



Language learning motivation  
and the discursive representations of German, the Germans, and Germany  
in UK school settings and the press

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## **Abstract**

Language learning in UK secondary schools is in sharp decline. Of the three most commonly taught languages, French, Spanish, and German, German uptake is dropping at the fastest rate. Societal attitudes towards languages and the target language communities of speakers are commonly blamed for the decline, however, few previous studies have investigated this area via empirical evidence. The current study explores the relationship between motivation for German learning in adolescent language learners in England, and the representations of German, the Germans, and Germany in private and public UK discourses. Through a mixed methods, cross-sectional research design, private grassroots discourses in a school setting and public discourses in the national press are examined to gain an insight into how beliefs and attitudes around German are constructed and conceptualised, and results are related to the factors that underlie learner attitudes, motivation for German learning and language uptake decisions. The study's theoretical framework draws on a range of key concepts from second language (L2)-specific and mainstream psychological motivation theories, such as Gardner's socio-educational model, as well as on aspects of cognitive-situated and self-based models. Main participants were 506 13 to 16-year-old German learners from a range of four secondary schools at the time they were asked to decide whether to continue or drop German. Further respondents included four German teachers and four head teachers from the participating schools. For the school settings strand, learner data were collected via focus groups and a questionnaire combining items which generated quantitative (such as motivation mean scores) as well as qualitative (such as metaphor) data; teacher and head teacher data were collected via interviews. For the public discourse strand, a specialised corpus of 40,000 UK national newspaper articles around German, the Germans, and Germany was compiled, and explored using discourse analysis techniques. Four research questions investigated the motivational dimensions relating to learners' choices to continue or discontinue with the

study of German, how German is represented in discourses of key players in school settings, how German is represented in newspaper discourses in the press, and the relationship between public and private discourses around German, the Germans, and Germany in the UK. Contrary to what is commonly thought about motivation for language learning, results suggest that adolescent learners in England are motivated to continue German not by instrumental rationales, but rather by their enjoyment of the classroom learning situation, and by a sense of personal relevance. The growing elitification in language learning in the UK manifests in the study's data, in that a higher socio-economic background is associated with continuing German, more conducive attitudes, a higher sense of personal relevance, and a view of language learning as a worthwhile process which requires effort and persistence. In press discourses, German is mainly represented in terms of politics and war, Germans mainly in terms of war, and Germany mainly in relation to other countries and football. The wider discourses in the press are reproduced in a reciprocal relationship with private discourses in the school setting. The study contributes to knowledge by presenting new insights into the motivation of adolescent German learners in the UK, and by validating elements of pre-existing motivation models, such as self-determination and self-worth theory. Furthermore, through its novel design of bringing together private and public discourse domains, it provides empirical evidence for previously unsubstantiated claims of links between the representation of target language speakers and communities in the mass media, and language learner motivation at English secondary schools.



## **Declaration**

I confirm that this is my own work and the use of all material from other sources has been properly and fully acknowledged.

Heike Krüsemann

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# **Chapter 1: Introduction**

## **1.1. Language learning in the UK: Opportunities and challenges**

The real-life starting point for this study is rooted in my experiences as a German teacher in English secondary schools since 1989. In my years at the ‘chalkface’ I have taught German to a generation of students against the backdrop of a range of different language policies and fashions in pedagogy, most of which have come and gone. Among the changing trends was one constant. Every year learners transitioned from primary school and started year 7 German lessons with unbridled enthusiasm. As they progressed up the school towards the non-compulsory stage of language education, not for all but for most, their keenness did not translate into language uptake. Yet, learners still appeared to enjoy lessons, they loved hearing about and engaging with German culture, and they appeared to value what they had learnt so far in terms of proficiency and knowledge. They also, however, shared with me the often stereotypical and negative values they had assimilated from their social environment about German, the Germans, and Germany. I began to suspect that the answer to why the majority of learners did not continue with German lay somewhere in their social context and the messages they absorbed from the world around them, consciously as well as subconsciously. As I learnt more and more about motivation for language learning in my role as Research Assistant at the University of Reading, my urge to explore the relationship between learner motivation for German at school level and the specific UK German learning context eventually resulted in this project.

To understand the current position of the subject of German in the UK school system, it is important to be aware of the trajectories which government language policy, and consequently language education, have described over the last few decades. Until the 1960s, study of languages in England was more or less confined to socio-economically

privileged learners (Hawkins, 1996). Even in 1965, only a quarter of learners over the age of eleven studied a foreign language (Whitehead, 1996).

