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Abstract: Interest in language learning motivation has been growing recently, particularly in multilingual contexts where individuals acquire additional languages beyond English. Despite increasing the focus on multilingualism within second language acquisition (SLA) research, less research focuses on the motivational dynamics of multilingual speakers in learning languages other than English (LOTE). Addressing this gap, the present study investigates the complex motivational factors influencing multilingual university students in learning French as an additional language and other languages (LOTE) within the Belgian context. The participants consisted of 121 multilingual university students who were learning French as an additional language and LOTE. Data were collected through questionnaire and semi-structured interviews, and analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Findings revealed that multilingual learners' motivation is multifaceted and dynamic, shaped by a combination of intrinsic interests (e.g., cultural appreciation, personal growth), extrinsic goals (e.g., academic and career aspirations), integrative motives, and prior language learning experiences. The study also sheds light on the overlapping and evolving nature of motivational patterns and provides nuanced insights into LOTE learning motivation within multilingual university settings.

Keywords: motivation; LOTE; additional language; multilingual learners

1. Introduction

In recent years, language learning motivation has drawn many researchers' attention with its complex and dynamic aspects in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) (Dörnyei, 2009; Gardner, 2010; Henry, 2011; Lai, 2023; Thompson & Lee, 2018). In addition, a growing number of studies have recently investigated new ideas and concepts emerging around the phenomena of multilingualism (Cohen & Kassis-Henderson, 2017; Cenoz 2013; Jessner, 2008) to take the "multilingual turn" (May, 2014; Ortega, 2013) providing broad perspectives on research in second language (L2) learning (Ushioda, 2021). While research on language learning motivation is popular in the domain of SLA studies, limited number of studies focus on the relationship between motivation and multilingualism (Csizér & Lukács, 2010; Henry & Thorsen, 2018; Thompson & Lee, 2018; Thompson & Liu, 2021). Moreover, although the majority of empirical research has focused exclusively on motivation to learn English (Boo, et al., 2015), few studies explore individual's motivation to learn languages other than English (LOTEs), or additional language in multilingual environments (D'Orazzi & Hajek, 2021; Lai, 2023; Siridetkoon & Dewaele, 2018; Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2017). Furthermore, it is still unclear, from a broader perspective, what motivations drive multilingual university students to learn an additional language or LOTE. Addressing these gaps, the present study examines various motivational constructs of multilingual university students in learning French as additional language and LOTE within the Belgian context. This research further provides a comprehensive perspective on multilingual learners' motivation in learning LOTE, with a particular focus on university students from predominantly European backgrounds.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Language Learning Motivation and Multilingualism

Motivation, as a driving force, key component and an important phenomenon for successful foreign/second language (FL/L2) learning, has attracted the attention of students, teachers and researchers in recent decades (Dörnyei, 2009; Lamb et al., 2019; Thompson & Erdil-Moody, 2016). While the construct of motivation in the context of language learning has been investigated through the lens of various approaches and models, "no single account or approach can ever hope to suffice" because of its multifaceted nature (Ryan, 2019; p.178). The most common motivation models in FL/L2 learning used are the socio-educational model (Gardner, 1985, 2010), self-determination theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2017), and L2 Motivational Self-System (L2MSS) (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009). Gardner's (1985, 2010) socio-educational model entails integrative versus instrumental motivation for L2 learning, whereas SDT proposed by Deci and Ryan (Ryan & Deci, 2002) focuses mainly on language learners' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in L2 learning. Dörnyei's L2MSS (2005, 2009), is a theoretical model which describes motivation and consists of three main components: the ideal L2 self (the learner's internal desire to become an effective L2 user), the ought-to L2 self (social pressures and external influences coming from the learner's environment to master the L2), and the L2 learning experience (the actual experience of being engaged in the L2 learning process) (Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017). Taken together, in addition to similar perspectives, each model has distinct characteristics by taking into account language learners' motives arising from within individuals or being influenced from outside in describing language motivation.

On the other hand, due to the increase of immigration and globalization across the world, the "multilingual turn" (Ortega, 2014, p. 33) has triggered a shift in L2 research exploring novel ideas and concepts relating to the multilingualism (Jessner, 1999; Cenoz, 2013; May, 2014). Multilingual people have more advantages over monolinguals in cognitive development, metalinguistic awareness, divergent thinking, imagination, grammatical awareness, perceptual organization, reading achievement, and heightened sensitivity in communicative skills (Cenoz 2003; p. 73-74). Moreover, in alignment with the learning experience component of the L2MSS (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009), previously learned or acquired languages positively influence subsequent language learning and enhance multilingual individuals' capacity to acquire additional languages (Thompson & Erdil–Moody, 2016; Thompson & Lee, 2018). Research suggests that having a multilingual background is beneficial for language learners as they are able to deploy more effective language learning strategies (Cenoz 2013; Cummins, 2007), score higher on language aptitude tests (Thompson, 2013), be more tolerant (Dewaele and Wei 2013; Thompson & Erdil-Moody, 2016; Thompson and Lee, 2018), and experience less anxiety (Dewaele, et al., 2008).

