowledging L1 through translanguaging and providing regular corrective feedback can help prevent fossilisation.

4. Help Students Set Personal, Future-Oriented Goals

Older students were more motivated when they linked English to their imagined futures - study abroad, careers or travel. This is exemplary of Dörnyei's (2005) Ideal L2 Self, in which motivation is driven by a vision of who the learner wants to become.

'Ich will besser Englisch sprechen, damit ich später im Ausland arbeiten kann'.
'I want to speak English better so I can work abroad'. – Student, aged 17

Weber and Lehmann (2015) note that their findings did not distinguish between school types, limiting insight into how future orientation differs across contexts. Embedding personal goal-setting tasks, such as letters to one's future self, mock interviews or discussions of travel plans, can therefore serve as a unifying strategy across varied educational settings.

5. Build on Students' Media Habits

One of the clearest findings across age groups was the role of media as a motivational gateway. Teachers can capitalise on this by incorporating real-world English content - songs, short video clips, gaming dialogue or social media posts - into the curriculum.

This not only improves relevance and engagement but also reflects Leung and Scarino's (2016) view of learners as multilingual users navigating diverse registers and styles. Weber and Lehmann (2015) emphasise the value of interlingual communication tasks, where students reformulate information in their own words. By connecting these tasks with media habits - for example, subtitling a favourite video or retelling a gaming dialogue - teachers can modernise traditional practices and make them more meaningful.

6. Create Safe and Varied Speaking Environments

Many students cited anxiety around speaking, especially in front of peers or during assessments. Teachers can reduce this by offering low-pressure, collaborative speaking activities such as pair work, group projects, audio recordings and scaffolded role-plays. Differentiated speaking opportunities, adapted to confidence levels, allow hesitant students to build fluency gradually (Bandura, 1997).

'Ich traue mich nicht, laut zu sprechen, aber wenn ich übe, wird es besser'.

‘I don’t feel comfortable speaking aloud, but if I practise it will get better’. – Student, aged 12

Positive reinforcement and progress-focused feedback reflect SDT and increase learner autonomy. Weber and Lehmann (2015) highlighted the persistence of input orientation in German classrooms; expanding varied speaking tasks directly addresses this imbalance by shifting emphasis from passive reception to active communication.

7. Present English as a Life Skill, not just a subject

Students often expressed that English felt “useful” outside school, but this relevance was not always reflected in classroom tasks. By framing English as a life skill - not merely an examination subject - teachers can better connect learning to students’ identities and futures. This could include:

- Writing emails or CVs in English
- Conducting interviews or video blogs
- Exploring careers that require English proficiency

Such tasks connect with instrumental and integrative motivation (Gardner & Lambert, 1972) while reinforcing the Ideal L2 Self through vision-driven activities. They also respond to Weber and Lehmann’s (2015) observation that German pedagogy often prioritises knowledge transmission over authentic use. By repositioning English as a transferable life skill, lessons

can move closer to the constructivist and interaction-rich approaches that remain underdeveloped.

By bringing together theory, empirical evidence and practical recommendations, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of how multilingual learners in the Saarland engage with English. It also underscores the importance of aligning pedagogical practice with learners' lived realities and evolving identities. While the study has necessarily been limited in scope, it leads us to fruitful directions for future research on multilingual regions and offers a framework that can be adapted in other contexts where English functions as both an academic subject and a global resource.

> "In institutionalized learning motivation is characterised by flux rather than stability … learners' goals evolve over time under the influence of positive and negative experiences related to the second language and the process of learning it." (Ema Ushioda, 1998, p. 82).

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Appendices

Appendix A

Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

PG2 / E1 FORM

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

RESEARCH STUDENTS
This form is to be completed by the student within **SIX** months for full-time students and **TWELVE** months for part time students, after the commencement of the research degree or following progression to Part Two of your course.

Once complete, submit this form via the ***MyTSD Doctoral College Portal*** at (https://mytsd.uwtsd.ac.uk).

This document is also available in Welsh.

