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Department of Education, University of Oxford

How MFL subjects are perceived by international school pupils in Italy

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Abstract

This school-based study used mixed methods to investigate pupil perceptions of Modern Foreign Language (MFL) subjects. These were widely defined so as to include the language of societal context, Italian. The focus was on perceived enjoyment and importance of the subjects, as well as overall linguistic self-concept in the form of pupils' self-rating as 'good at languages.' The school was an English medium British international school in Italy and the *N*=158 participants were in Key Stage 3.

The study was conducted in two stages, with a short questionnaire being administered in the first stage. Follow-up group interviews were then held with 46 pupils, who were invited due to their language backgrounds and/or a particularly high or low self-rating.

Perceptions of mandatory Italian lessons were compared, using both quantitative and qualitative analysis, to perceptions of pupil-selected 'second' MFL lessons. Particular focus was placed on comparing perceptions by pupil language background (monolingual, bilingual and multilingual as well as whether Italian was spoken at home). In addition, the data were analysed by MFL subject choice.

No statistical effects were found in respect of either enjoyment of importance ratings for (non-Italian) MFL subjects. However, statistically significant effects were found for Italian as a subject, whereby those who speak Italian at home rated it more enjoyable and important as a school subject. In addition, speaking Italian at home and having a multilingual home language background both correlated positively with overall linguistic self-concept.

Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) of the group interview data showed qualitative differences between the interest and enjoyment of the MFL subjects by language background.

It is suggested that, in some international contexts, proficiency in the language of society may be of greater salience in deciding overall linguistic self-concept than proficiency in (multiple) other languages, even if the language of society is not used much in daily life.

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Of course, the project could not have taken place were it not for the pupils, teachers and managers at the focus school. Their cooperation, openness and positivity made the research possible, and the pupils were an absolute joy to interview. It was a pleasure to listen to their stories.

I would never have begun this Masters, after so long away from university, were it not for my parents' belief in me and in lifelong learning. They have shown me that it is never too late to begin a course of study or take up something new, as well as the importance of persistence and optimism. My sister's experience in academia inspired and challenged me, too. I always really appreciate her wise advice and listening ear.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
BAILLI	Beliefs about Language Inventory (Horwitz, 1988)
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference
CUREC	Central University Research Ethics Committee
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
FLE	Foreign Language Enjoyment
FLES	Foreign Language Enjoyment Scale (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014)
IB	International Baccalaureate
IGCSE	International General Certificate of Secondary Education
KS3	Key Stage 3
LOTE	Language other than English
L1	First Language
L2	Second language
L2MSS	L2 Motivational Self-System (Dörnyei, 2005)
L2+	Second or subsequent language
L3	Third language
MFL	Modern Foreign Language
PIN	Personal Identification Number
S-FLES	Short form of the Foreign Language Enjoyment Scale (Botes et al., 2021)
SILL	Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (Oxford, 1990)
SLA	Second language Acquisition

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter will give a brief overview of the background to this study, and justification for it. Then, the methodological approach and research questions will be presented. Finally, there will be an explanation of the organisation of the chapters to follow.

1.1 Background

International schools are part of a growing educational sector and offer interesting contexts for Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Many such schools prioritise language learning as both a required component of the International Baccalaureate (IB) qualification taken at the end of secondary education, and as a key component in 'international mindedness' (Hayden et al., 2000). In addition, many international schools cater for a diverse, multinational and multilingual pupil population, although this is certainly not always the case (Hill, 2000).

Despite the 349% growth in the number of international schools from 2000 – 2020, to over 11,000 (ISC, 2021), and the interesting conditions mentioned above, there is relatively little published research from international schools in general (Schippling, 2018). Specifically, there is a lack of studies into language learning in contexts where the language of society is taught alongside other Modern Foreign Language (MFL) subjects. Similarly, there is a bias towards research into learning English, as opposed to other foreign languages, and very little comparing attitudes towards different languages learned as a second or subsequent language (L2+) where English is not part of the comparison. It will be argued that the particular status of English as a global language and *lingua franca* renders it a special case, and means that further exploration is warranted of the factors affecting learning of languages other than English (LOTEs).

Prioritisation of language learning in international schools may not, of itself, promote effective SLA. Against a background of growing interest in positive psychology, Foreign Language Enjoyment (FLE) is gaining ground as an important factor in SLA research (Dewaele and Proietti Ergün, 2020) and it has been shown to partially mediate between motivation and proficiency (Zhang, 2020). In order for this to be harnessed as a positive influence on L2+ learning, more research is required. There is some evidence that multilingualism correlates positively with FLE (De Smet et al., 2018, but compare Costley et al., 2020). However, more attention should be paid to this in contexts where the majority of learners are multilingual. Additionally, it is not known how the status of an L2+ in international school communities, as the language of wider society, might affect perceived importance or enjoyment of that language.

1.2 This study: Aims and research questions

This study will address the relative lack of published research into L2+ learning in international school contexts, the effects of the host country context on learning its language and also of comparative research into learning LOTEs. The study will aim to investigate feelings about language learning among Key Stage 3 (KS3, aged 11-14) pupils at one British international

school in Italy, where pupils have compulsory Italian lessons as well as choosing another MFL[1] subject. It will ask whether multilingualism affects pupils' linguistic self-concept and perceptions of language learning, including enjoyment of - and the importance attributed to - these subjects. In investigating such perceptions, potential differences between the language of societal context (Italian) and other MFL subjects will be examined. In addition, the MFL subjects selected, and home language background will be considered. The results may assist in improving pupils' enjoyment of MFL and Italian lessons in the focus school of the present study by clarifying their current feelings.

A mixed methods design will be used, employing both a questionnaire and group interviews and allowing the nature of the pupils' feelings to be explored in greater depth than a questionnaire alone would permit.

The following Research Questions will be addressed:

1a. What do KS3 pupils at international school think of language learning, of their compulsory Italian lessons and their MFL lessons (selected from four)?

1b. Do their feelings correlate with their language backgrounds?

1c. Do their feelings correlate with their MFL choice?

1d. Do their feelings correlate with their self-proficiency rating?

2a. What do they enjoy, or otherwise, about their language lessons?

2b. How do the reasons for their enjoyment and importance ratings differ between language background groups?

1.3 Chapter organisation

Chapter 2 will consist of a review of the literature relating to L2 motivation, with particular reference to the relationship between affective factors, such as FLE, and L2 motivation. It will also discuss research conducted on learning a third language (L3) or comparing learning experiences of different L2+ languages. **Chapter 3** will set out the Methodology used in the study in detail. **Chapter 4** will discuss the results, both qualitative and quantitative, of the questionnaire and group interviews, with thematic presentation of the qualitative data. **Chapter 5,**

[1] MFL in the dissertation title is defined widely, to include Italian as an L2+, or even as L1. In the rest of the dissertation, Italian is treated separately from, and contrasted with, the pupils' selected MFL subjects.

the Discussion, will situate the results within the existing field of research and draw upon various themes emerging from the results. Finally, **Chapter 6** will provide a Conclusion to the study, including pedagogical implications and suggested future research.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This chapter will explain the development trajectory of research concerning the relationship between affective factors and motivation in L2 learning. Particular focus will be placed on the effect of multilingualism, on an international educational context and on languages other than English (LOTE). The chapter will, therefore, provide a background for the present study, which examines the differences in FLE and perceived importance between two LOTEs: Italian and

another selected by the pupil. In order to situate the study in the context of international education, this review will also discuss the international school context, its aims and values.

2.1 A brief history of L2 motivation

Motivation to learn languages and the success or failure of learning are closely linked (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). This relationship has been the subject of a long tradition of research as psychologists and linguists have investigated the possible optimisation of language learning. This section will explain the history of motivation theory and how self-concept relates to motivation.

2.1.1 Early formulations of motivation

The nature of learner motivation can be categorised in several different ways. In their Self-Determination Theory, Deci and Ryan (1985), distinguished intrinsic from extrinsic motivation, where the former could be defined as "doing an activity for its inherent satisfactions rather than for some separable consequence" (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 56). Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, relates to activities being done "in order to attain some separable outcome" (ibid., p. 60). An alternative distinction, between instrumental and integrative motivation, was drawn by Gardner (1985). Instrumental motivation was defined as relating to utility and necessity, while integrative motivation is primarily driven by the desire to become part of a linguistic community. Linguistic communities were conceived of as groups of people speaking the same language and usually sharing some cultural background and specific to a geographical location. Therefore, integrative motivation can be seen as culturally and socially driven.

However, Gardner's 'integrativeness' concept is less clearly relevant in situations where a linguistic 'community' is geographically and culturally diverse. It made less sense to think of learners wanting to become part of a language user community in a monocultural, geographically-specific sense if they were learners of English as a global or international language, for example. As a result, the conception of a language user community had to evolve to include an international or global English speaking 'community' (Dörnyei, 2009) and Gardner's definition of integrativeness became less popular as a result of other formulations fitting better with these changes. For example, Yashima (2000) was one of those who developed a different way to describe the new internationalism: 'international posture' represented openness to going overseas or working with those from other cultures. Recent studies continue to reference Gardner's framework, however (see Zhang et al., 2020; Dewaele & Proietti Ergün, 2020, both discussed below).

2.1.2 Dörnyei's Dynamic L2 Motivational Self-System (L2MSS)

In 2005, Dörnyei published an alternative motivational framework, which moved away from Gardner's dichotomy of instrumentality-integrativeness. Dörnyei's L2MSS proposed that a learner is motivated by both an ideal version of their future self as a user of their L2 (the Ideal L2 Self), and by the knowledge of what they ought to do in order to be a good language learner (the Ought-to self). A third aspect of the L2MSS identified by Dörnyei was the L2 learning experience.

In the ten years following publication of the L2MSS, there was a surge of research output into motivation and L2 learning (Boo et al., 2015). Boo et al.'s (2015) review of this body of research-meant to identify trends within it from 2005-2014, showed the L2MSS had become the most popular motivational framework in SLA, with a great increase in papers exclusively using the L2MSS between 2011-2012 and 2013-2014 (six to 26). Additionally, 41 of the 52 mixed framework papers over the whole period included it. However, 30 of the mixed framework papers drew on Gardner's integrative/instrumental conception, showing its continued relevance.

Since 2005, the relative importance of the different facets of the L2MSS has been further investigated, alongside factors that influence them and that they influence. In doing so, researchers have usually used Likert scales in Motivational Factors Questionnaires to measure different motivational factors (e.g. Taguchi et al., 2009). Structural Equation Modelling has been used to establish the relationships between the different aspects; for example, future L2 selves are derived from, so influenced by, actual learning experiences (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). Wang and Liu (2017) found that target language and culture exposure affected visualisation of future L2 use significantly. Future L2 selves also mediate the language learning experience (Taguchi, 2009; Erikson, 2007), meaning Ideal L2 selves and language learning experience are mutually influential. This can only happen, however, if the L2 self is seen as achievable (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015).

The Ought-to self may be even more important than the Ideal self. Papi and Abdollazadeh (2012) found that it was a difference in the strength of their Ought-to selves that distinguished the high-motivation secondary school English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in their study from the low-motivation group, rather than the strength of their Ideal L2 selves. It proved to be the low-motivation group that had stronger Ought-to selves, which might be an indication that they saw EFL learning as a chore and that attitude is just as important as Ideal L2 self. Dörnyei and Chan (2013) also found that Ought-to selves did not, in themselves, provide an impulse to take action and that the impetus to do so must come from elsewhere.

2.1.3 L2MSS and LOTEs

Over 70% of the L2 motivation studies reviewed in Boo et al. (2015) related to English. This is in addition to a bias towards research concerning monolingual learners of a single L2 (Henry, 2017). As pointed out by Dörnyei and Al-Hoorie (2017), this emphasis does a disservice to LOTEs when there may be important differences between motivational constructs when learning any other language (or multiple languages at once) as opposed to English.

For example, Dörnyei and Al-Hoorie (2017) posit that learners of LOTEs must have various, highly personalised, Ought-to selves, perhaps encompassing more variety between individuals than Ought-to selves related to learning English. Henry (2015) explains that there may be a 'working self-concept' (p. 90) for language learning - a position which different linguistic self-concepts must compete to occupy, as only one can be active at a particular time. Similarly, Dörnyei and Chan (2013) propose that different languages being learned would have different self-images, but that these images can affect one another.

As well as having proposed a single 'working self-concept', Henry (2017) suggested the idea of an ideal multilingual self in learners of multiple languages, encompassing their desire and ambition to become multilingual. This could be useful in certain contexts and may be found to be particularly prevalent in contexts where many people are already multilingual. However, given the careful distinctions between different languages drawn by Dörnyei and Al-Hoorie (2017) and Dörnyei and Chan (2013), care must be taken not to ignore any variations between a learner's different language learning experiences and ambitions in relation to different L2+ languages. Ignoring these distinctions may lead to erasure of potential complexities involved in learning more than one L2+ and/ or LOTEs. There is particular evidence that this would be true where English is one of the L2+ languages concerned (see Busse, 2017; Csizér & Lukács, 2010).

2.2 Affective Factors in Language Learning

A simple way in which the experiences of learners across different languages can vary is in affect. Affect in education is a learner's "emotional or feeling responses to an object of experience" (Wight, 1972). Although affective factors were separated from motivation somewhat during its cognitive turn (ibid.; Al-Hoorie, 2017), regret for this has been expressed by commentators such as Dörnyei and Ryan (2015) and Al-Hoorie (2017). These commentators believe that more attention should be paid to emotions in SLA and their impact on language motivation.

As well as emotions, of which Foreign Language Enjoyment (FLE) is a prominent example, affective factors include beliefs and attitudes. Learner beliefs have been defined as "the learners' value judgements regarding learning situations" (Yashima et al., 2017, p. 692). By contrast, Yashima et al. saw attitudes as transient and more context-specific (ibid., p. 692).

2.2.2 Attitudes and the learning process.

According to Gardner's socio-educational model (1985), attitudes towards the L2, towards the learning situation and towards the L2 community are all key components of L2 motivation (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993). Dörnyei's L2MSS (2005) also features attitudes, and researchers such as Taguchi et al. (2009) have shown that attitudes towards the L2 culture and community feed into the Ideal L2 self, which in turn has an impact on attitudes to learning the L2.

An example of this is the work done by Platsidou and Kantaridou (2014). Their study measured the perceived importance of learning English as a foreign language and the enjoyment students reported, using these together as a measure of attitudes to language learning. The researchers found that both importance and enjoyment correlated with perceived proficiency (r=.36, p= <.05; r =.22, p=<.05 respectively), though their indirect predictive strength was weak and they more directly predicted strategy use.