Being multilingual is itself a source of motivation to learn L2 or additional languages (Busse, 2017; Costache, et al., 2022; Dörnyei & Al–Hoorie, 2017; Lasagabaster, 2017). Although many studies investigated the relationship between the motivation and a single second or foreign language, there has been relatively less research on motivation and multilingualism (Henry, 2011, 2017; Lasagabaster, 2017; Thompson & Erdil-Moody, 2016; Thompson & Yao Liu, 2021). For instance, Henry (2011) looked at how L2 and L3 motivational constructs relate to one another and found that L2 motivation can indeed impact L3 motivation. In another research, Thompson and Erdil-Moody (2016) examined differences between bilinguals and multilinguals with regard to their ideal and ought-to L2 selves on motivation. The findings showed that the ideal L2 selves of multilinguals are significantly different from those of other groups of learners, when using both a more traditional definition of multilingualism (i.e. experience with multiple languages), as well as an innovative way of operationalizing multilingualism.

2.2. Motivation Beyond L2 Learning

Research on motivation in L2 literature has extensively focused on motivation pertaining to one specific second or foreign language (Boo, et al., 2015; Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017; Ren, & Wang, 2025;

Thompson & Lee, 2018; Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2017). However, motivation in third or additional language learning is assumed to be even more changeable as it is more complex than L2 learning, especially when learners consider the additional language as interesting and useful but do not believe that learning it is absolutely necessary (Włosowicz, 2013). According to Marten and Mostert (2012), additional language acquisition is a particularly relevant concept for the teaching and learning of languages of the wider world or less widely taught languages since, at least in the European context, these are often learned by learners who already have experience of learning more widely taught languages such as French, German, Spanish or English (p.101). In addition, if the learners acquired two or more additional languages, they can also develop an ideal multilingual self, and this may positively influence their motivation to learn multiple languages (Henry, 2017).

The previous findings on motivation in SLA report that, in addition to other effects, having a multilingual background might be beneficial for learners' motivation to learn additional languages (Berthele, 2010; Cenoz, 2003; Costache, et al., 2022; Dewaele, 2010). On the other hand, although the previous research on language learning motivation has largely focused on L2 motivation, there has been less research on additional language or L3 motivation in multilingual settings (Bui, et al., 2018; Costache, et al., 2022; Marten & Mostert, 2012; Thompson & Lee, 2018). For example, Marten and Mostert (2012) investigated university students' linguistic background, their motivation and reasons and self-assessed progress for studying Zulu as an additional or L3 language in higher education in the UK. The results indicated that participants had mostly integrative and instrumental (extrinsic) motivation such as personal, academic and professional reasons for studying Zulu in South Africa. In another study exploring the motivation from both an L2 (English) and an L3 (Japanese) perspective focusing on motivational similarities and differences between L2 and L3, Bui, et al. (2018) found that students constructed different motivational profiles with extrinsic motivations for their L2 (English) learning and more cultural interest, positive learning experience, self-confidence, and positive attitudes for L3 (Japanese) learning. In a recent study, Costache, et. al. (2022) focused on the longitudinal relations between Swiss German students' value beliefs in English, French, and German as well as the differences in motivational development between multilingual and monolingual students in Switzerland, a historically multilingual country. The findings revealed that students who reported higher value beliefs in English showed a steep decrease in their value beliefs for French and German. In addition, multilingual students reported higher initial value beliefs in French and English, and also showed steeper decreases in French and English value beliefs over time compared to their monolingual peers.

Additionally, there are also other factors such as gender and proficiency that affect the motivation and attitudes of the language learners toward the target (additional) language. Some research has found that females have been more motivated than males in L2 learning (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2002; Henry, 2009), whereas others indicated that there were no significant differences for gender (Henry & Cliffordson, 2013; Sylvén & Thompson, 2015; Thompson & Erdil-Moody, 2016). With regard to the relationship of motivation to proficiency, research indicated that there has been generally a significant difference between the lower and advanced level groups (Lamb, 2012; Kim, 2012; Thompson & Erdil-Moody, 2016).

2.3. Motivation for Learning LOTEs

The majority of research on motivation in L2 literature has focused on the learning of English because of its dominant status as a global language across the world (Boo, et. al., 2015; Busse, 2017; Huang, et, al., 2021; Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2017). The motivation for learning languages other than English (LOTEs) is also salient for learners who are concerned with promoting, supporting, and enhancing language learning beyond global English (Ushioda and Dörnyei, 2017). LOTEs are predominantly learnt as an L3 or additional language following on from English as the first language learnt as an L2, while LOTEs are sometimes learnt as L2 by the English native speakers (Howard & Oakes, 2021; p.2). Current studies on language learning motivation focus on learning English as a second language due to its international status across the world, whereas few research has examined

students' motivation to learn LOTEs or additional languages (L3) (Huang, et, al., 2021; Lai, 2023; Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2017; Wu & Liu, 2023). For instance, Boo, et al., (2015) reported in their study reviewing a large body of research published between 2005 and 2014 on L2 motivation that English as a target language was very dominant in the studies during this period, and 72.6% of empirical research was conducted to explore the motivation in learning English as L2. Huang, et al., (2021) also investigated the potential emergence of a multilingual motivational system in the E-LOTE learners and compared Chinese English+LOTE (E-LOTE) learners to English-only learners. The findings revealed that E-LOTE learners had a higher motivation to learn English at the beginning and during their development. Moreover, the E-LOTE learners' motivation to learn the two languages interacted with each other over time. In another research, Wu and Liu (2023) explored the L3 motivational dynamics of four Japanese-major university students as LOTE speakers in China through the in-depth narrative interviews. They found that learners' meaning-making of experience provided the foundation for their self-guide construction, which leaded to the emergence of motivation. It is also worth noting that some people prefer learning LOTE because they have insufficient competence in L2 English, whereas others may consciously choose a LOTE as an additional language since it provides them a competitive benefit in the job market (Siridetkoon & Dewaele, 2018). Furthermore, researchers underline that there is still a gap between the motivation and LOTE as additional language in the literature (Boo, et, al., 2015; Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021; Ushioda, 2017; Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2017).