RESEARCH STAFF ONLY
All communications relating to this application during its processing must be in writing and emailed to pgresearch@uwtsd.ac.uk , with the title 'Ethical Approval' followed by your name.

STUDENTS ON UNDERGRADUATE OR TAUGHT MASTERS PROGRAMMES should submit this form (and receive the outcome) via systems explained to you by the supervisor/module leader.

In order for research to result in benefit and minimise risk of harm, it must be conducted ethically. A researcher may not be covered by the University's insurance if ethical approval has not been obtained prior to commencement.

The University follows the OECD Frascati manual definition of **research activity**: "creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications". As such this covers activities undertaken by members of staff, postgraduate research students, and both taught postgraduate and undergraduate students working on dissertations/projects.

The individual undertaking the research activity is known as the "principal researcher".

Ethical approval is not required for routine audits, performance reviews, quality assurance studies, testing within normal educational requirements, and literary or artistic criticism.

Please read the notes for guidance before completing ALL sections of the form.

This form must be completed and approved prior to undertaking any research activity. Please see Checklist for details of process for different categories of application.

SECTION A: About You (Principal Researcher)

1	Full Name:		Michael Fuxman			
2	Tick all boxes that apply:		Member of staff:	☐	Honorary research fellow:	☐
	Undergraduate Student	☐	Taught Postgraduate Student	☒	Postgraduate Research Student	☐

3	Institute/Academic Discipline/ Centre:	Education and Humanities
4	Campus:	Carmarthen

5	E-mail address:	2207745@student.uwtsd.ac.uk
6	Contact Telephone Number:	+44 7566 862603
	For students:	
7	Student Number:	2207745
8	Programme of Study:	MA Bilingualism and Multilingualism
9	Director of Studies/Supervisor:	Dr Hywel Glyn Lewis

SECTION B: Approval for Research Activity

1	Has the research activity received approval in principle? (please check the Guidance Notes as to the appropriate approval process for different levels of research by different categories of individual)		**YES**	☒	**NO** ☐
					Date
2	If Yes, please indicate source of approval (and date where known): ***Approval in principle must be obtained from the relevant source prior to seeking ethical approval***	Research Degrees Committee	☐		
		Institute Research Committee	☐		
		Other (write in): Dr Hywel Glyn Lewis (Programme Manager)	☒		6/12/24

SECTION C: Internal and External Ethical Guidance Materials

	Please list the core ethical guidance documents that have been referred to during the completion of this form (including any discipline-specific codes of research ethics, location-specific codes of research ethics, and also any specific ethical guidance relating to the proposed methodology). Please tick to confirm that your research proposal adheres to these codes and guidelines. You may add rows to this table if needed.	
1	**UWTSD Research Ethics & Integrity Code of Practice**	☒
2	**UWTSD Research Data Management Policy**	☒
3	**BERA Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2018)**	☒

SECTION D: External Collaborative Research Activity
If there are external collaborators then you should gain consent from the contact persons to share their personal data with the university. If there are no external collaborators then leave this section blank and continue to section E.

1	Institution					
2	Contact person name					
3	Contact person e-mail address					
4	Is your research externally funded?		**YES**	☐	**NO**	☐
5	Are you in receipt of a KESS scholarship?		**YES**	☐	**NO**	☐
6	Are you specifically employed to undertake this research in either a paid or voluntary capacity?	Voluntary	**YES**	☐	**NO**	☐
7		Employed	**YES**	☐	**NO**	☐
8	Is the research being undertaken within an existing UWTSD Athrofa Professional Learning Partnership (APLP)?	If YES then the permission question below does not need to be answered.	**YES**	☐	**NO**	☐
9	Has permission to undertake the research has been provided by the partner organisation?	(If YES attach copy) If NO the application cannot continue	**YES**	☐	**NO**	☐

Where research activity is carried out in collaboration with an external organisation

10	Does this organisation have its own ethics approval system?	**YES**	☐	**NO**	☐
	If Yes, please attach a copy of any final approval (or interim approval) from the organisation (this may be a copy of an email if appropriate).				