By contrast, Wong and Nunan (2011) found no evidence of a difference in the perceived importance of English between effective and ineffective learners. They did, however, find that the effective learners enjoyed learning more by a highly statistically significant margin (on chi-square, *d.f.*: 2; chi-square=30.405; p<.001) and also rated themselves as more proficient. This indicates that positive affective factors correlate with positive self-concept and effectiveness in learning the L2.

More specific dispositions have proved useful in some studies. Platsidou et al. (2017) constructed the term 'international orientation', which was said to cover the positive predisposition towards other cultures that is shared by both international posture (Yashima, 2009) and Dörnyei's (2005) Ideal L2 self (Platsidou et al., 2017, p. 158). The researchers found 'international orientation' to partially mediate attitudes to language learning. However, their measurement of enjoyment used a yes/no question and perceived importance was gauged on only a three-point scale, meaning the results were not particularly nuanced. In addition, this study, Platsidou and Kantaridou (2014) and Wong and Nunan (2011) all concerned the learning of English.

2.2.4 Positive psychology, Broaden-and-Build and Foreign Language Enjoyment (FLE)

Within the study of affective factors, positive psychology has attracted growing interest in SLA over the last ten years (Dewaele & Proietti Ergün, 2020). An early proponent of this movement was Fredrickson (1998; 2001), whose Broaden-and-Build Theory posits that positive emotions in learning help the learner to connect their thoughts to their actions, providing a foundation for further learning. This is possible because being in a safe state of reduced threat allows people to focus on long-term plans, which improves the ability to see situations from a wider perspective and this, in turn, hones coping skills (Cohn & Fredrickson, 2006).

Oxford has been a particularly influential commentator in this area of study and has used the acronym EMPATHICS (2016) to list the factors that influence language learning:

> (a) emotion and empathy, (b) meaning and motivation, (c) perseverance, (d) agency and autonomy, (e) time, (f) hardiness and habits of mind, (g) intelligences, (h) character strengths, and (i) the self factors of self-efficacy, self-concept, self-esteem and self-verification (p. 71).

Foreign Language Enjoyment (FLE) is one of the positive academic emotions (Dewaele et al., 2019) that Oxford would include in 'emotion and empathy,' and it has attracted particular attention in SLA research over the past few years. FLE has been described as more fleeting (Dewaele & Proietti Ergün, 2020, p. 54) than attitudes and motivation, although emotions can be more stable in some individuals than in others (see Pavelescu and Petrić, 2018).

2.2.4.1 FLE, love and perseverance/grit.

Positive emotions are of interest to researchers because they are thought to have a beneficial impact on outcomes, perhaps due to a moderating factor such as perseverance. Stronger emotions may have stronger effects, as shown by Pavelescu and Petrić's (2018) case studies in Romania. The adolescent subjects who showed feelings of love for learning an L2, as opposed to simply expressing enjoyment of it, had the necessary emotional resources to allow them to persist through less enjoyable periods of study. They were also apparently motivated to be more proactive in their study - inside and outside of the classroom - than those who 'only' enjoyed their language learning.

When perseverance is combined with what Oxford (2016) terms 'hardiness and habits of mind', the result can also be called 'grit'. Grit is comprised of persistence and long-term consistency of

interests (or goals) according to Duckworth et al. (2007). Lake (2015) found that grit in SLA correlates strongly with sustained effort in language learning. The development of grit, with its long-term consistency facet, is aided by positive emotions such as FLE (see Pavelescu & Petrić, 2018, above, and Dewaele et al., 2019). There is also evidence that grit can have a reciprocal predictive effect on FLE (Wei et al., 2019), though it should be noted that this study relied on pupils' self-reporting of behaviours associated with grit.

2.2.4.2 FLE and motivation

Addressing the lack of studies into L3 learning, Zhang et al. (2020) examined the relationship between motivation (using Gardner's integrative-instrumental framework) and proficiency in L3 learners at university in China. The researchers point out that the motivation of the participants to study their major, English, may differ from that of their compulsory second foreign language, which is selected from a variety. Zhang et al. (2020) hypothesised that instrumental motivation of participants may be particularly relevant for the L3 because the variation in choice of L3 may increase their employability. By contrast, English is widely spoken in comparison to other foreign languages in China, so makes learners less distinctive in their skillset. They also found that FLE partially mediated between both integrative and instrumental motivation and proficiency in the L3 and that FLE positively influences self-rated proficiency (regression coefficient =0.29, p=<.01).

2.2.4.3 FLE in different L2+ languages

Despite Henry's (2017) advocacy for an ideal multilingual self, it should not be ignored that different languages are learned in different contexts and, in the case of classroom learning, with different teachers. There is therefore a case for investigating how FLE differs across different L2+s. Dewaele and Proietti Ergün (2020) looked at differences between foreign languages in a secondary school immersion context in Turkey. Pupils' FLE, attitudes, motivation (using Gardner's 1985 model) and course marks in their immersion L2 (Italian) were compared to those of their L3 (English). Their findings support a view of English as different to other L2+ subjects because attitudes were a much weaker predictor of marks in English than in Italian, indicating the possibility that English is seen as a necessity. This is noted by the authors, who acknowledge the social pressure to learn English in Turkey (p. 48). It was found that FLE correlated positively between languages, and attitudes (combined with motivation) correlated positively with FLE in both languages, but that FLE did not correlate strongly with course marks. This study would benefit from a follow-up in which the influence of English was separable.

2.2.5 Learner agency

Another of Oxford's (2016) EMPATHICS factors is 'agency and autonomy.' Agency can be thought of as "optimising the conditions for one's own learning" (Larsen-Freeman, 2019, p. 61). Larsen-Freeman (2019) believes that, despite agency being relative to a learner's material situation, individuals can still take different 'orientations' towards it (ibid., p. 61). This indicates that she sees agency as encompassing agentive behaviours and not only as being the belief that one has the capacity to act. As such, agency may provide a link between motivation and the application of strategies, or between knowledge of what should be done and actually doing it. Without this link, there may be frustration.

2.2.6 Self-concept and self-proficiency

In addition to agency, another set of factors pertinent to motivation in language learning are the 'self-factors' mentioned by Oxford (2016), and self-concept in particular. Self-concept is defined by Rubio (2014) as the "perceived entity that is evaluated" (ibid., p. 42), or the result of a judgement of oneself. Rubio split self-concept into a "sense of competence and […] sense of worthiness" (ibid., p. 43) and made it clear that he sees self-concept as domain-specific, and as subject to influences such as both education and the immediate context.

Motivation depends on the way a learner perceives themselves: in the L2MSS, the Ideal L2 self must be considered an attainable goal. Therefore, anything affecting a learner's self-concept may affect their motivation. Mercer (2011) listed such factors as including both internal factors: belief systems, affective reactions and internal comparisons with other domains, and external factors: comparison with peers and others, previous language experiences, perceived experiences of success and failure (ibid., p. 440).

Hashimoto (2002) found that self-concept, in terms of competence, affects motivation directly and in Chao et al. (2019), the researchers found evidence that different linguistic self-concepts correlate differently with different domains of achievement: among bilingual learners of English and Chinese, the Chinese self-concept correlated moderately with achievement in Chinese (r =0.39, p=<.001) and predicted achievement in Chinese (β =0.20, p=<.001), while the English self-concept predicted both achievement in English (β=0.46, p=<.001) and in Chinese. Chao et al. (2019) propose that English self-concept may function heuristically, which is another reason for it to be excluded from, or consciously included in, language learning studies.

2.2.7 Mindsets

Closely related to the concept of agency, and relevant to self-concept, are 'mindsets.' These are a type of specific belief about learning ability and were originally conceived by Dweck (2006) in general educational psychology. Dweck proposed that learners had either a fixed mindset, whereby they believed their own ability to be set at a particular level, or a growth mindset, whereby they saw their own ability (and that of others) to be susceptible to change. Having a growth mindset, therefore, allows people to envision becoming better at learning a particular skill or area of knowledge through extra effort and practice. This gives those learners agency in the sense of an awareness that their behaviour can affect their learning and that their self-concept could be improved.

2.2.7.1 L2 Mindsets

Ryan and Mercer (2012) adapted Dweck's conception of mindsets and applied it to second language learning (SLA). They saw that language learners often believed in an innate ability that allowed some people to learn languages more easily, which they equated to a fixed mindset for language learning.

Learner mindsets should not, however, be thought of as dichotomous. Instead, Mercer and Ryan (2009) found them to exist on a continuum, with most participants in their study falling somewhere between a 'growth' and 'fixed' mindset. The significance of mindsets to learning is that those with fixed mindsets are less likely to put in effort to learn an L2 (Lou & Noels, 2016). Participants thought effort was not as important as talent or natural ability. This belief can, clearly, affect learner agency. Furthermore, fixed mindsets have been related to anxiety, fear of failure and consequent fear of communication in an L2 (Lou & Noels, 2019).

2.3 International education

The present study concerns a British International School in a large Italian city. International education is a huge and growing sector, which has seen a 518% growth in student numbers between 2000 and 2020 (ISC, 2021). The decision of parents to send their children to a bilingual or immersion school demonstrates an investment in foreign language learning on the part of parents, carers and families (Dewaele & Proietti Ergün, 2020). This, together with the multilingual profile and international orientation of many pupil families distinguishes some international schools from non-international schools. However, this is not always true: Hill (2000) was careful to explain that internationalism does not necessarily flow from geographical location alone. He argued that many schools that profess to be 'international' do not in fact embody a

philosophy or practice of internationalism. Of course, English medium internationals schools are popular with English L1 expat families, some of whom may simply seek the continuation of a particular curriculum rather than a particularly multilingual school environment. Interestingly, Belal (2017) found that in developing 'international mindedness' as part of the IB, senior management in international schools may consider the diversity of the student body to be of greater importance than interaction with the local community in which the school is based.

Hill's (2000) comments prompt consideration of whether and how international education differs from a non-international education. Investigating this question, Hayden et al. (2000) conducted an extensive set of studies spanning 28 countries. Questionnaires, which were given to teachers and 18-year-old pupils at the end of their secondary education, asked what constitutes 'international mindedness. The most important feature of international mindedness was found to be open-mindedness, with second language competence coming second. Pupils did not agree that being international necessitated having parents who were of different nationalities (M =3.93 on a Likert scale of 1-5, where 1 was 'strongly agree' and 5 was 'strongly disagree'). However, the use of the wording 'it is necessary that...' may have led to an under-emphasis of multinationalism in the reported results.

The concept of international mindedness clearly relates to Platsidou et al.'s (2017) concept of an international orientation, discussed above. Platsidou et al. (2017) used this conception in measuring perceptions of enjoyment and importance with regard to strategy use in language learning. The study found that pupils who reported high levels of importance and enjoyment in respect of EFL learning showed higher levels of openness to other cultures and also developed a stronger Ideal L2 self. Interestingly, perceived importance positively affected strategy use much more than did perceived enjoyment. The authors hypothesise that this may mean that extrinsic motivation was more important than intrinsic motivation to their young adolescent participants.

2.4 Factors in perceptions and attitudes towards language learning

2.4.1 International pupils' attitudes towards languages and Languages Other Than English (LOTE)

With the professed importance of second language competence discussed above, it might be assumed that international school pupils have positive dispositions towards learning languages.

However, there is little published research in this area, particularly concerning languages other than English (LOTE).

European adolescent learners tend to be positive about learning English as a foreign language (Taylor & Busse, 2016) and similar findings have been reported in a study from Ethiopia where English is taught as a second language (Getie, 2020). However, English as an L2+ seems to take precedence when pitted against another foreign language because of its perceived relative importance (Busse, 2017; Csizér & Lukács, 2010, both of which are European studies). Dörnyei and Al-Hoorie (2017) have stated that the motivation to learn English should be distinguished from that towards learning LOTE due to the powerful status of English; in fact, Al-Hoorie (2018) contends that "learning English...hardly needs a justification" (p. 735).

The importance of the context in which a study was conducted cannot be ignored. An illustration of this is the research done by De Smet et al. (2018) in French-speaking Belgium, comparing the attitudes and FLE of pupils studying Dutch and English. The results showed that attitudes and FLE relating to English were much more favourable in comparison to those relating to Dutch, but the specific context involved a difficult relationship between the Dutch- and French-speaking communities that may have negatively affected perceptions of Dutch.

2.4.1.1 Bilingualism and multilingualism

In an international education context, it is common for many people to be bilingual or multilingual. Some attention has been paid to the effect that multilingualism might have on language learning, although much of the research focuses on learning English. In the last few years, however, attention has turned to the effects on other languages. De Smet et al. (2018) found an effect on FLE associated with multilingualism, whereby there was significantly higher FLE among 'bilinguals' than 'monolinguals' (F=8.96, p=.003). However, learners may not be conscious of this. For example, only 0.3% of the respondents in Busse (2017) mentioned their own bilingual background as a factor influencing their attitudes towards learning English and LOTEs, while beliefs about their ability were mentioned by 17%. These pupils were not learning within international communities, however.

Conversely, no significant difference was apparent in the attitudes of the monolingual and 'EAL' (English as an Additional Language) multilingual groups in Costley et al. (2020). This study investigated French as a foreign language in one class at a single UK primary school and the researchers proposed that the pupils' young age (8-9 years) may have contributed to their universally positive disposition towards French. Interestingly, the multilingual pupils did not list

French among the languages they knew, but the 'monolingual' pupils did. As Costley et al. (ibid.) posit (p. 652), this could indicate a greater understanding of a language learning journey among the multilingual pupils.

2.4.2 Learning environment and teacher effects

Context, in terms of learning environment, is universally considered as influential on motivation; even Gardner (1985) acknowledged the role played in L2 motivation by "attitude towards the learning situation." This is widely defined and includes factors such as evaluation of the teacher and evaluation of the course (ibid.). Dörnyei's L2MSS (2005) lists the L2 learning experience, including teacher and class effects, as one of its three influences on motivation.

In synthesising research into teacher effects, Lamb (2017) found strong evidence that teachers can have a positive or negative impact on motivation. Fitting with Lamb (2017), Busse's work from the same year found 30% of adolescent respondents chose to mention teachers as having influenced their attitudes towards an MFL. Students from each of the four countries in the study mentioned the stresses of learning a foreign language, and that a good relationship with a teacher can contribute to a positive attitude to it. Students were complimentary about teachers 'caring' for their learning or being more 'interested in them' than other teachers.