2.4. Context

The Council of Europe (2008; p.566) suggests that each citizen in Europe should be proficient in three European languages, known as the '1 plus 2' model, which allows citizens to communicate in two additional languages plus their mother tongue. In addition to being a multilingual speaker as an essential characteristic feature of European identity, speaking fluently in more than one foreign language has currently become a major and current educational goal in Europe (Council of Europe, 2019). Belgium is also situated within a multilingual context in Europe with its three official languages (French, Dutch and German) and an important context with its linguistic communities for investigations into the effects of the social context (Dewaele, 2005). As a capital city of Belgium and the European Union, Brussels is the hub of a very diverse multilingual and multicultural community across the world. Today, beyond the FL/L2 learning, globalization, immigration and professional mobility continue to add to the linguistic and cultural diversity of Brussels. In Brussels, where a wide range of world languages are spoken fluently as additional languages, French currently holds a dominant position as a first language (Ceuleers, 2008). The Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB), located in Brussels, predominantly offers its academic programs in French, although several programs are also available in English.

3. The Study

This research fills the gap in the current L2 and motivation literature in several ways. This study focuses on examining the various motivational constructs of multilingual university students learning French as LOTE and additional language. Previous studies on language learning motivation have primarily focused on L2 (English) motivation, with specific motivational constructs such as anxiety, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and interest across diverse contexts; however, limited research focuses comprehensively on motivation for learning additional language(s) beyond L2 (Costache, et. al., 2022; Henry, 2011; Thompson & Lee, 2018). Additionally, although recent research on L2 motivation and multilingualism investigates the similarities and differences between L2 and L3 learning (Bui, et. al., 2018; Lai, 2023), there is still less research examining the motivation for an additional language or LOTE in multilingual environments. Furthermore, it is not yet clear what motivations specifically drive multilingual university students to learn French as additional language and LOTE (Boo, et, al., 2015; Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017; Ushioda and Dörnyei, 2017). Addressing these gaps, this research explored various motivational constructs influencing multilingual

university students learning French as additional language and LOTE in the context of Belgium. In this study, French is considered as a LOTE and learned as an additional language (L3, L4) by multilingual university students.

3.1. Research Questions

1. Are there significant differences among various motivational constructs (e.g., intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, interest in languages and culture, expectancy, language aptitude, and anxiety, etc.) influencing multilingual university students when learning French as additional language and LOTE?

2. Do motivational constructs for learning French among multilingual university students differ based on language proficiency levels and gender?

3. What are the primary motivational factors driving multilingual university students to learn French as an additional language and LOTE?

4. Methods

4.1. Participants

The study sample consisted of 121 international university students (35 male, 86 female), aged 17 to 35 years (M = 23.41, SD = 3.96), who were enrolled in undergraduate (bachelor's degree, n = 61) and postgraduate (master's and PhD, n = 60) programs at the Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB) in Belgium. They were enrolled in various departments, including languages and letters, economics, engineering, and psychology. All participants were multilingual university students pursuing their studies in French, which was the primary language of instruction at the university. French was an additional language (L3 or L4) and LOTE for all participants. Participants self-reported the additional languages they speak and their proficiency levels beyond their mother tongue. The majority (n = 67) reported speaking two additional languages, including French, while others reported proficiency in three (n = 36), four (n = 16), five (n = 1), or six (n = 1) additional languages, also including French. Participants also self-rated their French proficiency using the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) levels as follows: A2 (Elementary; n = 17), B1 (Intermediate; n = 46), B2 (Upper Intermediate; n = 45), and C1 (Advanced; n = 13). Some participants also provided their DELF or DALF test scores for French. Native or bilingual French speakers were excluded from the dataset. Table 1 presents the participants' mother tongues/first language (L1), highlighting the linguistic diversity of the sample, which included students from 23 different countries. The most represented L1s were Italian (n = 27), Turkish (n = 16), Spanish (n = 15), and German (n = 13). Most of the participants reported speaking a European language as their L1. Participation was voluntary and anonymous.

Table 1. Distribution of participants' mother tongues (L1).

Mother Tongues (L1)	N	%
Albanian	2	1,7
Arabic	6	5,0
Bulgarian	1	,8
Chinese	6	5,0
Czech	3	2,5
English	4	3,3
Estonian	1	,8
Finnish	1	,8
German	13	10,7
Greek	1	,8

Indian	1	,8
Italian	27	22,3
Japanese	1	,8
Korean	4	3,3
Persian	1	,8
Polish	3	2,5
Portuguese	5	4,1
Romanian	4	3,3
Slovak	1	,8
Spanish	15	12,4
Turkish	16	13,2
Ukrainian	4	3,3
Vietnamese	1	,8
Total	**121**	**100,0**