SECTION E: Details of Research Activity

1	Indicative title:	The importance and usefulness of English to pupils in the schools of the Saarland, Germany.		
2	Proposed start date:	24/02/25	Proposed end date:	30/04/25
	Introduction to the Research (maximum 300 words per section) **Ensure that you write for a <u>Non-Specialist Audience</u> when outlining your response to the points below:** • *Purpose of Research Activity* • *Proposed Research Question* • *Aims of Research Activity* • *Objectives of Research Activity* Demonstrate, briefly, how **<u>Existing Research</u>** has informed the proposed activity and explain • *What the research activity will add to the body of knowledge* • *How it addresses an area of importance.*			

3	**Purpose of Research Activity** To investigate how students in the Saarland, Gdermany are motivated to learn English by surveying the students' experience of using English at home and at school. (this box should expand as you type)
4	**Research Question** To what extent are students in the Saarland, Germany motivated to learn English? (this box should expand as you type)
5	**Aims of Research Activity** To conduct a study to determine motivations of students in the Saarland, Germany for learning English and their related experiences regarding the utilisation of English as a foreign language. To differentiate between the motivations of different age groups To investigate the family dynamics related to the acquisition of new language skills in English To uncover the statistics of which motivations are indicated as leading to greater outcomes in language acquisition and retention. (this box should expand as you type)
6	**Objectives of Research Activity** To identify the motivations of students in the Saarland, Germany for learning English and related experiences regarding the utilisation of English as a foreign language. To determine what motivates different age groups to learn English in different schools in the Saarland. This research builds on existing studies of language motivation, including Gardner's Socio-Educational Model and Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System, which explore how different types of motivation (integrative, instrumental, social) impact language acquisition. By examining these frameworks within the context of the Saarland, this study will contribute to the broader understanding of language motivation in non-Anglophone European regions. (this box should expand as you type)
	Proposed methods (maximum 600 words) Provide a brief summary of all the methods that **may** be used in the research activity, making it clear what specific techniques may be used. If methods other than those listed in this section are deemed appropriate later, additional ethical approval for those methods will be needed. You do not need to justify the methods here, but should instead describe how you intend to collect the data necessary for you to complete your project.
7	Questionnaires will be distributed to students of various ages and language levels in a Gemeinschaftsschule (comprehensive school) and a Berufsschule (vocational school) in the Saarland, Germany to determine motivations and experiences with the use of English as a newly acquired language. (this box should expand as you type)
	Location of research activity Identify all locations where research activity will take place.

8	Leonardo Da Vinci Gemeinschaftsschule in Riegelsberg, Saarland Berufsbildungszentrum in Lebach, Saarland (this box should expand as you type)
	Research activity outside of the UK If research activity will take place overseas, you are responsible for ensuring that local ethical considerations are complied with and that the relevant permissions are sought. Specify any local guidelines (e.g. from local professional associations/learned societies/universities) that exist and whether these involve any ethical stipulations beyond those usual in the UK (provide details of any licenses or permissions required). Also specify whether there are any specific ethical issues raised by the local context in which the research activity is taking place, for example, particular cultural and/or legal sensitivities or vulnerabilities of participants. If you live in the country where you will do the research then please state this.
9	Code of Ethics of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Erziehungswissenschaft, DGfE (German Educational Research Association, GERA) *(this box should expand as you type)*

10	Use of documentation not in the public domain: Are any documents **NOT** publicly available?	**NO**	☒
		YES	☐
11	If Yes, please provide details here of how you will gain access to specific documentation that is not in the public domain and that this is in accordance with the current data protection law of the country in question and that of England and Wales. *(this box should expand as you type)*		