More recently, Dewaele and MacIntyre (2019) found that, in an international study spanning a variety of countries, teachers were mentioned in connection with FLE by nearly half of learners (46%). A China specific follow-up study by Jiang and Dewaele (2019) found similar patterns of teacher influence on FLE. However, as the respondents in Dewaele and MacIntyre (2019) were adults with a mean age of 26, it is arguable that those who did not like their teacher had perhaps already stopped taking the classes.

2.5 Conclusion

2.5.1 Summary

It has been shown that learner attitudes have long been understood to affect L2 motivation. More recently, affective factors, such as FLE, agency and mindsets, have rightly attracted growing attention from SLA researchers such as Oxford (e.g. 2016) within a positive psychology movement. Such affective factors, therefore, warrant further exploration in international multilingual contexts and with regard to LOTEs, which have been subject to fewer studies than English language learning and 'monolingual' language learners (Henry, 2017).

A second strand of research has explored the context of international education and the role of language learning as it relates to international-mindedness. The importance of learning environments has been introduced, as well as the way teachers can affect motivation and pupil attitudes to language learning. International education, with a focus on international-mindedness, might be imagined to provide a particularly favourable learning environment for SLA. However, most existing studies concern at least a comparison with learning English (e.g. Dewaele & Proietti Ergün, 2020), or relate to tertiary education. Concerns have been expressed in this review about the measures used in some studies, such as overly strong wording in questionnaire Likert scales (Hayden et al., 2000), and a reliance on self-reporting of classroom behaviours such as those relating to grit (Wei et al., 2019). Some promising research on FLE and motivation is very small in scale (Pavelescu and Petrić, 2018), so further investigation of its findings in other contexts would be beneficial. A final message is that the research context is of utmost importance, as shown by De Smet et al. (2018) and by the influence of the potential job market in Zhang et al. (2020).

2.5.2 Literature gap

There is very little published research on the effect of multilingualism on language learning when English is taken out of the equation (Boo et al., 2015; Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017), or indeed, where the learners are living in international communities. The power and status of English as an international language and *lingua franca* can attract L2+ learners, to the disadvantage of LOTEs (Busse, 2017). Therefore, it may be helpful to examine LOTEs separately from, and without the distraction of, English. There is also little published work on the interaction between language background, L2 learning environment and self-concept or motivation, although it has been seen that educational affect is important to both the L2MSS and Gardner's integrative-instrumental model. In validation, FLE has been shown to play a mediating role between motivation and performance (Zhang et al., 2020) and to correlate with perceived proficiency (Platsidou & Kantaridou, 2014). However, it is unclear how secondary pupil perceptions of MFL learning might vary in an international school environment, or among multilingual pupils, and how this might be changed for the better to maximise motivation by capitalising on advances in positive psychology.

2.5.3 This study

This study aims to find out about pupil perceptions of language learning among 11–14-year-olds at one English-medium British international school in Italy. The focus will be on their Italian and other Modern Foreign Language (MFL) learning and will compare their feelings, in terms of their enjoyment and perceptions of importance of the subjects, by language background and MFL subject choice. It will investigate whether multilingualism and home language profile correlate with these feelings and examine the nature of the pupils' enjoyment or otherwise. Feelings about the language of societal context will be compared with those relating to the other MFL subject studied by pupils to establish if, and how, they are perceived differently.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter will contain an overview of the aims of the present study, followed by the research questions. Next, there will be a description of the design, the context and the participants. The

instruments and procedure used will be detailed and the plan for analysis explained. Finally, the relevant ethical considerations will be discussed.

3.1 Research Aim

The aim of this study is to find out how adolescents in an international school setting feel about their Italian and other MFL lessons, at least one of which is an L2+. It will investigate whether these feelings differ depending on the pupils' own language background, whether the language is compulsory/the language of the wider school context (as Italian is in the setting concerned), and whether it depends on their choice of additional MFL.

3.2 Research Questions

To this end, the following research questions were selected:

1a. What do KS3 pupils at international school think of language learning, of their compulsory Italian lessons and their MFL lessons (selected from four)?
1b. Do their feelings correlate with their language backgrounds?
1c. Do their feelings correlate with their MFL choice?
1d. Do their feelings correlate with their self-proficiency rating?

2a. What do they enjoy, or otherwise, about their language lessons?
2b. How do the reasons for their enjoyment and importance ratings differ between language background groups?

3.3 Design

This study used a cross-sectional and context-situated concurrent Quan + Qual mixed methods design. Mixed methods were used for complementarity (clarification) and expansion (Greene et al., 1989) to clarify - and widen the range of - data that could be gathered. A questionnaire collected both quantitative and qualitative data. Semi-structured interviews allowed more detailed exploration of the research questions, as well as permitting the flexibility to raise new issues or lines of questioning (Rolland et al., 2019). The interviews were conducted in English, which is the language of instruction in the school, and no pupils were below B1 level on the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference) according to termly proficiency testing.

3.4 Setting of the Study

The focus school in this study is a British international school, which caters for pupils aged 3-18, in a large Italian city. The medium of instruction is English, but pupils learn Italian as a first, second or subsequent language throughout the school, starting in Year 1. In Year 7, pupils have a term of a languages carousel where they have a series of taster lesson blocks lasting four weeks per MFL option subject. Following this, they decide which MFL subject to study for the rest of KS3. The options are: French (the most popular), German, Chinese and Latin (although not an MFL subject, it is part of the carousel and then offered as an alternative to the others. Because of this, it is included in the term 'MFL' in this dissertation).

Italian lessons are taken in selective sets to cater for beginners entering each year group. 'Intermediate' and advanced sets often include both first language and second language pupils and, so, may mix pupils who do and do not speak Italian at home. Other MFL lessons are not taught in proficiency sets.

These pupils attend a private international school, so have relatively privileged socio-economic backgrounds even in the cases where parental employers pay the school fees. A significant proportion (35-40%[1]) of parent families have at least one member who works for an international inter-governmental organisation, or embassy.

3.5 Participants

All of the Year 7, 8 and 9 pupils (aged 11-14) at the focus school were asked to participate in the questionnaire stage, through emails to their parents and guardians. Five parents opted out on behalf of their children and, of the remaining pupils, twelve opted out themselves and several did not hand in their questionnaires. Questionnaire respondents were, therefore, *N*=158 pupils, which represents 79% of the Key Stage 3 pupils. Of these, there were 48 Year 7s, 51 Year 8s, and 59 Year 9s (see Table 3.1).

Group interview participants were *n*= 46 pupils in total, of which there were 19 Year 7s, 16 Year 8s and 11 Year 9s. Interviewees were selected by convenience from those who met particular characteristics based on their questionnaire responses. These characteristics were either self-ratings (low: 1 or 2; or high: 9 or 10) or by language background, allowing a cross-section of pupils with a variety of language backgrounds to be interviewed (see Appendix II).

Despite the breakdown by year group, age has not been surveyed and year group or age effects are not examined in this study. Ethnicity, nationality and gender were not recorded on the questionnaire, as these factors are not within the scope of the study.

Table 3.1

Self-declared home languages of questionnaire respondents

Home languages	**From Year 7** (percentage of Y7 respondents)	**From Year 8** (percentage of Y8 respondents)	**From Year 9** (percentage of Y9 respondents)	**Total across all three year groups** (percentage of all respondents)	**Total across all three year groups** (percentage of all respondents)
Monolingual (Not English or Italian)	6(13%)	9(18%)	11(19%)	26(16%)	65(41%)
Monolingual (English)	6(13%)	7(14%)	9(15%)	22(14%)	
Monolingual (Italian)	8(17%)	7(14%)	2(3%)	17(11%)	
Bilingual (without Italian)	6(13%)	11(22%)	11(19%)	28(18%)	66(42%)
Bilingual (with Italian)	15(31%)	6(12%)	17(29%)	38(24%)	
Multilingual (without Italian)	0	4(8%)	2(3%)	6(4%)	26(16%)
Multilingual (with Italian)	7(15%)	6(12%)	7(12%)	20(13%)	
Did not specify	0	1(2%)	0	1(1%)	1(1%)
Total (percentage of year group)	48(75%)	51(80%)	59(82%)	158	158

3.6 Instruments

3.6.1 Questionnaire

A questionnaire was used to enable data to be collected from a large sample within the school population. Existing questionnaires, such as the Foreign Language Enjoyment Scale (FLES,

Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014) and the Beliefs about Language Inventory (BAILLI, Horwitz, 1988) were excluded due to their length and complexity. A short form of the FLES (S-FLES) has very recently been developed and validated (Botes et al., 2021), but this was slightly late for use in this study and still longer than preferred.

Instead, a new questionnaire (see Appendix IV) was drafted and kept deliberately short and simple. This was to ensure it was accessible to all potential participants, whatever their level of English proficiency or whether they have dyslexia (Iwaniec, 2019) and to avoid fatigue. The questionnaire took 5-10 minutes to complete and assessed pupils' enjoyment of their Italian and other MFL lessons, and how important they felt these are (following Platsidou & Kantaridou, 2014). It also measured their linguistic self-concept in terms of how 'good at languages' they consider themselves.

The five numerical rating scale items (on a 1-10 scale) were worded as neutrally as possible. Leading questions can be a problem in language learning questionnaires (Gardiner et al., 2021), so open answer questions that followed the numerical scales simply asked pupils to explain their ratings. Personal questions were held back until the final few items, so key self-rating responses were earlier in the question sequence and more likely to be answered (Iwaniec, 2019).

3.6.1.1 Validity and reliability

The questionnaire was piloted with two adult teachers and then with three Year 10 pupils who receive English language learning support. The pilot raised no issues but was likely far too small to be effective. A more extensive pilot phase would have been beneficial, as some issues came to light only after analysis of the full survey.

Some pupils have language teachers as their tutors. Despite assurances that their responses would be later anonymised, they may have been concerned that their tutor would read them while collecting them in. Likewise, the pupils knew that the project was about language learning and it was being conducted by a language teacher. This may have affected their responses, leading to prestige bias (Iwaniec, 2019).

Other issues included the terminology of 'languages spoken at home'. In focus groups, it became apparent that some pupils included languages that they are learning at school and practice at home. Additionally, 'home language background' only represents the languages used in their home so many pupils who only speak English in school (and so, are actually bilingual or multilingual) will be categorised as using one language fewer than they really use. This is done in an attempt to remove English from the focus of the study.

3.6.2 Semi-structured group interview

The interview questions used differed depending on the group, and can be found in Appendix VI. For the high and low self-raters, questions were partly based on Mercer and Ryan's (2009) guiding questions (see Appendix V). The first couple of these were inspired by an example interview guide (Rolland, 2019).

3.6.2.1 Validity and reliability

In the group interviews, there was evidence that some responses were inspired by what other group members said, as is normal group behaviour (Stewart & Shamdasani, 2015).

Spot checks were done on the transcripts to check that the information shared in the group interviews agreed with the questionnaire responses. This is when some issues of home language use became apparent (see Results chapter).

In terms of reliability, the qualitative data is presented with as much transparency as possible. The qualitative coding was done following Thematic Analysis principles, which means that only one coder worked on the coding and inter-rater reliability measures were not engaged.

3.7 Procedure

Following the receipt of ethical approval, all parents and guardians of KS3 pupils were sent information sheets detailing the project. They were given five days to opt-out on behalf of their children before the questionnaires were distributed and five did so. The questionnaires were then completed on paper during a tutorial period, at the start of which the researcher explained the project to all tutor groups on a video call. Paper questionnaires were chosen due to the researcher's experience of pupil login problems and previous low response rates to an informal survey by electronic form.

Those pupils whose families had opted them out were given the questionnaire with everyone else. Some chose to fill it in, but their responses where not recorded in the dataset. Likewise, any responses from the twelve additional non-consenting pupils were excluded from the dataset and those pupils were not invited to interview. The pupils were asked their names on the questionnaire (to allow individuals to be contacted for interview).

Group interviews had to be short and fit around pupils' extra-curricular lunchtime clubs. They also had to maintain separation of pupils from different year groups, as dictated by Italian Ministry of Health Covid-19 rules. As a result, the group interviews were conducted over three weeks and they lasted an average of twelve minutes. Pupils were invited in person by the

researcher, who visited tutor groups each morning. Invitations were based on pupils' home language background or self-rating (particularly high or low), as well as availability. The majority of invited pupils were willing to take part, although seven pupils declined. They were mainly conducted in groups of between two and six pupils.

Interviewees were given a separate consent form which specified their voice could be recorded and quotes could be used; one pupil dropped out due to this. The focus group discussions were recorded using a voice recorder app on a password protected device and then transcribed manually within two days. Pupil names were removed at transcription stage and the pupils were given the PINs to match their questionnaire responses so their responses could be cross-referenced. Names were then removed from the questionnaire data.

3.8 Analysis plan

3.8.1 Quantitative data analysis

A Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test of normality will be done on the quantitative data (by various dependent variables) to ensure that appropriate statistical tests are applied. Then, pairwise Kruskal-Wallis Tests (in the case of non-normal distribution of data) will be performed to determine whether the dependent variables (self-rating as good at languages, and enjoyment and importance of Italian and MFL) differ by language background, or by MFL subject choice. Effect sizes will then be calculated.

Finally, potential correlations between sets of dependent variables will be calculated using Spearman's Rho.

3.8.2 Qualitative data analysis (questionnaires and interviews)

Answers to the open questions will be printed out by question and will be coded using Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Interview transcripts will be printed and coded using reflexive Thematic Analysis (ibid.), with an inductive, semantic and realist approach.

3.9 Ethical considerations

This study was conducted in accordance with the ethics considerations laid out by the University, including permission being obtained from the Head of school, pupils' parents and guardians (through opt-out procedures) and also explicit assent being obtained from the pupils themselves. This included separate assent for voice recording in the case of group interview participants.

School safeguarding procedures were also followed at all times. Please see Appendix I for the DREC approval confirmation.

Chapter 4: Results

This chapter will begin with an explanation of how the Research Questions were approached in terms of data analysis. This will be followed by details of the quantitative data gathered, the reasons for statistical test choice and the results of those tests. Next, the qualitative data, from both the questionnaire and the group interviews, will be presented thematically. The qualitative data from the questionnaires will mainly be used to support and elucidate the quantitative data,

while the interview data stands alone. In places where it is pertinent, however, qualitative questionnaire data is grouped with qualitative interview data.