4.2. Measurements

Data were collected through a questionnaire and semi-structured interview in the spring term of 2022-2023. The current study adopted a questionnaire designed for French to identify the different motivational factors in learning French as LOTE. The questionnaire was originally developed by Schmidt and his colleagues (Schmidt, et. al., 1996) with a broader scope and different aspects of language learning motivation, and later adapted and used by Hatcher (2000) and Balaman-Uçar (2009) in different contexts. The questionnaire contained 62-items pertaining to intrinsic motivation (6 items), extrinsic motivation (9), interest in languages and culture (5), integrative motivation (4), competitiveness (3), cooperativeness (4), the value of the language course (3), the belief on doing well or getting high grades (6), language aptitude (4), attitudes toward the target language (5), language anxiety (6), as well as items designed to gauge the learner's intention to put their best effort into learning the language (7). The items of the questionnaire were originally drafted in English. All items were then translated into French and adapted to the community of speakers of French. Cronbach alpha coefficients were computed for the questionnaire and produced the value .86. All dimensions of the questionnaire were also reliable ($\alpha \geq .70$) and homogenous ($p > .05$). The questionnaire also included demographic and educational information in the form of 5-point Likert scales from 1 (strongly agree) to (strongly disagree).

The other instrument was a semi-structured interview including a predetermined set of questions prepared by the researchers based on motivational dimensions in the questionnaire (e.g. "Why do you learn French? please give us some reasons?", "Are you interested in learning other languages and cultures? Why or why not?"). This semi-structured interview was conducted to gain in-depth understanding of the multilingual university students' motivations towards learning French as additional language and LOTE. All participants answered the interview questions in writing since they felt free to express their thoughts.

4.3. Data Analysis

Regarding the analyses, after descriptively examining the demographic details of multilingual university students, the data were quantitatively analyzed using SPSS 28, employing t-tests and one-way ANOVA. Additionally, comparisons were made to assess significant differences in gender, proficiency levels, and motivational constructs influencing participants' motivation to learn French. Post-hoc tests were conducted to identify specific differences between proficiency levels among French speakers. Then, the responses given to the semi-structured interviews were qualitatively analyzed using Atlas.ti 25, providing thematic analysis through the coding of responses to identify and examine themes in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Participants' responses were examined individually to identify both overarching and condition-specific themes through a systematic multi-step coding procedure conducted independently by the researchers. The analysis process involved

dividing the dataset into three portions (25%, 25%, and 50%, respectively). The first author coded the first dataset and refined the coding framework, while the second author followed the same procedure for the second dataset. Both authors collaboratively reviewed the codes from the first and second datasets to ensure consistency, resolving minor discrepancies through discussion and comparison of their coding. Reliability was reinforced at each stage of the analysis. The finalized coding framework was then applied by the first author to the remaining dataset. Finally, the first and second authors jointly reviewed all coded data to ensure overall consistency and accuracy. This thematic analysis provided deeper insights into the participants' experiences of learning French and illuminated the motivational factors driving these multilingual French speakers. Common themes and notable remarks were reported, with participant citations anonymized using numerical identifiers (e.g., P1, P2, P3) to preserve confidentiality.

5. Results

5.1. Quantitative Findings: Variations in Various Motivational Constructs

Table 2 revealed the mean scores for each motivational construct differed significantly from each other. The findings also indicated that all motivational constructs were highly significant in driving motivation for learning French ($p < .001$) (Table 2). Interest in foreign language and culture ($t(120) = 87.99$, $p < .001$) and then cooperativeness ($t(120) = 73.66$, $p < .001$) were among the highest-rated constructs, highlighting participants' strong motivation to engage with other languages and collaborate with others. Conversely, competitiveness ($t(120) = 27.14$, $p < .001$) and anxiety ($t(120) = 37.04$, $p < .001$) had lower mean scores but were still statistically significant.

Table 2. Means of various motivational constructs in learning French.

Motivational constructs	(n=121) Mean (SD)
Intrinsic motivation	3.66 (.54)
Extrinsic motivation	3.69 (.53)
Integrative motivation	3.81 (.70)
Interest for foreign language and culture	4.18 (.52)
Competitiveness	2.76 (1.12)
Cooperativeness	3.98 (.59)
Task-Value	3.82 (.70)
Expectancy	3.61 (.50)
Language Aptitude	3.26 (.69)
Attitude	3.00 (.63)
Anxiety	2.71 (.80)
Motivational Strengths	3.71 (.47)

For gender differences, independent samples t-tests results indicated no statistically significant differences between male and female participants across all measured motivational constructs ($p > .05$). With regard to the differences in motivational constructs on language proficiency levels, Table 3 indicated no statistically significant differences ($p > .05$) across most motivational constructs, including intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, integrative motivation, interest in foreign languages and cultures, competitiveness, cooperativeness, task value, expectancy, attitude, and motivational strengths. However, we found significant differences for language aptitude ($p = .013$) and anxiety ($p = .005$). Furthermore, the Post-Hoc test (Bonferroni), which provided multiple comparisons between proficiency levels, revealed that the statistical differences were generally between lower (A2-Elementary) and higher proficiency (B2-Upper-Intermediate and C1-advanced) levels ($p < .05$). Learners' perceptions of language aptitude differed significantly ($F(3, 117) = 3.716$, $p = .013$), with A2-Elementary learners (M = 2.82, SD =.51) rating their aptitude significantly lower than

B2-Upper-Intermediate (M = 3.40, SD =.68) and C1-Advanced learners (M = 3.51, SD = .68). Similarly, anxiety levels varied significantly across proficiency levels (F(3, 117) = 4.453, p = .005), with C1-Advanced learners (M = 2.30, SD =.59) reporting lower anxiety compared to A2-Elementary (M = 3.00, SD =.79) and B1-Intermediate learners (M = 2.93, SD =.84).