	Does your research relate to one or more of the seven aims of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015?	**YES**	**NO**
12	A prosperous Wales	☐	☒
13	A resilient Wales	☐	☒
14	A healthier Wales	☐	☒
15	A more equal Wales	☐	☒
16	A Wales of cohesive communities	☐	☒
17	A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	☐	☒
18	A globally responsible Wales	☐	☒
19	If YES to any of the above, please give details:		
	(this box should expand as you type)		

SECTION F: Scope of Research Activity

	Will the research activity include:	YES	NO
1	Use of a questionnaire or similar research instrument?	☒	☐
2	Use of interviews?	☒	☐
3	Use of focus groups?	☐	☒
4	Use of participant diaries?	☐	☒
5	Use of video or audio recording?	☒	☐
6	Use of computer-generated log files?	☒	☐
7	Participant observation with their knowledge?	☒	☐
8	Participant observation without their knowledge?	☐	☒
9	Access to personal or confidential information without the participants' specific consent?	☐	☒
10	Administration of any questions, test stimuli, presentation that may be experienced as physically, mentally or emotionally harmful / offensive?	☐	☒
11	Performance of any acts which may cause embarrassment or affect self-esteem?	☐	☒
12	Investigation of participants involved in illegal activities?	☐	☒
13	Use of procedures that involve deception?	☐	☒
14	Administration of any substance, agent or placebo?	☐	☒
15	Working with live vertebrate animals?	☐	☒
16	Procedures that may have a negative impact on the environment?	☐	☒
17	Other primary data collection methods. Please indicate the type of data collection method(s) below.		
	Details of any other primary data collection method: (this box should expand as you type)	☐	☒

If NO to every question, then the research activity is (ethically) low risk and **may** be exempt from **some** of the following sections (please refer to Guidance Notes).

If YES to any question, then no research activity should be undertaken until full ethical approval has been obtained.

SECTION G: Intended Participants

If there are no participants then do not complete this section, but go directly to section H.

	Who are the intended participants:	YES	NO
1	Students or staff at the University?	☐	☒
2	Adults (over the age of 18 and competent to give consent)?	☐	☒
3	Vulnerable adults?	☐	☒

4	Children and Young People under the age of 18? (Consent from Parent, Carer or Guardian will be required)	☒	☐
5	Prisoners?	☐	☒
6	Young offenders?	☐	☒
7	Those who could be considered to have a particularly dependent relationship with the investigator or a gatekeeper?	☐	☒
8	People engaged in illegal activities?	☐	☒
9	Others. Please indicate the participants below, and specifically any group who may be unable to give consent.		
	Details of any other participant groups: (this box should expand as you type)	☐	☒

	Participant numbers and source Provide an estimate of the expected number of participants. How will you identify participants and how will they be recruited?	
10	How many participants are expected?	Approximately 100 *(this box should expand as you type)*
11	Who will the participants be?	Children between the ages of 10 and 18 in a school setting in Saarland *(this box should expand as you type)*
12	How will you identify the participants?	By their first names, age, and class, but their names and other means of identity will be kept anonymous. *(this box should expand as you type)*

	Information for participants:	**YES**	**NO**	**N/A**
13	Will you describe the main research procedures to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?	☒	☐	☐
14	Will you tell participants that their participation is voluntary?	☒	☐	☐
15	Will you obtain written consent for participation?	☒	☐	☐
16	Will you explain to participants that refusal to participate in the research will not affect their treatment or education (if relevant)?	☒	☐	☐
17	If the research is observational, will you ask participants for their consent to being observed?	☒	☐	☐
18	Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason?	☒	☐	☐
19	With questionnaires, will you give participants the option of omitting questions they do not want to answer?	☒	☐	☐

20	Will you tell participants that their data will be treated with full confidentiality and that, if published, it will not be identifiable as theirs?	☒	☐	☐
21	Will you debrief participants at the end of their participation, in a way appropriate to the type of research undertaken?	☒	☐	☐
22	If NO to any of above questions, please give an explanation			
	(this box should expand as you type)			