RQ1 (see 3.2) was addressed using quantitative data from the questionnaire, which was analysed using statistical tests. These tests included Kruskal-Wallis and correlation analysis using Spearman's Rho.

RQ2 was addressed primarily using the qualitative data collected in the questionnaires and the group interviews. This was analysed using Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

4.1 A caveat

It is incredibly hard to classify language use. The categories used in this study cannot accurately represent the nuance and variety of language knowledge, use and proficiency of the pupils and their families. A simple example of this is that those pupils who are categorised as having monolingual (Italian or other) home backgrounds are all actually bilingual, as they all use English at school. Whether or not Italian is spoken at home is more easily defined as a category, so this discriminator was used in some of the quantitative analysis.

4.2 Quantitative questionnaire data

A Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test (Social Science Statistics, 2021) indicated that the data were not normally distributed (Table 4.1) and confirmed that non-parametric tests would be most appropriate.

Table 4.1

Descriptive Statistics for whole sample and results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test of Normality

	Descriptive Statistics						Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test	
Item	***N***	***M***	***SD***	**Median**	**Skewness**	**Kurtosis**	**KSD**	***p***

Self-rating 'good at languages'	157	6.41	2.15	7	-0.58	0.07	.16	<.001
Enjoyment of Italian	159	6.36	2.10	7	-0.19	-0.37	.15	.00157
Importance of Italian	159	7.55	2.18	8	-0.93	0.44	.17	<.001
Enjoyment of MFL	145	6.52	2.30	7	-0.49	-0.54	.16	<.001
Importance of MFL	146	6.91	2.29	7	-0.64	-0.09	.17	<.001

4.2.1 Missing data

Slightly different *N* values were used in each calculation (see Tables 4.1 and 4.3-4.5), because responses that did not give a value were excluded by pairwise deletion. As answers to these items were independent of each other, pairwise deletion was possible, allowing more data to be included; listwise deletion would have reduced the dataset more markedly.

4.2.2 Spearman's Rho correlations

Spearman's Rho was chosen to examine correlations between measures. This was due to the non-normal distribution of the data, and these were calculated online using free access software (Social Science Statistics, 2021). There was a very weak correlation between enjoyment of MFL and enjoyment of Italian (r_s=0.16), and between perceived importance of the two subjects (r_s=0.13). Neither of these were statistically significant (Table 4.2). Slightly stronger positive correlations were found between the 'good at languages' ratings and both enjoyment of Italian (r_s=0.42) and enjoyment of MFL (r_s=0.47). Enjoyment ratings for a language correlated with importance ratings for the same subject (MFL: r_s=0.45; Italian: r_s=0.42).

Table 4.2

Spearman's Rho Correlations with two-tailed p values[2]

[2] small effect size in light grey, small-medium effect size in mid grey

Enjoyment of MFL	r_s=0.47 p=<.001			
Importance of MFL		r_s=0.45 p=<.001		
Enjoyment of Italian	r_s=0.42 p=<.001	r_s=0.16 p=.06062		
Importance of Italian			r_s=0.13 p=.12319	r_s=0.42 p=<.001
	Good at Languages	Enjoyment of MFL	Importance of MFL	Enjoyment of Italian

4.2.3 Kruskal-Wallis Tests

Kruskal-Wallis tests were used in place of one-way ANOVAs due to the non-normal distribution of the data (Social Science Statistics, 2021). To obtain effect sizes, eta squared values were calculated manually where statistically significant results were obtained. The sizes from the values were estimated using Draper (2020) as small: 0.02, medium: 0.13 and large: 0.26.

In the following Kruskal-Wallis tables, statistically significant results are shown in grey and, in those cases, the language background group with higher median rating is indicted under the η^2 value. *H* is recorded to two decimal places and η^2 is recorded to three decimal places.

4.2.3.1 Italian enjoyment

Italian being spoken at home was associated with a higher median rating for enjoyment of Italian lessons: *H*=25.4971 (1, *N*=158), *p*=<.00001, η^2=0.1624 (medium). As can be seen in table 4.3, pairwise comparisons evidence large differences between the enjoyment of the Monolingual Italian and Monolingual English groups (the former rated enjoyment higher at *H*=12.43, *p*=.00042, η^2 =0.255). The difference between the Monolingual Italian and Bilingual without Italian was also large, with the former rating their enjoyment higher (*H*=14.03, *p*=.00018, η^2 =0.257). For all significant pairwise results, a group that speaks Italian at home rated their enjoyment of Italian higher than a group that does not.

Table 4.3

Pairwise Kruskal-Wallis results for Enjoyment of Italian

Bilingual With Italian	*H*=9.66 (1, *N*=67) *p*=.00188 η^2 =0.062

	BIt					
Monolingual other	*H*=0.39 *p*=.53314	*H*=6.14 (1, *N*=65) *p*=.01324 η^2 =0.050 BIt				
Monolingual English	*H*=0.52 *p*=.4696	*H*=6.67 (1, *N*=61) *p*=.00979 η^2 =0.062 BIt	*H*=<0.01 *p*=.97524			
Monolingual Italian	*H*=14.03 (1, *N*=45) *p*=.00018 η^2 =0.257 Mono It	*H*=1.03 *p*=.30977	*H*=9.80 (1, *N*=43) *p*= .00175 η^2 =0.166 Mono It	*H*=12.43 (1, *N*=39) *p*=.00042 η^2 =0.255 Mono It		
Multilingual without Italian	*H*=1.03 *p*=.30942	*H*=1.70 *p*=.19286	*H*=0.28 *p*=.59536	*H*= 0.35 *p*=.55661	*H*=4.86 (1, *N*=23) *p*=.02742 η^2 =0.089 Mono It	
Multilingual with Italian	*H*=8.33 (1, *N*=48) *p*=.0039 η^2 =0.116 Multi Ita	*H*=<0.01 (1, *N*=59) *p*=.97445	*H*=5.36 (1, *N*=46) *p*=.02058 η^2 =0.054 Multi Ita	*H*=6.42 (1, *N*=42) *p*=.01137 η^2 =0.087 Multi Ita	*H*=1.80 *p*=.17994	*H*=2.41 *p*=.12069
	Bilingual Without Italian	**Bilingual with Italian**	**Monolingual other**	**Monolingual English**	**Monolingual Italian**	**Multilingual without Italian**

4.2.3.2 Italian importance

Where Italian is spoken at home, this correlated with a higher median rating for importance of Italian lessons: *H*=10.3956 (1, *N*=158), *p*=.00126, η^2=0.0662 (small). Table 4.4 shows pairwise comparisons where all statistically significant differences in ratings involve an Italian speaking group that has rated Italian learning as more important than a non-Italian speaking group. The largest difference is between the Multilingual with Italian group and the Monolingual Other group (*H*=11.20, *p*=.00082, η^2=0.186- a medium effect).

Table 4.4

Pairwise Kruskal-Wallis results for all background language combinations for importance of Italian

Bilingual With Italian	*H*=0.38 *p*=.53753					
Monolingual other	*H*=1.89 *p*=.16873	*H*=4.56 (1, *N*=65) *p*=.0327 η^2=0.025 BIt				
Monolingual English	*H*=<0.01 *p*=.98441	*H*=0.29 *p*=.58872	*H*=1.89 *p*=.16882			
Monolingual Italian	*H*=2.24 *p*=.13406	*H*=1.51 *p*=.21887	*H*=6.80 (1, *N*=43) *p*=.0091 η^2=0.093 Mono It	*H*=2.38 *p*=.1227		
Multilingual without Italian	*H*=1.49 *p*=.22257	*H*=2.84 *p*=.09177	*H*= 0.17 *p*=.68152	*H*=1.52 *p*=.21804	*H*=4.27 (1, *N*=23) *p*=.03888 η^2=0.060 Mono It	
Multilingual with Italian	*H*=4.03 (1, *N*=48) *p*=.04469 η^2=0.022 Multi Ita	*H*=2.94 *p*=.08664	*H*=11.20 (1, *N*=46) *p*=.00082 η^2=0.186 MuIti Ita	*H*=5.85 (1, *N*=42) *p*=.01562 η^2=0.071 Multi Ita	*H*=0.18 *p*=.66962	*H*=4.80 (1, *N*=26) *p*=.02846 η^2=0.075 Multi Ita
	Bilingual without Italian	**Bilingual with Italian**	**Monolingual other**	**Monolingual English**	**Monolingual Italian**	**Multilingual without Italian**

4.2.3.3 Self-rating as 'good at languages'

This was found to differ by language background with a medium effect size: *H*=21.3096 (4, *N*=156), *p*=.00027, η^2=0.1375. Whether Italian was one of the languages spoken at home had a small-medium effect (η^2 =0.0996): *H*=15.432 (1, *N*=156), *p*=.00009. Italian being spoken at home was associated with a higher median self-rating.

A higher median self-rating as 'good at languages' was associated with pupils who came from multilingual homes compared to those who came from bilingual homes: *H*=12.6799 (1, *N*=91), *p*=.00037, η^2=0.1409, or from monolingual homes: *H*=11.6872 (1, *N*=90), *p*=.00063, η^2=0.1313. Both relationships had a medium effect size, according to the values of η^2.

Table 4.5 shows that the Multilingual with Italian group rated themselves significantly higher than all other groups, except Multilingual without Italian. The effect of both multilingualism and

speaking Italian can be seen in these pairwise comparisons, with Monolingual Italian group rating themselves higher than the Bilingual without Italian group (H=8.23, p=.00413, η^2=0.124, a small-to-medium effect). Large effects can be seen when comparing the Multilingual with Italian group to the Bilingual without Italian (H=17.13, p=.0003, η^2=0.321) and the Multilingual with Italian group to the Monolingual English (H=18.72, p=.00002, η^2=0.403).

Table 4.5

Pairwise Kruskal-Wallis results for all background language combinations for 'good at languages' rating

Bilingual With Italian	H=4.77 (1, N=66) p=.02829

	η^2=0.027 BIt					
Monolingual other	*H*=4.91 (1, *N*=53) *p*=.02675 η^2=0.037 Mono Other	*H*=0.04 *p*=.85129				
Monolingual English	*H*=<0.01 *p*=.96793	*H*=5.53 (1, *N*=61) *p*=.01875 η^2=0.043 BIt	*H*=6.53 (1, *N*=48) *p*=.01061 η^2=0.077 Mono Other			
Monolingual Italian	*H*=8.23 (1, *N*=61) *p*=.00413 η^2=0.124 MIt	*H*=1.53 *p*=.21555	*H*=1.36 *p*=.24301	*H*=10.79 (1, *N*=39) *p*=.00102 η^2=0.211 MIt		
Multilingual without Italian	*H*=1.65 *p*=.19929	*H*=0.01 *p*=.92021	*H*= <0.01 *p*=.98074	*H*=2.12 *p*=.14547	*H*=0.44 *p*=.50597	
Multilingual with Italian	*H*=17.13 (1, *N*=46) *p*=.0003 η^2=0.321 Multi Ita	*H*=9.34 (1, *N*=58) *p*=.00224 η^2=0.113 Multi Ita	*H*=9.34 (1, *N*=45) *p*=.00224 η^2=0.147 Multi Ita	*H*=18.72 (1, *N*=41) *p*=.00002 η^2 =0.403 Multi Ita	*H*=4.24 (1, *N*=36) *p*=.03943 η^2=0.037 MuIti Ita	*H*=2.53 *p*=.11167
	Bilingual Without Italian	**Bilingual with Italian**	**Monolingual other**	**Monolingual English**	**Monolingual Italian**	**Multilingual without Italian**

4.2.3.4 Enjoyment and Importance of MFL

All pairwise relationships were statistically non-significant (at *p*>.05) for enjoyment of MFL (see Appendix VIII) and importance of MFL (see Appendix IX). Additionally, when grouped, there were statistically non-significant relationships between mono- or multilingualism and enjoyment or importance of MFL or Italian (see Appendix X).

4.2.4 By MFL choice: Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics were used here due to the very small sample sizes of learners of Latin and Chinese.

Table 4.6

Enjoyment of MFL subject by subject

Subject	*n*	*M*	*SD*	Median
French	85	5.94	2.33	6
German	29	6.83	2.35	7
Chinese	16	7.81	1.52	8
Latin	12	7.83	1.90	8

Table 4.7

Importance of MFL subject by subject

Subject	*n*	*M*	*SD*	Median
French	85	7.01	2.42	7
German	29	6.59	2.41	7
Chinese	16	7.44	1.82	7.5
Latin	12	6.08	1.68	6

Table 4.8

'Good at languages' self-rating by subject

Subject	*n*	*M*	*SD*	Median
French	85	6.36	2.21	7
German	29	6.52	2.16	7
Chinese	16	7.69	1.25	7.5
Latin	12	5.71	2.51	5.5

These data addressed RQ1 (see 3.2). In terms of RQ1b and RQ1d, these data suggest that Italian being spoken at home correlates with a greater enjoyment of Italian lessons and greater importance attributed to Italian lessons. This also correlated with a higher rating of linguistic self-concept as 'good at languages.' More languages being spoken at home also correlated with a higher linguistic self-concept rating.

There were no effects evident between home language backgrounds for enjoyment or importance of the other MFL subjects.

In terms of RQ1c, the students of Chinese felt their MFL was more important than pupils of the other subject choices and the students of Chinese and Latin gave higher enjoyment ratings for MFL than those of French and German. Finally, the students of Chinese rated their linguistic ability as higher than those of other languages, and of French in particular. RQ1a is addressed in the Discussion section.

4.3 Qualitative Questionnaire Data

To address RQ2, the qualitative data from the questionnaires and interviews were analysed. In this section and section 4.4, participants are identified by their participant PINs in the form P*n*.

4.3.1 Good at languages?

In explaining their self-ratings in the question 'How good are you at languages?', many respondents drew distinctions between their proficiency in different languages. For example, P65: "I am good at Spanish but not French or Italian" and P9: "I am good at Italian but bad at German." This emphasises the fact that the pupils see their linguistic ability as nuanced and different in relation to different languages. It is possible that a holistic judgement of language ability was nor a sensitive enough measure of their linguistic self-concept.

It was also relatively common for pupils to cite the number and range of languages they speak. 16% of respondents mentioned this. For example, P154: "I can speak four, so I think I'm good" and P7: "I only know two languages to speak them". Many responses referred to the number of languages in which the pupils felt fluent, sometimes distinguishing these from those in which they did not feel fluent.