Table 3. One-Way ANOVA results on motivational constructs in learning French based on students' proficiency levels.

Motivational constructs	Proficiency levels	N	X	SD	df	F	*p
Intrinsic Motivation	A2-Elementary	17	3.67	.491			
	B1-Intermediate	46	3.61	.530	3	1.243	.297
	B2-Upper-Intermediate	45	3.77	.502			
	C1-Advanced	13	3.47	.790			
Extrinsic Motivation	A2-Elementary	17	3.59	.506			
	B1-Intermediate	46	3.62	.495	3	1.257	.292
	B2-Upper-Intermediate	45	3.81	.549			
	C1-Advanced	13	3.65	.612			
Integrative Motivation	A2-Elementary	17	3.79	.601			
	B1-Intermediate	46	3.80	.699	3	.164	.920
	B2-Upper-Intermediate	45	3.86	.696			
	C1-Advanced	13	3.71	.894			
Interest for foreign language and culture	A2-Elementary	17	3.92	.628			
	B1-Intermediate	46	4.21	.489	3	1.824	.147
	B2-Upper-Intermediate	45	4.26	.451			
	C1-Advanced	13	4.15	.669			
Competitiveness	A2-Elementary	17	2.84	.965			
	B1-Intermediate	46	2.65	1.073	3	.762	.518
	B2-Upper-Intermediate	45	2.93	1.236			
	C1-Advanced	13	2.48	1.085			
Cooperativeness	A2-Elementary	17	3.80	.681	3	1.311	.274
	B1-Intermediate	46	4.00	.574			
	B2-Upper-Intermediate	45	4.08	.598			
	C1-Advanced	13	3.80	.501			
Task-Value	A2-Elementary	17	3.64	.594			
	B1-Intermediate	46	3.76	.719	3	1.040	.378
	B2-Upper-Intermediate	45	3.96	.689			
	C1-Advanced	13	3.82	.812			
Expectancy	A2-Elementary	17	3.45	.516			
	B1-Intermediate	46	3.65	.419	3	1.495	.219
	B2-Upper-Intermediate	45	3.68	.586			
	C1-Advanced	13	3.44	.410			
Language Aptitude	A2-Elementary	17	2.82	.513			
	B1-Intermediate	46	3.21	.716	3	3.716	.013

	B2-Upper-Intermediate	45	3.40	.681			
	C1-Advanced	13	3.51	.680			
Attitude	A2-Elementary	17	3.01	.676			
	B1-Intermediate	46	2.96	.712	3	.833	.478
	B2-Upper-Intermediate	45	3.10	.547			
	C1-Advanced	13	2.81	.556			
Anxiety	A2-Elementary	17	3.00	.793			
	B1-Intermediate	46	2.93	.848	3	4.453	.005
	B2-Upper-Intermediate	45	2.50	.730			
	C1-Advanced	13	2.30	.588			
Movivational Strengths	A2-Elementary	17	3.89	.372			
	B1-Intermediate	46	3.69	.394	3	1.918	.131
	B2-Upper-Intermediate	45	3.73	.534			
	C1-Advanced	13	3.48	.564			

5.2. Quatitative Insights: Multilingual University Students' Motives for Learning French

In regard to participants' specific motivational factors for learning French, the qualitative analysis identified several significant themes and motivations, each playing a distinct role in learning French as an additional language and LOTE. Regarding the question about why they learn French, among extrinsic motivations, social integration emerged as a major theme, with many participants emphasizing the importance of learning French to connect with local communities, build relationships, and feel part of their environment. One participant remarked, "Because it's important for me to communicate when I'm with French-speaking people" (P09), while another shared, "[French helps me] to be able to express myself in a French-speaking environment" (P53). Similarly, employability and career advancement were frequently mentioned, with learners viewing French as a valuable skill to access better job opportunities and excel professionally. A participant highlighted, "I'm doing the master's in European studies because French is important for my future" (P76), while another noted, "The more languages you know the better possibilities you have in your job career" (P88). When viewed from the intrinsic motivation perspective, many participants expressed a deep appreciation for the beauty and elegance of the French language, with one describing it as "it is a beautiful language" (P11) and another highlighting their personal growth, remarking, "To have a deeper knowledge of the whole world and French-speaking realities" (P31). Cultural engagement emerged as another key intrinsic motive, reflecting a desire to connect with the language on a deeper cultural level: "I like to get to know the [French] culture" (P61). Additionally, mastering a new language was also frequently mentioned, highlighting: "I like learning new languages" (P87).

With respect to the (integrative motivations) interactions with French speakers, participants identified several motivational factors evolving around three main themes: ease of interaction, challenges in interaction, and lack of proficiency and confidence. Many participants reported an increasing ease of interaction over time and often linked to practice and immersion. For example, one participant stated, "I can quite easily interact with the francophones even though I'm in the process of learning French. I can understand French speaking people and I test myself when replying to them," (P17). However, challenges in interaction were also frequently mentioned, with participants pointing to difficulties in maintaining conversations or initiating them due to a lack of fluency; "I feel nervous when I speak with francophones because it takes a lot for me to make a sentence" (P99). A lack of proficiency and confidence emerged as a significant barrier to interaction. Many participants described their hesitance to engage with French speakers due to fear of making mistakes or being

judged, remarking; "I can't interact directly and easily with francophones because I hesitate to be judged because of my accent .,." (P81).