	Information for participants:	**YES**	**NO**	**N/A**
24	Will participants be paid?	☐	☒	☐
25	Is specialist electrical or other equipment to be used with participants?	☒	☐	☐
26	Are there any financial or other interests to the investigator or University arising from this study?	☐	☒	☐
27	Will the research activity involve deliberately misleading participants in any way, or the partial or full concealment of the specific study aims?	☐	☒	☐
28	If YES to any question, please provide full details			
	An electronic device will be used to record the interview to facilitate data analysis. *(this box should expand as you type)*			

SECTION H: Anticipated Risks

	Outline any anticipated risks that may adversely affect any of the participants, the researchers and/or the University, and the steps that will be taken to address them. If you have completed a full risk assessment (for example as required by a laboratory, or external research collaborator) you may append that to this form.		
1	**Full risk assessment completed and appended?**	**Yes**	☐
		No	☒
2	**Risks to participants** For example: sector-specific health & safety, emotional distress, financial disclosure, physical harm, transfer of personal data, sensitive organisational information		

	Risk to participants: Personal information being leaked, feelings of inadequacy with regard to their English skills *(this box should expand as you type)*	*How you will mitigate the risk to participants:* Asking questions in a way that would not make them feel self-conscious regarding their language skills or any existing family dynamics. In order to prevent information from being leaked, I would be the only person along with the programme manager with access to the surveys and interview answers. The information will be securely kept on my computer and no third party will have access to my computer or the password. Any hard copies of questionnaires and interview answers with participant information will remain locked in a secure location. Since language learning can be a sensitive topic, the questionnaire and interview questions will be carefully designed to avoid inducing anxiety. Questions will be phrased in a neutral and non-evaluative manner, ensuring that students do not feel judged based on their language proficiency. The study will focus on students' experiences rather than assessing their skills. *(this box should expand as you type)*
3	If research activity may include sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting topics (e.g. sexual activity, drug use) or issues likely to disclose information requiring further action (e.g. criminal activity), give details of the procedures to deal with these issues, including any support/advice (e.g. helpline numbers) to be offered to participants. Note that where applicable, consent procedures should make it clear that if something potentially or actually illegal is discovered in the course of a project, it may need to be disclosed to the proper authorities	
	Not applicable *(this box should expand as you type)*	
4	**Risks to the investigator** For example: personal health & safety, physical harm, emotional distress, risk of accusation of harm/impropriety, conflict of interest	
	Risk to the investigator: Anxiety during the interview process, accusations made against the investigator, risk of agitation and aggression from research participants during the interview process, inability to complete the research, lack of support from students who are participating. *(this box should expand as you type)*	*How you will mitigate the risk to the investigator:* Stay relaxed during the interview process - although I am already familiar with the participants as their assistant teacher. The risk of the inability to complete the research will be overcome by securing sufficient participant numbers (approximately 100). *(this box should expand as you type)*
5	**University/institutional risks** For example: adverse publicity, financial loss, data protection	

	Risk to the University: Accusations made by students, faculty, or parents of misconduct by the investigator. *(this box should expand as you type)*	*How you will mitigate the risk to the University:* By maintaining appropriate boundaries and professional conduct during the research project in accordance with the ethical guidance stipulated in Section C (above). By ensuring that the research is also completed in order to ensure that I protect the university's reputation. *(this box should expand as you type)*
6	**Environmental risks** For example: accidental spillage of pollutants, damage to local ecosystems	
	Risk to the environment: excessive use of paper, driving to school to conduct the research. *(this box should expand as you type)*	*How you will mitigate the risk to environment:* By recycling excess paper used in the project, and using public transport rather than my own transport in order to reduce any possible adverse effect on the environment. *(this box should expand as you type)*

	Disclosure and Barring Service			
	If the research activity involves children or vulnerable adults, a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate must be obtained before any contact with such participants.	**YES**	**NO**	**N/A**
7	Does your research require you to hold a current DBS Certificate?	☒	☐	☐
8	If YES, please give the certificate number. If the certificate number is not available please write "Pending"; in this case any ethical approval will be subject to providing the appropriate certificate number.	1809696994		

SECTION I: Feedback, Consent and Confidentiality

1	**Feedback** What de-briefing and feedback will be provided to participants, how will this be done and when?
	Feedback on results will be provided to all participants after the surveys and interviews have been conducted. *(this box should expand as you type)*
2	**Informed consent** Describe the arrangements to inform potential participants, before providing consent, of what is involved in participating. Describe the arrangements for participants to provide full consent before data collection begins. If gaining consent in this way is inappropriate, explain how consent will be obtained and recorded in accordance with prevailing data protection legislation.