Individual skills about which the respondents felt particularly positive or negative were mentioned often, though they were usually limited to one per answer. The skills mentioned varied, covering grammar, memory, spelling, pronunciation, and speaking in general.

Only 3% - fewer pupils than expected - cited evidence in the form of others' opinions or their own grades, with only two individuals (1%) mentioning a teacher or parent's opinion and three (2%) mentioning grades.

4.3.2 Enjoyment of MFL and Italian

In answering this question, there were many more mentions of how difficult respondents found the subject in the MFL item than in the corresponding Italian item (21% in MFL and only 6% in Italian). There were slightly more positive emotions cited in the MFL answers, which primarily described the lessons as 'fun,' and slightly fewer negative ones than for MFL. However, the mentions of 'boring' were approximately the same for MFL and Italian (10% and 8% respectively).

In MFL answers, the most commonly mentioned positives focused on connection with others (4%), the enjoyment of language learning in general (4%) or learning about new cultures and

history (4%). The teacher was mentioned the most times (8 mentions, or 5% of responses, of which one said the teacher was 'amazing'). Three respondents (2%) said they loved their MFL.

The teacher was also the most mentioned in the negatives (6%), with a few pupils each saying they felt there were too many tests (2%), they disliked grammar (2%), or they had wanted to choose a different MFL subject but were unable to do so (2%). The negatives were spread more thinly across different reasons.

In Italian, positive mentions of the teacher (12%) were more than double the number in the MFL responses and there were very few negative teacher mentions (1%). Other positives mentioned included learning a lot in lessons (4%) and enjoying using their mother tongue (4%). For example, P32: "It's nice to talk in Italian because most of the time we talk in English," and P47: "At school we speak every day in English and having a lesson where I can speak Italian is very good." There were the same number of respondents who said they loved the language as there were for the MFL (2%).

Among negative aspects mentioned, several pupils said they felt they were not learning useful things and wanted to learn more conversational language (3%), that they would not use Italian (3%) or that they disliked grammar (2%).

4.3.3 Importance of MFL and Italian

The pupils' rating of the importance of Italian was very much based on its use in communication and understanding (13%), in everyday life (5%) and for connecting to other languages (5%). Some specified that you should speak the language of where you live (5%) with 65 mentions (41%) of the fact that we live in Italy or in our Italian city, and 13% mentioned Italian nationality or having Italian as a first language. However, 5% said that the basics of the language would be sufficient. 7% of pupils mentioned using Italian in the future, of which half (3%) thought they would use it for jobs and half (3%) for university.

Future plans appeared to be a deciding factor in the perceived importance of Italian. 6% of pupils said it depends whether the pupil stays in Italy, 9% said they were planning to leave (so it is not very important) and 5% said that Italian is not widely spoken outside Italy.

MFL was seen in quite a different light, despite communication also being mentioned frequently (9%). 11% of pupils felt they would not use their MFL subject, but 10% said they felt it was important because it was widely spoken. Two pupils said that French was portable in case of moving schools. Many mentioned job opportunities related to their MFL (12%) and it being

useful for the unspecified 'future' (11%). 4% said they were planning to live outside Italy and it would be useful for that. Travel featured heavily, with 11% of pupils mentioning it in relation to their MFL.

8% pupils felt MFL lessons were beneficial in increasing knowledge or skills and 9% said that the more languages they spoke, the better.

4.4 Qualitative Group Interviews Data

The qualitative interview data were coded using Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; see Appendix VII for more details and Appendix III for themes and codes). Abbreviated tags, as shown in Table 4.9 below, are used in the rest of this chapter to share information about pupils' language backgrounds and self-ratings concisely. Where italics appear in the quotations, they have been used to show emphasis.

Table 4.9

Tags used for identifying language background profiles

Tag	Meaning
MI	Monolingual Italian
ME	Monolingual English
M	Monolingual (other)
B	Bilingual (without Italian)
BIt	Bilingual (with Italian)
Mu	Multilingual (without Italian)
Mu-It	Multilingual (with Italian)
High self-rated	Pupil rated themself 9 or 10 on 'good at languages' item
Low self-rated	Pupil rated themself 1 or 2 on 'good at languages' item
Y7/Y8/Y9	Pupil is in Year 7 (aged 11-12), Year 8 (aged 12-13) or Year 9 (aged 13-14) (ages approximate)

4.4.1 Theme 1: Multilingualism as the valued norm

4.4.1.1 Multilingual families and the problems in classifying language use

The majority of pupils in the study, and at the school, live with families who are multilingual, even if they would not be categorised as such according to the languages listed by the pupil. Many of the families travel frequently (at least, when travel is not restricted due to Covid-19), and many pupils have lived in more than one country.

> I think I'm a good language learner because my parents are not from only one country. They're multinational. Once, with my parents and my brothers, we had a big trip and we went to different countries and I heard different languages... (P46: Y7 high rated BIt)
>
> Even I have parents and family who know languages and my parents, like my mum pushes me to enjoy the French- not pushing me in a bad way, because I like doing it, so she encourages me. And the teacher I have taught my grandma... (P47: Y7 high rated BIt)

Many parents in the 'monolingual' families speak other languages, even if these are not used often in the household:

> My dad speaks a lot of languages, and my mum speaks Italian and French, but we don't use them often. (P161: Y9 ME)

4.4.1.2 Family language learning

That leads on to the fact that many parents model language learning to their children. For example, P3, a Y7 monolingual English speaker said: "My household speaks only English, but then occasionally my dad might speak Italian because he's practising, or like my mum might speak Italian cos she's practising as well."

4.4.1.3 Secret family languages

Several of the Year 7 monolingual English pupils said that their parents spoke to one another in another language when they wanted to talk without their children understanding. This shows that even many 'monolingual' families actually have parents who are speakers of multiple languages. It also shows the motivational power of decoding secret messages:

> At my house, my parents speak French to each other sometimes and I kind of want to understand them sometimes, so that motivates me to learn languages. (P16: Y7 ME)
>
> My mum and dad speak Dutch a lot to each other cos me and my sister don't speak Dutch. And my sister and I used to be able to pick up a lot of what they were saying when she started learning German because they're very close languages. (P17: Y7 ME)

However, at times, the pupils can underestimate the effort taken for parents to learn these languages:

> My parents love travelling, so they travel a lot. I think they went several times to France and just learned French. (P16: Y7 ME)

4.4.1.4 Siblings versus parents

It was common among questionnaire respondents that they used English with siblings, despite the main home language being something else. The respondents did not always include this English in their 'languages spoken at home'. This was borne out by the focus group responses, too, such as in this exchange between Year 8 'Monolingual Italian' twins:

> P87: We study French and my father knows French really well, so he talks to us and it helps with the work we do.
>
> P82: But for the rest we speak Italian.
>
> P87: Yeah, and between each other we sometimes do speak English, me and P82.

Their home environment does not only include English being spoken, but also French (though the French is more studied and practised at home than 'spoken'; this distinction is a fine one.)

Parents were sometimes said to prefer the first language in the home, even where they also spoke English:

> Sometimes I speak to my sister in English. To my parents, I speak Danish because my dad gets annoyed when I speak English...well, not annoyed, but they want me to speak Danish at home. (P33: Y7 M)
>
> Outside of school, I speak a *lot* of English. I speak to myself in English, I talk to my siblings in English. Most of the time also to my dad, although he likes me to talk in Spanish because it's easier for him. (P26: Y7 M)

4.4.1.5 Deliberate or conscious language planning

These rules appeared to be part of a conscious effort on the part of families to ensure a balanced use of multiple languages and retention of proficiency in the face of contextual change. For example, P124, a Y9 (high rated) Multilingual (with Italian) spoke of the recent change in language use they had undergone with a sibling: "I speak Italian with my father, mainly, and Japanese with my mother. With my brother I used to speak French but now I speak English."

To compensate for the reduced use of French (because P124 and sibling P43 used to attend a French medium school), P124 has planned an adjustment: "I don't want to forget my French, obviously, because I'm not studying it now. So, with my grandfather- he used to study French, so I speak French with him when I phone him."

Language planning by families was reported by other pupils, too, whether in a general approach:

> My mum always wanted me to kind of know languages, like a lot of languages...She speaks four languages. I think she wants me to follow in her steps. (P105: Y8 BIt)

Or for a particular time period:

> (My parents) said, for my high school and middle school times, I should speak English a lot more than French. (P101: Y8 BIt)

Or due to the ongoing English use at school:

> In our house, we try to speak as much as possible Italian because we go to an English-speaking school and my mum's Italian. So, when we are the dinner table we will speak in Italian and I will speak English and my mum will correct me to Italian. (P21: Y7 BIt)

4.4.1.6 Shifting dominance and proficiency

Changes in use resulting in shifting dominance were mentioned by several pupils. As seen above, siblings P124 and P43 stopped using French together after changing to an English medium school, substituting it with English. Daily English use and studying in the medium of English at school had rendered it more salient for various pupils, compared with their first languages:

> I started English when I first joined the [nursery class of this school] so now English has become my mother tongue more than Russian. (P156: Y9 high rated Mu-It)

> When I was younger, my order of best languages was Spanish, Italian and then English, but now I find that English is my more *dominant* language and it's the way I think, and then it's Spanish, and then it's Italian. (P26: Y7 high rated M)

This has, however, resulted in a drop in proficiency in other languages. This has been hard on some, including P26:

> I have gone *down* in my Italian. I feel I'm not as fluent anymore. So I feel that might be the reason why I don't like it as much- it's harder and I don't enjoy it as much because I'm confused quite a bit of the time. (P26)

> I would say my level of Italian has gone down a bit because Italian's easier here than it was in Italian school, and I only speak it with family maybe once every month. (P71: Y8 from a ME household yet speaks fluent Italian)

Others, despite their young ages, saw a decrease in proficiency as something which could be reversed with effort:

> I forgot my French from Belgium, so now I'm relearning that along with Italian. (P161: Y9 ME who spoke French fluently in the past)

> Italian was basically my language, because I used to speak it a lot with my friends...And then I moved to South Africa...I kind of lost all my Italian...so my English was good and my French was good and my Italian was really bad. And, since I moved back here, it's my second year, so I'm trying to get back to speaking Italian...we moved to Italy because I wanted to get my Italian back up. (P101: Y8 BIt)

4.4.1.7 Multilingual advantages

Many pupils, of a variety of language profiles, felt that bilinguals and multilinguals have a clear advantage in language learning over monolinguals. This was connected by some to a belief that being exposed to, or starting to learn, multiple languages while young would also help.

> If you started learning languages when you were very little, sometimes two or three languages at a time, or your parents speak different languages in your household, then I think, obviously, it comes easier to understand new languages. (P119: Y9 BIt)
>
> I was born with a lot of languages being inputted in me, like I've always visited many countries and I've never stayed in just one country for more than a couple of years, so I've attempted to learn five different languages... So, I have been born and raised in that sort of style, I can obviously learn more because I have experience. (P38: Y7 high rated B)

In answering what makes someone a successful language learner, three Year 9 pupils summarised the opinions of many of the pupils interviewed:

> P167: Y9 Mu-It: I think there's two main aspects to it. I think the first one is having learnt languages from a very young age, and/or having learnt more than one language.
>
> P145: Y9 ME: I agree. I think, having learnt a lot of languages and having that as a background...
>
> P143: Y9 ME: Same as they said. Actually, if you're going to learn a language like French, it's best to learn Italian first so then it's kind of easier to learn that language.

4.4.1.8 Language connections

Pupils were aware that being able to relate one language to another already known would make language learning easier:

> Someone who already knows three or four or five languages, it might be easier for them to learn another language because they have other languages to relate it to. For me, I already speak Portuguese, Italian and English. Now I'm learning French I can go between [Portuguese and Italian] to try to decode a word. Someone who only knows one language- it might be harder for them. (P74: Y8 high rated Mu-It)
>
> Since I already know a wide variety of languages, I can kind of tell cos like some languages are very similar, so I can tell kind of what words there are. So that's easy. (P156: Y9 high rated Mu-It)
>
> I think having a rich background of languages has helped me a lot to find connections between languages. (P124: Y9 high rated Mu-It)

4.4.1.9 Monolingual challenges/ embarrassment

Conversely, there was a general feeling that being monolingual was a disadvantage and something that may even cause some embarrassment:

> If you only know one language and you're trying to learn another one, you're going to have difficulties. (P74: Y8 high rated Mu-It)

P45, a Y7 Monolingual Italian, laughed in a slightly embarrassed way when she said, “My dad speaks just Italian.” Similarly, but in a different group interview, P71 (Y8 ME) showed some embarrassment when she said:

> My dad speaks English, my mum speaks English and she kind of speaks Italian...so, it’s a lot of English at home. I think she also learnt French and German at school, but she lost it when she came here and learnt Italian. (P71)

This feeling of monolinguals being at a disadvantage was echoed by some other monolingual English background pupils:

> I grew up in England and then moved to Italy, so my household just speaks English and I did have a lot harder time learning languages than some bilingual people who are a lot closer to Italian. I had a hard time at the beginning because I had only known one language. (P17: Y7 ME)

4.4.2 Theme 2: Communication as ultimate purpose

4.4.2.1 It is all about communication

As well as being mentioned frequently in the questionnaire responses, communication was seen as key by many of the pupils interviewed. A Y7 monolingual Italian, in explaining how you decide if someone ‘knows’ a language, said, “They have to understand and they have to know how to communicate with other persons. So, the first step is to understand and try to respond is they ask you a question and to try and communicate.” (P10). Other pupils felt similarly:

> My mum is very friendly and can communicate with everyone. I think I want to have that same thing with other people. Wherever I go, I want to know languages so I can communicate with everyone around me. (P105: Y8 BIt)

> You have to be able to connect with who they are talking with in that language. They have to be able to build on [what someone else says]. (P104: Y8 ME)

4.4.2.2 Accentism

Communication was sometimes equated with spoken language, and speaking skills appeared to be very highly valued by pupils. However, this sometimes came with high expectations of conformity. In answering how to decide if someone knows a language, P158, a Y9 (high rated) bilingual with Italian said, “The pronunciation is a top result. If someone pronounces clearly.” P156 Y9 (high rated) multilingual with Italian, agreed with P158, saying, “I totally agree. They definitely need to know how to pronounce words because you can at least tell if they’re speaking that language correctly.” In a separate interview, another Year 9 pupil expressed similar views:

> For me, personally, if the accent doesn't sound good, I just personally don't like it. But, even if the accent is wrong, but you still have a vast vocabulary, you can speak a language well. (P124: Y9 high rated Mu-It)

4.4.2.3 'Incorrect' language

Linguistic prescriptivism was also evident in the response of some pupils with lower-self-ratings:

> I started learning English back in Thailand. I feel like it wasn't the correct way of learning English because most of the lessons were not taught by English speakers, well. They speak English but sometimes I feel like it's wrong. I was in a bilingual school, but sometimes it wasn't correct. (P57: Y8 low rated B)

P57 felt like it was the regular contact with her friendship group, with which she uses English, that changed things for her: "When I moved here, I was still struggling a lot with English but then I had my friend group which helped me speak English every day, so it got better."