Regarding interest in learning other languages and cultures, many participants expressed a deep enthusiasm for learning other languages and often linked this interest to personal fulfillment; "I always want to discover other languages. I love the idea that you can talk to people from other cultures and discover them" (P55). Practical use in everyday life also emerged as a significant motivation, with participants frequently citing work, travel, and integration into communities as key reasons for learning additional languages, noting; "Yes. I believe that learning new languages will allow me to grow as a person and professional" (91). Cultural curiosity further underpinned participants' interest in learning languages. Many responses reflected a desire to understand and engage with diverse cultures, with one participant stating, "because speaking several languages opens up the possibility of getting to know more cultural people" (P103). This theme underscores the role of language as a bridge to cultural exploration and global awareness.

When it comes to the competition and cooperation in learning French, the majority of participants expressed a strong preference for cooperation by emphasizing its effectiveness in enhancing learning, particularly in oral practices and group activities. Learners frequently cited cooperative activities, such as dialogues, group discussions, and presentations, as instrumental in improving speaking skills and building confidence. A participant noted, "Cooperation is important because the study of a foreign language requires communication. For example, you can improve your level of oral production by doing dialogues with other students" (P59). In contrast, competition was less favored, with many participants associating it with stress and discomfort. One participant stated, "No, I think a competitive environment generates more stress and learning" (P109), while another remarked, "No, I don't like [competition]. Learning French is not a competition. All learners have to support each other." (P39). However, a smaller group of participants highlighted the motivational benefits of friendly competition, particularly in structured activities like vocabulary quizzes or speaking challenges, noting; "Yes, I think friendly competition is important for better learning" (P97).

Course materials emerging another important theme were seen as crucial not only for understanding grammar and vocabulary but also for improving pronunciation and cultural awareness. Among the various types of materials, audiovisual resources were the most frequently mentioned. Participants emphasized the effectiveness of videos, films, and audio materials in improving listening skills, pronunciation, and overall comprehension, noting; "Yes, because [course materials] give us a record of what we've already seen and what we'll see next. It's a way of consulting during questions, and ultimately it's useful because people have different ways of learning (visual, auditory, etc.)," (P45), while another participant highlighted, "Audio material is particularly important throughout the learning process. It's the only way to improve pronunciation" (P88). Songs and music were also highlighted as engaging and enjoyable tools for language learning.

With regard to the attitudes of participants towards learning French, the majority expressed positive feelings about learning French, describing the experience as exciting, cool, and motivating. Many participants highlighted the enjoyment of discovering new expressions and cultural nuances, which made learning engaging and rewarding; "I like learning new things so it's exciting and fun. Plus, it's a beautiful language and since I speak Spanish, I can combine or better understand my mother tongue" (P110). However, some participants reported negative or challenging feelings related to the difficulties of learning French. These challenges were often linked to stress, frustration, and fear of making mistakes, particularly in speaking and pronunciation. For instance, one participant stated, "I feel terrible because it is difficult for me, it doesn't resemble to my native language nor English. Grammar, pronunciation, everything is difficult for me" (P78).

For expectancy, the primary motivations for learning French were driven by academic and career-oriented goals, as well as social integration. Many participants highlighted the importance of French for academic success and career advancement and viewed it as a critical skill for securing job opportunities and excelling in professional settings. For example, one participant stated, "I'm learning French because I want to have enough knowledge to find an internship, first, and a job,

second…" (P35), while another remarked, "I'm learning French because it's one of the most widely used official languages in international organizations. I want to work for international organizations in the future" (P97). Social integration also emerged as a prominent theme, with many participants motivated by the desire to connect with local communities and navigate daily life in French-speaking environments, remarking; "I'm also learning [French] because I want to integrate fully into the city and feel comfortable living there" (P102).

Regarding language aptitude, many participants felt competent in grammar, reading comprehension, and listening skills when learning French. These areas were frequently cited as strengths and considered easier to develop compared to speaking or writing. For example, one participant noted, "Grammar and reading comprehension are the easiest for me, [whereas] speaking is the most difficult" (P41). However, about half of the participants identified pronunciation and speaking as their primary challenges. Issues with articulation, minimal pairs, and accents were commonly mentioned as barriers to fluency, noting; "…pronunciation is still a problem because there are minimal pairs that aren't in Spanish, so my ear hasn't completely got used to it yet and it's mainly my oral production that poses problems with articulation, these minimal pairs and my accent" (P64).

For the question which asked whether the participants are anxious or relaxed in learning French, many participants experienced significant anxiety in learning French, particularly during specific activities such as speaking, exams, and real-life interactions. Speaking emerged as the most prominent source of anxiety, often attributed to a lack of confidence, fear of making mistakes, and concerns about being misunderstood. One participant stated, "I am anxious when I have to speak because I lack confidence when I express myself in French" (P07), while another participant commenting, "I am relaxing, but during exam I am anxious I am not confident with my oral speaking" (P26). In contrast, few participants reported feeling relaxed during structured and predictable learning environments, noting; "Now I'm more relaxed because I'm better able to understand it [in French] both orally and in written expression" (P77).