	Parents need to sign a consent form which is contained in the letter to parents that indicates the purpose of the research and what identifiable information the child should provide i.e. first names, age, class, and voice recordings. Parents will be able to see the forms before they are completed by the child/children. Participation in this study is voluntary. Parents will be provided with an information letter explaining the purpose and methodology of the research, along with a consent form. In addition to parental consent, students will also be asked to provide their assent before participating. The study will emphasise that there are no right or wrong answers, and participation (or withdrawal) will not affect their education in any way. No identifiable data will be included in the final report hence every pupil will be totally anonymous. *(this box should expand as you type)*
3	**Confidentiality / Anonymity** Set out how anonymity of participants and confidentiality will be ensured in any outputs. If anonymity is not being offered, explain why this is the case.
	Confidentiality will be maintained by keeping the identifiable information secure on an electronic device (with a personal password not available to anyone else) or in physical documents that can only be accessed by the investigator and kept in a locked cabinet. Student responses will remain confidential in any reports or publications. If names are collected for follow-up interviews, they will be stored separately from questionnaire responses and deleted after the study is concluded. Any voice recordings will be used solely for reference and transcribed before being deleted. *(this box should expand as you type)*

SECTION J: Data Protection and Storage

	Does the research activity involve personal data (as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 "GDPR" and the Data Protection Act 2018 "DPA")?	**YES**	**NO**
1	***"Personal data"*** *means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person ('data subject'). An identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person. Any video or audio recordings of participants is considered to be personal data.*	☒	☐
	If YES, provide a description of the data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
2	Voice recordings and details of first names, age, and class need to be collected to make the students identifiable for the purpose of data analysis. However, no identifiable data will be included in the final report. *(this box should expand as you type)*		
	Does it involve special category data (as defined by the GDPR)?	**YES**	**NO**

3	***"Special category data"*** *means sensitive personal data consisting of information as to the data subjects' –* *(a) racial or ethnic origin,* *(b) political opinions,* *(c) religious beliefs or other beliefs of a similar nature,* *(d) membership of a trade union (within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992),* *(e) physical or mental health or condition,* *(f) sexual life,* *(g) genetics,* *(h) biometric data (as used for ID purposes),*	☐	☒
	If YES, provide a description of the special category data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
4	*(this box should expand as you type)*		

	Will data from the research activity (collected data, drafts of the thesis, or materials for publication) be stored in any of the following ways?	**YES**	**NO**
5	Manual files (i.e. in paper form)?	☒	☐
6	University computers?	☐	☒
7	Private company computers?	☐	☒
8	Home or other personal computers?	☒	☐
9	Laptop computers/ CDs/ Portable disk-drives/ memory sticks?	☒	☐
10	"Cloud" storage or websites?	☒	☐
11	Other – specify:	☐	☐
12	For all stored data, explain the measures in place to ensure the security of the data collected, data confidentiality, including details of backup procedures, password protection, encryption, anonymisation and pseudonymisation:		
	The data collected will be kept password secure and can only be accessed by the investigator and the professor. First names will only be used if the child wants to proceed to the interview stage and the first name will be deleted. Voice recordings will only be used to refer back to the interview and then subsequently deleted. Personal data (first names, audio recordings) will be deleted once transcription and analysis are complete. Anonymised survey data will be retained securely for a period outlined by university policy. *(this box should expand as you type)*		