4.4.2.4 Transactional usage and social usage, or lack thereof

For some L2+ pupils of Italian, the Italian language is also used socially, as English is for P57, although often less consistently. This social use adds an incentive to learn Italian well, and provides a context in which to practise regularly:

> If my friends speak Italian, I want to be able to join in their conversation and understand what they're saying and so I can feel part of the group. (P3: Y7 ME)

Additionally, some pupils deliberately use their Italian in their everyday life in contexts when it may be optional:

> In my apartment, there's a *portiere* and I speak to him often in Italian. I just ask him how it's going. Also, at school, I talk to the Italian staff and, outside, there are a lot of occurrences where you just have to speak to someone in their own native language. (P161: Y9 monolingual English)

However, a majority of those who do not speak Italian at home use Italian primarily for transactional purposes:

> If you're going to the shops and buying food...cos we live in a country that speaks Italian, that's what you use if you're trying to get something, but I wouldn't say I use it with my friends. (P17: Y7 monolingual English background)

> Yeah. I don't use it regularly. I only use it if I'm in a restaurant or a shop. (P16: Y7 ME)

For those who do not speak English at home, they could contrast between their use of the two languages:

> P86 Y8 M: I use English for everything that I do online outside of school- it's all in English. And, Italian, I don't use Italian out of school, really.

> P55 Y8 M: I also use English online and use Italian if I go to the shops or like with the school bus driver and stuff.

This pair of responses underlines the contrast between the function and utility of English and Italian for pupils who don't speak Italian at home. Although English usage is not a focus of this dissertation, its mentioned functionality outside of the (English-speaking) school environment provides an illustrative counterpoint to that of Italian.

4.4.2.5 Wrong focus in lessons

Despite the reported transactional use of Italian in everyday life, some pupils don't feel like their particular language usage needs are catered for in lessons:

> For us beginners, I feel like we don't always learn everything that we'll use outside of school. We just learn things useful for *in* school, like *about* the things *in* school. (P12: Y7 ME)

> I'd like more structure- a clearer path and end goal like an exam, or just being fluent in the language. (P167; Y9 Mu-It)

> There's like one oral test a year and three written tests. You're not going to go out on the street in France and go writing on pieces of paper. You're going to have to say it, but school doesn't really teach you how to say stuff. (P156: Y9 (high rated) Mu-It)

4.4.2.6 Basics enough for some

Similarly, as mentioned above, questionnaire responses showed several pupils felt that basic Italian would be sufficient. For example, P25 stated, "I think we should only learn the basics and not everything."

4.2.3 Theme 3: MFL and Italian are seen differently

4.2.3.1 Ease, confidence and ownership

For many of the bilingual and multilingual pupils who speak Italian at home, their relationships with Italian lessons and MFL lessons was expressed to be quite different:

> Italian's easier because we speak it like each day, each morning, with our family and friends, so I feel more confident with it. (P87: Y8 MI)

> Yeah, I actually like them both because Chinese is a new language and it's interesting. Italian is my language. (P82: Y8 MI, twin of P87)

> German, I find a struggle, but in Italian, I feel like I just flow. (P31: Y7 BIt)

> Personally, it's more enjoyable, my Italian, than French. There are so many languages in my head and I'm trying to learn them *well*. In Italian, the people are at my same level. In French, everyone's kind of at different levels. Some have learnt French before. Some are half French. (P21: Y7 BIt)

For many of the monolinguals, despite what P21 says, the MFL lessons provide an opportunity to start on the same level as others with different language backgrounds (setting aside the multilingual advantage discussed above):

> With the MFL lessons, we all started on the same page, cos like none of us knew how to speak German. In Italian, even though we have groups, there's quite a range [of proficiency in the group]. In German, we all started at the same time and it gave me more of a chance to study ahead. I think that compared to the class, I do a lot better at German than I do in Italian. In Italian, I'm one of the less experienced in the class. (P17: Y7 ME)

4.2.3.2 Pressure from context and choice

Some learners reported that they felt pressure to learn Italian, in contrast to their MFL subject. This is in spite of the actual transactional usage reported by many (see 4.4.2.4 above).

> I think Italian feels more challenging that the other language because we are in a country that speaks Italian, so it feels like we need to learn *more* of it. We need to learn it *quicker*. (P16: Y7 ME)
>
> Yeah, there's more of a *need* to be able to speak Italian. (P3: Y7 ME, agreeing with P16)
>
> I feel more enthusiastic about learning the MFL since I *chose* to learn that language. (P12: Y7 ME, in the same conversation, after being asked whether they feel differently about the two subjects)
>
> Same here. By choosing, it doesn't feel like a necessity to learn it and there're no big pressure for me to have to learn it. (P17: Y7 ME, agreeing)
>
> Yeah, I think for me Italian feels more *urgent*, because with the other language it feels more like I'd need it in the future. I live in Italy so it feels more *urgent*. I need to learn it now. (P16: Y7 ME)
>
> In Italian, I'm only in beginners so I feel more pressurised because everyone else is- most people are like really good and we're in Italy and so almost everyone speaks fluent Italian. But then, other languages, it's like, more fulfilling. (P16: Y7 ME)

One pupil even described the need to learn Italian as a shock:

> I've lived in England my whole life and haven't really been taught to speak other languages. It's just like so sudden, like to learn another language and get better at it, but it's harder if you just speak English. (P121: Y9 low self-rated ME)

P121 has actually lived in Italy for two years. It is worth noting that these two years have both been disrupted by Covid 19 and that P121's experience has probably been affected by this. Prior to starting here, P121 did one year of French lessons as an MFL in England.

4.2.3.3 The attraction of new languages

Other attractive things about the MFL, in addition to the fact of having been able to choose it, included pupils having long harboured ambitions of learning a particular language:

> I've always wanted to learn French since I was a very young age. So, for me learning French is really fun because finally I get to learn it properly, with a teacher there. (P26: Y7 M)

There was also optimism about a fresh start, such as from P33, who is a Y7 with a monolingual other background, and will start French in September after having had extra English lessons during Year 7:

> I am having high expectations for French because I really want to learn the language and personally, I think French is better than Italian, because in Italian I'm really struggling. I don't know what's going on in class because they're talking way too fast. But I feel like French is a slower language than Italian.

Some pupils are focused on the future and how useful their MFL may be when they reach adulthood:

> I find Mandarin better. Maybe in my future, Mandarin will come in handy for business or work. Seeing as my plans are not to stay in Italy- I'm going to live somewhere else. (P22: Y7 bilingual with Italian)

4.2.4 Theme 4: Work in progress

4.2.4.1 It is a process

As was evident when pupils discussed their undulating proficiency levels and reinvigoration of language skills that had declined, some of these pupils are experienced linguists of multiple languages, with an understanding that language learning is a long, ongoing and uneven process:

> After explaining the languages his family can speak, 'I started learning French 3 or 4 years ago, so I think I'm nearly there, too. (P10 Y7 MI)

> I find it easy to understand some words, but most words, I check and then I learn them and when I have to learn something new, I always repeat it so I can memorise it clearly. I read some books in that language and watch films so I can dig in deeper. (P158: Y9 high rated BIt)

4.2.4.2 High expectations of self and a bar of many languages

Their experience and understanding, however, can mean that they are harsh in rating their own skills:

> The only language that I actually learned[3] was English. When I started to learn Italian and French it was really hard for me. I started learning Italian in Year 6 and it's been three years and I still can't introduce myself. (P57: Y8 low self-rated B)
>
> Switzerland has four national languages, of which I only speak two. My first language is English and, through home, I started to learn a bit of French and some German. (P167: Y9 Mu-It)
>
> I think I was always bad at languages because I always compared my ability to others. In English, my brother always exceeded me. In Chinese, I always have to stay behind to learn the characters. In French, my results never beat my friends. (P131: Y9 low self-rated B)

This was also evident in various questionnaire responses:

> I can speak three languages well. (P153 Y9 M, self-rating 7)
>
> Currently, I understand English, Chinese and Italian. However, I believe it is average to know three languages. I am learning my fourth language, German, so I wouldn't say I'm amazing at languages. (P76: Y8 BIt, self-rating 6)

4.2.4.3 Expect hardship; it will be a bumpy road

On the other hand, the experience pupils have with learning languages seems to have prepared most of them for the challenges and difficulties they see as inevitable as part of an ongoing process:

> With learning a language comes great frustration because you might not get it first try... (P101: Y8 BIt, self-rated 10)
>
> You need to be patient because, with the challenges that come with learning a new language... (P97: Y8 BIt)
>
> You have to keep persevering with a language, even if you find it difficult. I think you have to have that enthusiasm to keep going because it's not going to come easy. (P104: Y8 ME)
>
> You can [get better], but you really have to work hard. (P14: Y7 monolingual Italian)
>
> You always need to practise at home because you're not going to get it in like a few years. Like, that's not how it works. You need time to practise. You need to speak with someone. You can get the *basics* at school, but I don't think you can learn a language fully at school. (P156: Y9 Mu-It, high self-rated)

4.2.4.4 Effort and strategies

As well as generally persisting and giving your all, as recommended above, other pupils had more specific advice and strategies that they shared:

[3] not counting her first language

> Don't be too fixated on learning every detail of a language. Often you don't need to know a language in such depth to really understand it. (P119: Y9 BIt)
>
> Sometimes you need to take a break...and let your mind breathe a bit. (P101:Y8 BIt)
>
> If you want to stop, but say you want to know how to speak it, it's better to do like a little bit each day. (P87: Y8 MI)
>
> At random points during the day, I would just start thinking that language just to remember it, cos it's always like -What language do I need to speak now?- It helps you switch faster. (P156: Y9 Mu-It, high self-rated)

Those who rated themselves as poor at languages, however, found it harder to suggest ways they might improve:

> I don't know what to do to make me better at learning languages. (P57: Y8 B, low self-rated)
>
> More revising could help. Yeah, it's just revising more, cos unless you use apps, there's no other way you could learn it except for school. (P121: Y9 ME, low self-rated)

The power of necessity and saliency was raised, though, by one learner, P155, who struggles with language learning, who said to get better, "I would need to dedicate myself to learning that language over and over again."

When asked what it would take to make him do that, P155 said, "Latin's a dead language, so I think if I really needed it, like if I lived in Spain, I would really dedicate myself to learning Spanish because I would need it in everyday life. I'd need a reason. There's exams and stuff, but I'd need a *motivation*." (P155: Y9 BIt low self-rater)

4.2.5 Theme 5: Talent and mindset

It is striking that those who speak Italian at home value their Italian lessons and feel they can always improve:

> I think you can always learn more, so you can always progress speaking your language. (Even) me. I'm Italian. I'm [young] but I still learn new things. (P45: Y7 MI)
>
> I'm learning a lot more in Italian- things I don't know and I think you can continue learning and getting even better. (P10: Y7 MI, agreeing with P45)

This is connected to the idea that those who see themselves as good at language learning also feel that improvement is within their grasp. Although the poor self-rated language learners said they believe anyone can get better, they feel it is harder for some:

> You can definitely get better if you try, but for some people it's just harder in general to remember stuff...especially if you don't use it every day. (P57: Y8 B, low self-rated)

> I feel like there are always people who have to study less for something. I'm dyslexic, so I find it hard to remember stuff without going over it loads and loads of times. So, language isn't my strong point. (P155: Y9 BIt, low self-rated)

Others make it clear that they believe to some extent, in a language learning talent:

> Practising just makes you better, but I also believe that some people are just good at some things and, although you practise, like some people are just born with some things that maybe others aren't. (P69: Y8 MI, rated self a 6)

> I think people have like this gift of learning languages. (P38: Y7 BIt self-rated 9)

> I don't think it's real saying you don't have an ability. You have to put both in, like if you've got a talent...imagine if we're looking at a level, some people are already at 50 and some people just started off at 0. If you're at 0, that means you just started off new, but you can become 100 by trying hard. (P43: Y7 Mu-It, self-rated 10)

However, there was evidence of the opposite point of view:

> Some people might be naturally better at it, but I feel like practice is essential. Like, I feel like it's harder to learn something if I don't really want to learn it. So, if I can't do it first try, then I just leave it. Then, there's other things that I have more interest in: if I fail, I don't care and I will try it again until I get it. (P26: Y7 M)

> Many people think that learning languages comes very easy to me because I'm pretty academically well-rounded, but I don't think they understand that it takes a lot of effort and time and revision to keep going. I don't think I have it built in me. (P104: Y8 ME, rated self 8)

> I don't think it's politically correct to say there's such a thing as 'talent'...but I do believe there's an element of maybe luck to it, because some people will pick it up faster than others. However, I do think that can also be achieved through a huge amount of practice and experience in the language. (P167: Y9, Mu-It)

So, it appears that even those who do believe in a 'talent' are aware that hard work is necessary for successful language learning.

4.2.6 Conclusion of qualitative interview data

The themes that have emerged from the interview data are varied but connected. First, there was evidence that multilingualism is seen as normal and advantageous by these pupils, and that monolingualism, conversely, is a distinct disadvantage to language learning. Next, the ultimate goal of communicative competence was made clear, and the distinction between how pupils feel about their Italian and other MFL lessons was broken down. The way pupils conceive of their language learning as an ongoing process followed this and the chapter concluded with evidence of learners' positions on a growth to fixed mindset continuum.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The results of this study will be discussed by Research Question, with reference to the existing literature. In addition, consideration will be given to evidence for the different motivational constructs within the qualitative data, as motivation research provided a foundation for the affective factors examined.

5.1 Research Question 1

5.1.1 RQ 1a: General feelings about MFL and Italian lessons

The respondents, as a whole, rated importance of both Italian and MFL learning as high, at *M*=7.55, *SD*= 2.18, median=8 and *M*=6.91, *SD*=2.29, median=7 respectively. The higher mean and median importance of Italian compared to MFL is explored further in analysis of the qualitative data. This accords with Hayden et al.'s (2000) findings, which showed how important multilingualism is to students and teachers at international schools.