With respect to the intention to put his/her best effort into learning French, most participants expressed a strong intention to continue learning French, driven by professional and career goals, social integration, and personal enrichment. Career advancement was a prominent theme, emphasizing the importance of French for job opportunities and professional fluency "… because knowing French has important consequences in my personal and professional life" (P111), while another remarked, "I will do my master's in France or work there in the future" (P47). Social integration also emerged as a significant motive, highlighting the need to communicate effectively and build relationships in French-speaking communities. One participant shared, "because I want to integrate well into the French-speaking environment" (P99). Additionally, many participants expressed a deep passion for the French language for their personal enrichment, emphasizing; "I want to be fluent and speak like a native" (P85).

6. Discussion

This study investigated the motivations of multilingual university students in learning French as additional language and LOTE within the Belgian context. Regarding the differences in various motivational constructs in learning French (RQ1), the results indicated that multilingual university students are influenced by a range of motivational factors, each contributing meaningfully to their overall motivation. Notably, while various motivational constructs significantly influenced multilingual learners' motivation to learn French as an additional language, the particularly high ratings for interest in foreign languages and cultures, along with cooperativeness, underscore the pivotal role of socially driven dispositions and intrinsic interest in fostering sustained engagement in additional language learning. These findings align with the socio-educational model of language learning, which highlights the significance of collaborative elements and the role of intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Gardner, 2010) in supporting multilingual learners' engagement in additional language and LOTE learning. Although competitiveness and anxiety yielded lower mean scores, their statistical significance indicates that they remain relevant, though less influential, factors

within the broader motivational landscape. These differences in motivational constructs between multilingual learners further support the argument that additional language learning motivation is shaped by diverse personal and contextual factors as well as previous language learning experiences. This result is also consistent with previous findings, which suggest that language learning motivation is dynamic and shaped by learners' linguistic backgrounds, personal goals, and sociocultural contexts (Bui, et al., 2018; Lai, 2023; Siridetkoon & Dewaele, 2018).

In relation to gender differences in motivational constructs (RQ2), we found no statistically significant variations between male and female learners in their motivation to learn French. This result suggests that multilingual male and female French learners exhibit comparable motivational profiles in the context of French language learning as LOTE. This finding also aligns with previous research, which has similarly reported no gender-based difference in language learning motivation (Henry & Cliffordson, 2013; Sylvén & Thompson, 2015; Thompson & Erdil-Moody, 2016).

With regard to the relationship between motivation and language proficiency (RQ2), the present study found that multilingual learners of French shared consistent motivational patterns across a broad range of constructs including intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, interest in languages and culture, integrative motivation, competitiveness, cooperativeness, the value of the language course materials, the belief on doing well or getting high grades, attitudes toward the target language, and overall motivational strengths. These results suggest that motivation to learn French remains relatively stable across different levels of language proficiency. However, significant differences were observed in language aptitude and language learning anxiety, with advanced learners (B2–C1) reporting higher aptitude and lower anxiety than learners at lower proficiency levels (A2–B1) (Table 6). The results also revealed that these differences were particularly pronounced between learners at lower proficiency levels (A2–B1) and those at higher proficiency levels (B2–C1) ($p < .05$). Advanced French learners demonstrated stronger language aptitude and reported significantly lower anxiety levels, suggesting that as learners become more proficient, they develop greater confidence and reduced affective barriers. Previous research supports these findings, indicating that lower levels of anxiety are frequently associated with higher language proficiency and more clearly defined motivational trajectories in multilingual learning contexts (Csizér & Kormos, 2009; Teimouri, et al., 2019). Similarly, studies have also shown that similar differences between learners at lower and higher proficiency levels frequently occur in L2 learning (Lamb, 2012; Kim, 2012; Thompson & Erdil-Moody, 2016).

The findings related to the final research question (RQ3) related to participants' specific motivational factors for learning French, the results valuable insights into the multifaceted motivations and contextual factors shaping multilingual university students' experiences with learning French as an additional language. Career advancement, academic success, and social integration emerged as dominant extrinsic drivers of multilingual university students in learning French. The importance of extrinsic motivation for academic and professional advancement is widely supported in recent multilingualism research (Lamb et al., 2019; Costache et al., 2022). It is also closely associated with the ought-to L2 self, which reflects external influences and expectations from the learner's environment (Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017). Additionally, the finding related to social integration aligns with Gardner's (1985) concept of integrative motivation, which emphasizes learners' desire to connect with and become part of the target language community. The results also indicated that participants were intrinsically motivated by their enjoyment of the aesthetics of the French language. They described a personal interest in French culture, an appreciation for the language's beauty, and a desire for self-development. The results align with SDT, which emphasizes the role of autonomous motivation, where learners engage in language study for reasons of personal interest or inherent satisfaction (Ryan & Deci, 2017; Noels, et al., 2000). Moreover, the participants' aspirations resonate with Dörnyei's concept of the Ideal L2 Self, reflecting a vision of themselves as proficient French speakers and culturally engaged individuals in multilingual context, which serves as a powerful internal motivator in sustaining language learning effort. Furthermore, participants'

desire to explore Francophone culture aligns with Ushioda's (2011) view of motivation as relational and identity-driven, grounded in learners' cultural and personal values.