	Data Protection		
	Will the research activity involve any of the following activities:	**YES**	**NO**
13	Electronic transfer of data in any form?	☒	☐
14	Sharing of data with others at the University outside of the immediate research team?	☐	☒
15	Sharing of data with other organisations?	☐	☒
16	Export of data outside the UK or importing of data from outside the UK?	☒	☐
17	Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, emails or telephone numbers?	☒	☐

18	Publication of data that might allow identification of individuals?	☐	☒
19	Use of data management system?	☐	☒
20	Data archiving?	☐	☒
21	If YES to any question, please provide full details, explaining how this will be conducted in accordance with the GDPR and Data Protection Act (2018) (and any international equivalents, where appropriate):		
	No identifiable data will be transferred via personal email. If data needs to be shared, it will be done through secure, encrypted university email or the UWTSD Research Data Repository, in accordance with GDPR guidelines. Any submission to Turnitin will exclude personal identifiers. *(this box should expand as you type)*		
22	List all who will have access to the data generated by the research activity:		
	Michael Fuxman (student/ researcher); Dr Hywel Lewis (tutor, for assessment purposes only). *(this box should expand as you type)*		
23	List who will have control of, and act as custodian(s) for, data generated by the research activity:		
	Michael Fuxman (student/ researcher). *(this box should expand as you type)*		
24	Give details of data storage arrangements, including security measures in place to protect the data, where data will be stored, how long for, and in what form. Will data be archived – if so how and if not why not.		
	Data will be stored on a personal laptop with password security, and on physical copies of questionnaires and interview answers which will be stored in a locked cabinet which can only be opened with a personal key kept on my person. *(this box should expand as you type)*		
25	Please indicate if your data will be stored in the UWTSD Research Data Repository (see https://researchdata.uwtsd.ac.uk/). If so please explain. (*Most relevant to academic staff)*		
	No *(this box should expand as you type)*		
26	Confirm that you have read the UWTSD guidance on data management (see https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/library/research-data-management/)	**YES**	☒
27	Confirm that you are aware that you need to keep all data until after your research has completed or the end of your funding	**YES**	☒

SECTION K: Declaration

	The information which I have provided is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge. I have attempted to identify any risks and issues related to the research activity and acknowledge my obligations and the rights of the participants. In submitting this application I hereby confirm that I undertake to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice which is published on the website: https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/research/research-ethics/		
1	**Signature of applicant:**		**Date:** 07/02/25

For STUDENT Submissions:

2	Director of Studies/ Supervisor:	Dr Hywel Glyn Lewis	**Date:** 10-02-25
3	Signature:		

For STAFF Submissions:

4	Academic Director/ Assistant Dean:		**Date:**
5	Signature:		

Checklist: Please complete the checklist below to ensure that you have completed the form according to the guidelines and attached any required documentation:

☒	I have read the guidance notes supplied before completing the form.
☒	I have completed **ALL RELEVANT** sections of the form in full.
☒	I confirm that the research activity has received approval in principle
☐	I have attached a copy of final/interim approval from external organisation (**where appropriate**)
☐	I have attached a full risk assessment (where appropriate) *ONLY TICK IF YOU HAVE **ATTACHED A FULL RISK ASSESSMENT***
☒	I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice.
☒	I understand that before commencing data collection all documents aimed at respondents (including information sheets, consent forms, questionnaires, interview schedules etc.) must be confirmed by the DoS/Supervisor, module tutor or Academic Director.

Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

PG2 / E1 FORM

RESEARCH STUDENTS ONLY Once complete, submit this form via the **MyTSD Doctoral College Portal** at (https://mytsd.uwtsd.ac.uk).
RESEARCH STAFF ONLY All communications relating to this application during its processing must be in writing and emailed to pgresearch@uwtsd.ac.uk , with the title 'Ethical Approval' followed by your name.
STUDENTS ON UNDERGRADUATE OR TAUGHT MASTERS PROGRAMMES should submit this form (and receive the outcome) via systems explained to you by the supervisor/module leader.