In the present study, there was also a generally positive attitude towards enjoyment of both MFL and Italian, as both received median scores of seven on a ten-point scale. This might have been anticipated based on Platsidou et al.'s (2017) findings of international orientations mediating enjoyment of language learning, though this would conflate the international school environment and international mindedness. However, in Costley et al. (2020), positive attitudes were also found towards MFL lessons among both monolingual and bi- or multilingual pupils. The correlation between enjoyment of Italian and MFL in the present study was rather weak (r_s=0.16), though, which contrasts with the findings of Dewaele and Proietti Ergün (2020). In that study, a small to medium correlation was found between FLE in the two languages (*r*=0.356). The weak correlation in the present study indicates that there may be some pertinent differences between those who particularly enjoy each language; the stronger correlations between ratings for importance and enjoyment within languages may show that pupils tend to prefer one language holistically over the other.

5.1.2 RQ 1b: Feelings and language backgrounds

Home language background, both in terms of multilingualism and whether Italian is spoken at home, was not found to affect pupils' enjoyment of MFL lessons, or the importance they

attributed to those lessons, according to pairwise Kruskal-Wallis tests. This differs from the findings of De Smet et al. (2018), who found higher FLE among bilinguals than monolinguals.

However, those pupils who spoke Italian at home rated Italian higher for both enjoyment (medium effect size) and importance (small effect size) than those who did not. There were large differences between particular pairs of groups, with the Monolingual Italian pupils enjoying Italian much more than both the Monolingual English and Bilingual without Italian groups. Regarding importance, there were fewer and milder significant pairwise differences than for enjoyment. However, the Multilingual with Italian group rated importance of Italian particularly highly in comparison to all groups without Italian at home. The reasons for these differences will be discussed in section 5.2.

5.1.3 RQ 1c: Feelings and MFL choice

Pupils who chose to learn Chinese and Latin reported greater enjoyment of their MFL lessons compared to learners of German and of French. However, in interpreting this result, it must be acknowledged that the class sizes for both Chinese and Latin are very small, which may account for some of the difference: smaller classes may have contributed to the pupils' enjoyment of the lesson experience. In addition, French is somewhat of a default choice, with the largest numbers of pupils opting for that. It is possible that those who are disenfranchised from languages altogether end up taking French, while those choosing Latin or Chinese have a particular interest in those languages.

5.1.4 RQ 1d: Language backgrounds, feelings and self-proficiency rating

There was a low to moderate positive correlation between the 'good at languages' holistic judgement and enjoyment ratings for both MFL and Italian (r_s=0.47, p=<.001 and r_s=0.47, p=<.001 respectively). Platsidou and Kantaridou (2014), Wong and Nunan (2011) and Zhang et al. (2020) also examined perceived enjoyment of MFL and found that it correlated with self-reported proficiency. The first two of those studies concerned English as a target language, however, in contrast to the present study. Although the present study did not measure course marks, the correlation between enjoyment and self-rating suggests it might be interesting to explore whether course marks do correlate with enjoyment; they did not in Dewaele and Proietti Ergün (2020).

There was a difference in median self-ratings by language profile, with multilinguals giving themselves a higher median rating than bilinguals or monolinguals. However, as previously mentioned, these categories are not truly distinct. Some of the bilingual group actually speak

more than two languages and most of the Monolingual home background group members are actually bilingual, speaking one language at home in addition to English at school.

It is, nevertheless, very interesting that Italian being spoken at home appears also correlated with a higher self-rating. While the Multilingual with Italian group rated themselves higher than five out of six other groups, the Multilingual without Italian pupils did not differ significantly from any other groups, including the Monolingual English group. The Bilingual without Italian group rated themselves significantly lower than four out of six of the other groups. It appears, then, that speaking the language of context, even when it is not used in school (outside of Italian lessons) correlates with a higher self-proficiency rating and better language learning self-concept. This will be explored further in section 5.2.

5.2 Research Question 2

5.2.1 Nature of feelings about Italian

As has been shown, there was a difference in feelings about Italian depending on whether Italian is spoken in the home. For home Italian speakers, Italian lessons in school were seen as a relief and opportunity to enjoy speaking Italian. By contrast, those without Italian at home seemed to feel they had already been at a disadvantage when they began learning Italian. On a daily basis, th2y are witness to more proficient Italian speakers and the complex use of the language beyond controlled transactional interactions, even if they do not participate in such interactions themselves. This comparison with peers may negatively affect their self-concept (Mercer, 2011). As a result, it perhaps seems too hard to master this language in all its messy, real-world glory, meaning any nascent Ideal L2 self would not be seen as achievable and would be rendered ineffective in motivating the learner (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015).

The limited transactional use of Italian by those who do not speak it at home and the perception of its limitations outside of Italy are reminiscent of the findings of Belal (2017). There, a distinction was found between the concept of internationalism and the reality of interaction with the host community. Just because the focus school is in Italy does not mean the pupils feel integrated into an Italian speaking community. However, feeling able to use social language may be a precursor to attempting to use it to integrate. Certainly Hashimoto (2002) found perceived competence to directly affect both Willingness to Communicate and motivation. Indeed, some pupils expressed the desire to learn more basic Italian, followed by conversational language suited to their age group and interests, which would be more useful to them for social situations.

5.2.2 Nature of feelings about MFL

Although there was no statistically significant difference between groups in terms of enjoyment or importance of MFL, there were qualitative differences of feeling expressed. From the perspective of non-home Italian speakers, MFL was seen as tidy and manageable. There was an impression that MFL provided a fair start where all pupils began at the same point. This recalls Costley et al (2020), where the teachers saw MFL lessons as providing a "plain level field" (p. 653) for the (multilingual) EAL pupils and monolingual English children.

For some Italian speakers, on the other hand, MFL was frustrating and harder than expected given the anticipated benefits of their linguistic background. This was not universal, of course. Other bilinguals and multilinguals found their MFL relatively easy, as they could use their Italian (or other Romance language) knowledge to help with the French.

5.2.3 Self-concept

There was evidence of high language standards and high expectations, similar to those found in Costley et al. (2020), where bilingual and multilingual children did not count the language they were learning as an MFL among languages they knew. Some of the low self-rating pupils were negatively affected by this standard and clearly suffered from comparing their language profile and performance in lessons to that of others (Mercer, 2011). Coupled with a fixed mindset and low agency (see 5.2.4.1), this led to feelings of frustration and having given up.

In the present study, in contrast to Busse (2017), a number of pupils mentioned their bilingual or multilingual background as influencing their language learning. As in Busse, some pupils did reflect on the difficulties of specific languages they were learning and also on the particular assistance given by languages they already speak proficiently. Interviewees with multinational experience and multinational parentage clearly considered this beneficial to their language learning.

5.2.4 Feelings about language learning in general

The present study accords with the findings of Busse (2017) in terms of the importance of teacher effects. In open answers, teachers were mentioned in 12% and 14% of responses about Italian and MFL respectively. This is notably fewer than in Busse (2017), where 30% did so. In contrast to the findings of Dewaele and MacIntyre (2019), MFL teacher mentions in the present study were evenly split between positive (5%) and negatives (6%) ones. However, for Italian, the split resembled those previous studies more closely, with 12% positive mentions, and only 1% negative.

Only 2% of pupils mentioned loving their MFL lessons and the same for Italian lessons, which matches the number who rated their enjoyment of those subjects at nine or ten out of ten. According to Pavelescu and Petrić (2018), high enjoyment expressed as love might correspond with better performance. However, there was only a small-medium correlation between high enjoyment and self-rating (self-concept) in the present study. It is possible that a measure of self-concept per subject (rather than holistically) would have produced a stronger correlation with enjoyment of each subject, given the lack of correlation between enjoyment of MFL and enjoyment of Italian. In addition, actual performance was not measured.

5.2.4.1 Mindsets

The present study found some evidence of a continuum of fixed to growth mindsets, as reported by Mercer and Ryan (2009). Respondents mentioned some pupils having advantages, head starts and being born with a gift, but also hard work, tenacity and the existence of a misconception of ease for some learners. A number of pupils indicated that they fell between the two extremes on the continuum. This may reflect the extensive experience many of the pupils have had in learning different languages and their appreciation of the long-term commitment and nuance of language learning. Many appeared to see it as a long journey with anticipated difficulties and challenges and this view did seem more prevalent among experienced language learners, multilinguals and those who had high self-reported proficiency.

Contrastingly, there was some evidence that low self-raters felt disempowered to improve. It seemed to be that, while they believed in theory that anyone could improve, they saw their own mountain as incredibly difficult to scale. This reflects a lack of agency, or motivation, breaking the connection between the concept of improvement being possible and attempting to make it happen.

5.2.5 Motivation

5.2.5.1 Integrative motivation

There was little evidence of integrative motivation among pupils, with only one interviewee mentioning social benefits of learning Italian and no questionnaire respondents specifically mentioning friends or relationships. This was not anticipated for Italian, though it was expected for MFL. Italian, being the language of context, might have been thought to exert a greater integrative pull on pupils. However, the reality for those who do not speak Italian at home is that they are part of one international community where the *lingua franca* is English and perhaps others where an(other) L1 is used.

5.2.5.2 Instrumental motivation

Conversely, instrumental motivation seemed prevalent among responses to both the questionnaire and interviews. Many pupils mentioned using their MFL for future travel and job opportunities. Importantly, Italian was not seen as having the same instrumental potential for highly mobile pupils as their other MFLs, especially where those MFLs were widely spoken. These results echo those of Zhang et al. (2020), who hypothesised that choice in L3 renders instrumental motivation for learning that language more salient than for the mandatory L2.

5.2.5.3 Extrinsic motivation

In Platsidou et al (2017), the authors proposed that extrinsic motivation might be of greater importance to young adolescent language learners than intrinsic motivation, as measured by enjoyment. The results of the present study did not contradict this, as a weak correlation was found between pupils thinking they were good at languages and enjoying language learning. It is possible that the extrinsic motivation provided by their mandatory school lessons and regular tests is enough to adequately motivate most pupils.

5.2.5.4 Ideal L2 self

There was limited evidence of well-formed Ideal L2 selves among responses. A handful of pupils discussed future plans with a surprising degree of specificity, such as P22, a Year 7 who knew he wanted to live outside of Italy and use his Chinese for business purposes as an adult. Similarly, one or two pupils talked about how they would use their MFL when travelling and had a more carefully formed idea of themselves using that language in another country.

It is fascinating that the pupils appeared to have little idea of an Ideal L2 self in respect of Italian. Perhaps they choose to disassociate from the messiness of learning a language of context which may not serve them in the future and focus on the potential glamour of learning their MFL well and using it abroad.

5.2.5.5 Ought-to self

Evidence of an Ought-to self featured heavily, but only in so far as many pupils felt an obligation to speak at least the basics of Italian while living in Italy. Beyond this, it did not appear that many pupils felt they had to work harder, or that the obligation would change their behaviour. Several monolingual English pupils expressed a feeling of stress due to the perceived necessity of speaking Italian, which may indicate that the Ought-to self can be counter-productive in places, according with the findings of Papi and Abdollazadeh (2012).

5.3 Limitations

The study was subject to various limitations, the most salient of which will be discussed below.

5.3.1 Definitional limitations

The definition of each language background group, while not 'incorrect' can only be interpreted in relation to the languages regularly used at home by the pupils. This necessarily excludes English when it is spoken primarily at school, although all pupils speak English at school because it is an English medium establishment. In addition, as has been explained previously, some families do use or practise other languages around the home, including instances where parents are learning Italian or other languages.

5.3.2 Methodological limitations

The pupils who opted out of completing the questionnaire may have been less engaged in school in general and may have contained a high concentration of those who did not enjoy their language lessons. Likewise, the pupils who declined invitations to take part in group interviews may have been more likely to have negative feelings about their language learning experiences. This means that reported perceptions may have been slightly more positive overall than the average of the entire KS3 population.

The time pressure on data collection meant that very few bilinguals and multilinguals without Italian were interviewed, and those who were mostly interviewed as part of a high rated or low rated group. Therefore, their language background is underrepresented in the qualitative data.

Finally, the decision to use only one self-rating, rather than one for MFL and one for Italian, or even further ratings relating to home languages represents a missed opportunity to distinguish between pupils' different linguistic self-concepts in different languages.

5.4 Discussion summary

It has been seen that pupils differ in their feelings about language learning, but that whether or not Italian was spoken at home made a bigger difference than other variables. In addition, MFL choice may be a result of particular feelings about language learning, or the feelings expressed may be consequences of class size effects. Qualitative differences in feelings of different pupils have been explored, as have the saliency of various motivational constructs.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This chapter will summarise the findings of the present study, before explaining their contribution to SLA research and pedagogical implications. Finally, some recommendations will be made for further research and the direction it may take.

6.1 Aims and methodology

This study aimed to find out if there is a difference in pupils' feelings about modern language lessons in a British international school in Italy. The nature of feelings about those lessons were investigated through open questionnaire items and group interviews with KS3 pupils. Potential differences between compulsory Italian lessons and MFL lessons, which were mandatory though selected from a choice of four languages, were considered. Likewise, potential differences in feelings between pupils of different home language backgrounds were examined. Numerical rating scales were employed in the questionnaire to address some of these issues quantitatively.

6.2 Summary of findings

KS3 pupils in the focus international school generally enjoy their language lessons, both in Italian and their selected other language. They generally have a good self-concept of their ability in languages.

Pupils with Italian spoken at home enjoy Italian lessons more than those who do not speak it in the household, and those pupils also feel learning Italian is more important than those pupils who do not speak it at home. However, Italian being spoken at home, and analysis of more specific language backgrounds, did not affect ratings in respect of MFL. Speaking Italian at home was associated with a higher self-rating as 'good at languages'. This indicates that the language of context (even if not used much, or as anything other than transactionally) may have greater saliency as a measure of self-judgement.

Pupils see their Italian and other MFL lessons differently, with an understandable sense of responsibility to learn the language of context being reported by a large number of respondents. However, this sense of immediate necessity can lead to a feeling of pressure on some pupils, and does not always reflect the actual everyday linguistic needs of individual pupils.