While some multilingual students reported increased ease and confidence through practice and immersion, others highlighted the challenges of oral communication, particularly due to fear of making mistakes, language accent, etc. These support previous findings that multilingual learners, while often more linguistically flexible, may still face emotional barriers when acquiring an additional language (Dewaele et al., 2008; Thompson & Erdil-Moody, 2016). In addition, anxiety emerged prominently among participants, particularly concerning oral skills, accent, pronunciation, and fear of negative evaluation in learning French. Participants at higher proficiency level described increased confidence and reduced anxiety, aligning with findings by Teimouri et al. (2019) and Thompson and Erdil-Moody (2016), who found that affective factors like anxiety vary significantly across proficiency levels. However, multilingual learners generally had positive attitudes toward learning French, finding it enjoyable and enriching, though less proficient learners experienced frustration and anxiety due to challenges with grammar, pronunciation, and fluency. These findings are also consistent with Dewaele and MacIntyre's (2016) findings, which highlights the coexistence of enjoyment and anxiety in language learning at various levels.

When it comes to learning environments, the findings indicate that almost all participants favored cooperative learning strategies over competition. Cooperative learning activities including group discussions and pair work in in multilingual learning settings were perceived to enhance speaking ability and reduce anxiety. This finding is consistent with previous research (Bećirović, 2023) reflects the 'learning experience' component of Dörnyei's L2MSS (2009), highlighting how cooperative classroom dynamics positively influence motivation by fostering engagement, enhancing speaking confidence, and reducing anxiety. In terms of expectancy, multilingual university students were primarily motivated by the perceived benefits of learning French for future career opportunities, academic advancement, and social integration. These future-oriented goals align with Dörnyei's (2009) L2MSS, which posits that the Ideal L2 Self serves as a powerful driver of additional language and LOTE learning behavior.

The results also highlighted participants' emphasis on the importance of instructional materials, particularly audiovisual content, for enhancing comprehension, pronunciation, and cultural understanding. In terms of goal orientation and effort, most learners reported strong intentions to continue learning French, driven by professional, academic, and social integration goals. This aligns with the Ideal L2 Self, where learners envision themselves as successful language users, and is especially prominent in multilingual individuals (Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017; Thompson & Erdil-Moody, 2016; Henry, 2017). Learners' strong ambitions to use French in their future careers or lives abroad also highlight this internally driven motivational path (Dörnyei, 2009; Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Finally, learners' perceptions of language aptitude varied. Many felt more competent in receptive skills like reading and listening, while speaking and pronunciation were often cited as the most difficult. This supports Saito (2015), who notes that productive oral skills often develop more slowly and are linked to higher anxiety levels. Notably, multilingual learners frequently reported drawing on their prior language learning experiences which is closely consistent with the view of the 'learning experience' in L2MSS (Dörnyei, 2009). This also aligns with the perspectives of Cenoz (2013) and Cummins (2007), who emphasize that multilinguals transfer metalinguistic awareness and strategic learning resources across languages.

7. Conclusions

This study explored the complex and dynamic motivational landscape of multilingual university students learning French as an additional language and LOTE within the Belgian context. The findings reveal that additional language and LOTE learning motivation among multilinguals is multifaceted, shaped by a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic factors, integrative motives, and learning experiences. Learners were found to be motivated not only by extrinsic goals such as academic success, career advancement, but also by intrinsic interests including personal growth,

cultural appreciation, and aesthetic enjoyment of the French language. Additionally, social integration and prior language learning experiences emerged as key motivational factors, highlighting the importance of both relational and experiential influences in shaping multilingual speakers' engagement with French as an additional language. These motivational drivers among the multilingual speakers align with major motivational frameworks, including Gardner's Socio-Educational Model (Gardner, 1985, 2010), Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2017), and Dörnyei's L2MSS (2005, 2009). In addition, the study revealed that multilingual university students demostrated distinct motivational patterns when engaging with French as an additional language and with LOTE. These patterns reflect the complexity of their multilingual identities and are influenced by a blend of personal, emotional, and contextual factors (Cenoz, 2003; Costache et al., 2022; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009). While some motivations are specific to the target language—such as career development, cultural affinity or personal interest in French—others are shaped by broader multilingual experiences of prior language learning (Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017).

8. Practical Implications, Limitations, and Future Directions

This study practically contributes to a broader understanding of the complex relationships among additional language learning, motivation, and multilingual learner, offering pedagogical implications for more inclusive and effective language education in multilingual settings. Given the diverse motivational patterns identified among multilingual learners, educators might offer flexible learning pathways that allow students to pursue their individual interests, such as content-based instruction linking target language learning with relevant themes like art, history, or global issues. Additionally, to foster integrative motivation, educators could create meaningful opportunities for interaction both within and beyond the classroom, thereby enhancing learners' social integration and promoting sustained engagement in additional language and LOTE learning. Moreover, language policies at the university could move beyond monolingual paradigms and embrace the dynamic multilingual identities of students. Policies that support linguistic diversity, value multiple language competencies, and recognize multilingualism as an asset in academic and professional contexts could have a powerful impact on learners' motivation and engagement.

While this study provides significant insights, it also presents certain limitations. It primarily relied on self-reported data, which may have been influenced by subjective perceptions or social desirability effects. Future research could incorporate longitudinal and experimental methodologies to more robustly investigate motivational dynamics over time. Additionally, further studies among multilingual learners in various linguistic and educational contexts would enrich our understanding of motivational interrelationships and their implications across diverse learner populations. It is also important to note that this research included multilingual learners across all proficiency levels, without a specific focus on one. Future research could explore and compare various experiences and motivational profiles of learners at specific proficiency levels within multilingual contexts.

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