6.3 Evaluation of contribution

6.3.1 Significance of findings for theory and research

This study contributes to the field of L3 learning in classroom contexts and in international education and the learning of LOTEs. The results are interesting in reflecting priorities in young adolescent learners within an international community. Proficiency in the language of societal context may influence overall linguistic self-concept more than multilingualism, and may not depend on the actual need for, or use of, the language of societal context. However, pupils value real-world application and some would welcome a more needs-orientated Italian curriculum given the high levels of mobility in the pupil population.

There is some evidence that the concept of instrumental motivation may be of continuing importance and particularly relevant to adolescents, while the Ideal L2 self may be a less salient construct for such learners. Integrative motivation did not appear particularly relevant in this research context. However, it may be rather more important when the language being learned has a more essential social role for young teenagers.

6.3.2 Pedagogical implications

The pedagogical implications of this study may be modest. However, in the relative absence of previous research in the area of L2+ learning among international pupils, with English laid to one side, several recommendations will be made. Perhaps the most important of these is that the teaching of a language of context as L2 or L3 should be considered carefully in relation to the needs of pupils at each school. The desire to learn practical conversational Italian which could be used immediately in the community for transactional interactions, followed by more conversational language tailored to the social needs of young teenagers may provide a more productive course model, both in terms of utility and enjoyment. In these cases, there is time for Italian to be promoted in a more context-sensitive way. This is particularly pertinent given the mobile nature of the school population, coupled with the weight pupils attribute to their chances of using Italian in the future.

Conversely, more could be done in MFL to promote the current use of the languages taught so as to foster a sense that they are useful not only for the nebulous ‘future,’ but also in the present. For this to happen, the sizable parental body, which represents an enormous collective linguistic resource, could be engaged. This has, admittedly, been particularly difficult in the past two academic years due to Covid-19, but online engagement could have occurred.

Thirdly, new pupils from monolingual English homes, as well as others who do not speak Italian at home, should be offered some more support in their settling in period. Their potential feelings of inadequacy in a massively multilingual environment should be considered and particularly sensitive approaches from their language teachers may be appreciated.

6.4 Recommendations for further research

A promising direction for further research would be to extend the scope of enquiry to other international schools, either in Italy, or elsewhere. The latter would allow consideration of how the language of societal context affects results when it is a language perhaps more widely spoken outside of the host country.

In addition, it would be useful to conduct further studies where the self-rating measure is separated for the two languages being examined. It would also be interesting to examine the effect of externally-measured proficiency and performance, and to use standard scales to measure enjoyment, such as the newly validated S-FLES (Botes et al. 2021). Furthermore, taking English into account as a comparator language, in contexts where it is the language of instruction, may be informative.

6.5 Conclusion

This study has examined the similarities and differences in how KS3 pupils at an international school in Italy feel about learning languages. In doing so, it has gone some way towards addressing the lack of research into the effects of multilingualism and home language profiles on learners of multiple languages and LOTEs, with English laid aside. It has found a lack of effect from home language backgrounds on enjoyment and importance ratings for MFL subjects, but qualitative differences in the experiences of pupils of different language backgrounds in respect of those lessons.

Conversely, an effect was found related to whether the language of societal context, Italian, was spoken at home. Italian at home was associated with higher enjoyment and importance ratings for Italian lessons and also higher self-concept ratings as ‘good at languages.’ Multilingualism was also found to be associated with higher self-proficiency ratings. It is suggested that proficiency in the language of societal context may be more salient in deciding linguistic self-concept than proficiency in other languages.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Confirmation of Ethical Approval

On 12 May 2021, at 13:00, Pinar Kolancali <pinar.kolancali@wolfson.ox.ac.uk> wrote:

Dear XXXXXXXXXX,

Thank you for this well-prepared application for your study on 'KS3 Pupil Perceptions of Second Language Italian and MFL lessons'.

Your application has been considered on behalf of the Departmental Research Ethics Committee (DREC) in accordance with the procedures laid down by the University for ethical approval of all research involving human participants.

I am pleased to inform you that, based on the information provided to DREC, the proposed research has been judged as meeting appropriate ethical standards, and accordingly, approval has been granted.

Please continue to follow all current guidance issued by CUREC during the pandemic, notably COVID-19: CUREC guidance on research involving human participants, https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/governance/ethics/coronavirus

If relevant, please also check the CUREC website for their best practice research guides, https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/governance/ethics/resources/bpg

Stay safe,

Yours sincerely,

Pinar

Pinar Kolancali

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Appendix II: Self-declared home languages of group interviewees

Home languages	***Number of interviewees in <u>Year 7</u>***	***Number of interviewees in <u>Year 8</u>***	***Number of interviewees in <u>Year 9</u>***	***Total across all three year groups***	***Total of wider group across all three year groups*** *(percentage of those interviewed)*
Monolingual (Not English or Italian)	2	4	0	6	23(50%)
Monolingual (English)	4	2	5	10	
Monolingual (Italian)	3	4	0	7	
Bilingual (without Italian)	1	1	1	3	17(37%)
Bilingual (with Italian)	7	4	3	14	
Multilingual (without Italian)	0	0	1	1	6(13%)
Multilingual (with Italian)	2	1	2	5	
Total *(percentage of those interviewed)*	19(41%)	16(35%)	11(24%)	46	46

Appendix III: Themes and subthemes used in qualitative interview data analysis

Themes	Subthemes
Theme 1: Multilingualism as the (valued) norm	Multilingual families Family language learning Secret family languages Siblings versus parents Deliberate conscious language planning Shifting dominance and proficiency Multilingual advantages Language connections Monolingual challenges and embarrassment
Theme 2: Communication as the ultimate purpose	Language bigger than school Communication and spoken language Accentism and 'incorrect' language Transactional use or lack thereof Wrong focus in lessons Basics enough for some
Theme 3: Italian and MFL seen differently	Differences- ease, need and want Pressure from context The attraction of a new language
Theme 4: Work in Progress	Language learning as an ongoing process High expectations of quality and quantity Expect hardship Effort and strategies
Theme 5: Talent and mindsets	Everyone can improve but it's harder for some

Appendix IV: Questionnaire

Section 1: Italian

1.1. Do you speak Italian at home?

1.2. If yes, who do you speak it with?

1.3. **Do you enjoy Italian** lessons at school? Choose your answer on the scale below:

1: Not at all	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10: Very much

1.4. Explain why you chose that number on the scale.

1.5 How **important** is it to learn **Italian**? Choose your answer on the scale below:

1: Not at all	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10: Very

1.6. Explain why you chose that number on the scale.

Section 2: MFL

2.1 What is the **MFL (Language option)** you study at school:

Language	**Cross (X)**
Chinese	
French	
German	
Latin	
EAL (no extra MFL) - *Skip to section 3*	

2.2 **Do you enjoy** your **MFL** (French or German or Chinese or Latin) lessons? Choose your answer on the scale below:

1: Not at all	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10: Very much

2.3 Explain why you chose that number on the scale

2.4 **How important** is it to learn your **MFL** option subject (Chinese/German/French/Latin)? Choose your answer on the scale below:

1: Not at all	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10: Very

2.5 Explain why you chose that number on the scale.

2.6 Do you think you made the right choice about which MFL to study?

No- I should have chosen a different one.	Maybe/not sure	Yes- I chose the right one for me.

2.7 Why did you choose that answer?

2.8 If you said NO for 2.6, which other MFL (language) do you think would have been a better choice?

Section 3: You

3.1 Name:

3.2 Year group:

3.3 Languages you speak at home/ with your close family:

3.4 How long have you been at [school name]?

3.5 How long do you think you will stay in Italy?

3.6 Did you go to an Italian nursery or an Italian school before [school name]?

3.7 **Are you good at languages**? Choose an answer on the scale below:

1: Not at all	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10: Very good

3.8 Why did you choose that number?

3.9 Please finish this sentence to tell me what you think:

Learning languages at school is….

Appendix V: Mercer and Ryan's (2009) Guiding questions

Mercer and Ryan's (2009) guiding questions:

What factors do you feel are necessary to be a highly successful language learner?

Do you believe there is such a thing as a natural ability for learning languages?

If you believe there is such a thing, how would you describe a natural ability for learning languages?

Appendix VI: Semi-structured group interview guide

Semi-structured group interview guide:

Tell me about your language learning history.

How do you use your languages at home and who do you use them with?

Do you use your Italian/ French/ Chinese/German/Latin outside of school?

- How/ who with?

What do you think makes someone a good language learner?

Some people think that people are born with a fixed ability to learn languages- you are either good at it or not. Some people think disagree and think people can get better at learning languages. What do you think?

(If they do not think it is a fixed ability) How would someone get better at learning languages?

How do you feel about learning Italian/ your Italian lessons?

How do you feel about your MFL/ your MFL lessons?

(If they rated themselves high) What about you makes you a good language learner?

(If they rated themselves low) Why did you rate yourself so low as a language learner?

Appendix VII: Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) procedure

Thematic Analysis Procedure (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.87):

1. Familiarizing yourself with your data: Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.

2. Generating initial codes: Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.

3. Searching for themes: Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.

4. Reviewing themes: Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.

5. Defining and naming themes: Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.

6. Producing the report: The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Appendix VIII: Enjoyment of MFL by language background

Pairwise Kruskal-Wallis results for Enjoyment of MFL, with H to 2 d.p, showing non-significant results for every language background pair.

Bilingual With Italian	*H*=0.97 (1, *N*=65) *p*=.32458					
Monolingual other	*H*=0.16 (1, *N*=40) *p*=.68601	*H*=0.11 (1, *N*=51) *p*=.73762				
Monolingual English	*H*=0.04 (1, *N*=49) *p*=.84856	*H*=1.10 (1, *N*=60) *p*=.29336	*H*=0.26 (1, *N*=35) *p*=.60859			
Monolingual Italian	*H*=1.92 (1, *N*=44) *p*=.16576	*H*=0.16 (1, *N*=55) *p*=.68865	*H*=0.37 (1, *N*=30) *p*=.54395	*H*=1.77 (1, *N*=39) *p*=.18314		
Multilingual without Italian	*H*=1.42 (1, *N*=33) *p*=.23395	*H*=0.18 (1, *N*=44) *p*=.66902	*H*=0.49 (1, *N*=19) *p*=.4829	*H*=1.19 (1, *N*=28) *p*=.27493	*H*=0.12 (1, *N*=23) *p*=.72629	
Multilingual with Italian	*H*=1.42 (1, *N*=45) *p*=.2328	*H*=0.06 (1, *N*=56) *p*=.7992	*H*=0.16 (1, *N*=31) *p*=.68892	*H*=1.21 (1, *N*=40) *p*=.27088	*H*=<0.01 (1, *N*=35) *p*=.97367	*H*=0.02 (1, *N*=24) *p*=.89393
	Bilingual Without Italian	**Bilingual with Italian**	**Monolingual other**	**Monolingual English**	**Monolingual Italian**	**Multilingual without Italian**

Appendix IX: Importance of MFL by language background

Pairwise Kruskal-Wallis results for Importance of MFL, with H to 2 d.p, showing non-significant results for every language background pair.

Bilingual with Italian	*H*=0.38 (1, *N*=65) *p*=.5403					
Monolingual other	*H*=0.07 (1, *N*=40) *p*=.79495	*H*=0.06 (1, *N*=51) *p*=.8037				
Monolingual English	*H*=3.72 (1, *N*=49) *p*=.05365	*H*=2.71 (1, *N*=60) *p*=.09914	*H*=2.57 (1, *N*=35) *p*=.10859			
Monolingual Italian	*H*=<0.01 (1, *N*=44) *p*=.96155	*H*=0.52 (1, *N*=55) *p*=.47189	*H*=0.19 (1, *N*=30) *p*=.66034	*H*=3.23 (1, *N*=39) *p*=.07211		
Multilingual without Italian	*H*=0.56 (1, *N*=33) *p*=.45517	*H*=0.21 (1, *N*=44) p=.6443	*H*=0.28 (1, *N*=19) *p*=.59873	*H*=0.15 (1, *N*=28) *p*=.69511	*H*=0.65 (1, *N*=23) *p*=.42073	
Multilingual with Italian	*H*=0.52 (1, *N*=45) *p*=.47262	*H*=0.07 (1, *N*=56) *p*=.78568	*H*=0.18 (1, *N*=31) *p*=.67424	*H*=1.04 (1, *N*=40) *p*=.30797	*H*=0.58 (1, *N*=35) *p*=.44778	*H*=0.07 (1, *N*=24) *p*=.78973
	Bilingual Without Italian	**Bilingual with Italian**	**Monolingual other**	**Monolingual English**	**Monolingual Italian**	**Multilingual without Italian**

Appendix X: Statistically non-significant grouped differences

Statistically non-significant grouped differences on Kruskal-Wallis

Groups	Enjoyment of MFL		Importance of MFL		Enjoyment of Italian		Importance of Italian	
	***H* value**	***p***	***H* value**	***p***	***H* value**	***p***	***H* value**	***p***
Monolingual and Bilingual	0.01 (1, N=119)	.9171	0.72 (1, *N*=120)	.39645	0.09 (1, *N*=132)	.7604	0.42 (1, *N*=132)	.51512
Monolingual and Multilingual	0.87 (1, *N*=79)	.35089	0.00 (1, *N*=80)	.99172	1.76 (1, *N*=91)	.18465	3.12 (1, *N*=91)	.07742
Bilingual and Multilingual	0.72 (1, *N*=90)	.39461	0.36 (1, *N*=90)	.54614	1.05 (1, *N*=93)	.30631	1.15 (1, *N*=93)	.28267
Italian spoken at home or not	2.33 (1, *N*=144)	.12729	0.41 (1, *N*=145)	.52298	*See Table 4.3*		*See Table 4.4*	

Appendix XI: Change of title form

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Notification of Change of Title Form

Please submit this form **electronically** to the Higher Degrees Office: higherdegreesoffice@education.ox.ac.uk
Please do not submit it later than 1st August or it will not be accepted.

NAME OF STUDENT	
CANDIDATE NUMBER	1029943
NAME OF SUPERVISOR	
COURSE	MSc ALLT
PREVIOUS DISSERTATION TITLE KS3 Pupil Perceptions of Second Language Italian and MFL Lessons	
PROPOSED NEW TITLE How MFL subjects are perceived by international school pupils in Italy	
SUPERVISOR APPROVAL Please check this box to confirm you have discussed this title with your supervisor and received his/her approval for it: Confirmed- approved by email.	

Appendix XII: Change of title approval

Tue 7/27/2021 2:23 PM

Dear XXXXXXX,

This has been received and the details have been updated.

Best wishes,
Stacey

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