With the advent of comprehensive schools in the late 60s and 70s, whose mission was to increase educational opportunities, languages were first offered to a wider range of learners. However, lower-attaining learners were often excluded, and few learners continued a language beyond the compulsory age of 14 (Moys, 1996). In 1994, in the course of the process of introducing the National Curriculum (NC) in the late 1980s and early 1990s, a modern foreign language (MFL) became compulsory until age 16, at which stage students took the General Certificate of Education (GCSE) examination. The policy of compulsory language study for GCSE was known as 'Languages for All'. During this time language teaching and its methodologies focussed more and more on language as a tool for communication, as opposed to the study of literature, grammar, and high culture, which characterised the pedagogical aims of the classical languages (McLelland, 2017). Along with the strengthening of a common European identity through the UK joining the European Economic Community in 1973 (the predecessor of the European Union (EU)), language didactics adopted a more pragmatic, outward-looking stance and promoted an awareness of language and reflection on their own culture among learners (Hawkins, 1996). A new aspect of MFL emerged as cultural studies, which aimed to cultivate cultural awareness, tolerance, and positive attitudes towards the target language speaking communities (TLSCs; Byram, 1997).

However, the 'Languages for All' policy was reversed in 2003/04, when compulsory language study post age 14 was abolished. It had been hoped that making a language at GCSE compulsory would result in increased language uptake at A'level, but quite the opposite was the case: compulsory language study at GCSE was accompanied by a marked decrease in numbers of learners choosing to continue with language study in the 6th Form (years 12/13, age 16-18), possibly because GCSE classes consisted of many

more reluctant language learners (1996-2016 figures by language are available in Tinsley & Board, 2017a, p. 20). Whilst the discontinuation of ‘Languages for All’ has widely been blamed for the decline in language study (e.g. Coleman, Galaczi, & Astruc, 2007), uptake figures show that A’level entries began in fact to fall before 2003/04, the year the first cohort freed from compulsory language study chose their A’level subjects. This led Macaro (2008) to directly link the NC and the ‘Languages for All’ policy with the stark decline in A’level entries.

At GCSE level, currently less than half of all learners study a language (Tinsley & Board, 2017a). With the introduction of the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) in 2011, a school performance measure which includes a language GCSE, numbers briefly increased, however with the gaining importance of other performance measures which do not include the requirement for learners to study a language, such as Progress 8, this slight gain in entries was not sustained (Tinsley & Board, 2017a). The short-term positive effect on language GCSE entries as a result of the introduction of the E-Bacc appears to have been short-lived, and conversely the real impact of current performance measures, such as Attainment 8 and Progress 8, together with severe grading, has been said to disincentivise the study of languages rather than encourage it (ALL, 2016). For the 2017 summer examinations, German GCSE entries dropped by 12%, French by 10%, and Spanish by 3% (Dickens, 2017). A’level entries have also declined by around one third (32%) since 1996 (Tinsley & Board, 2017a).

The rapid decline of languages in the UK plays out against the background of a number of official initiatives and reports in support of languages, such as the University of Cambridge’s ‘The value of languages’ strategy proposal (2015). In the light of the recent Brexit vote of 2016 (the vote to leave the European Union), official government and expert voices have called for a strengthening of the UK’s languages capacity, such as the All Parliamentary Group on Modern Languages (APGML, 2016), the Minister of State for

Schools Standards (Gibb, 2016), and the universities of Oxford (Kohl, 2016) and Cambridge (Colvin, 2016). Moreover, also in view of impending Brexit, concerns have been expressed around the fact that about a third of UK language teachers are EU citizens, whose future status in the UK is now uncertain (Stauffenberg, 2017). The government has recently delayed the original EBacc study target of 90% of students entered for GCSEs by 2020 by seven years to the year 2027 (Whittaker, 2017), but in the light of the most recent figures for students entered for the EBacc (38.1%) and students achieving the EBacc (21.1%), it seems unlikely that this target will be reached (TLTP, 2017). However, lack of language teachers is still going to be even more of an issue in the future (Allen, 2017).

Language skills, of course, take some time to acquire, and need to start at school level. Currently, English secondary school students usually study a compulsory language (most commonly French, Spanish, or German) during key stage (KS) 3. KS3 originally comprised school years 7 to 9 (age 11-14), but schools can choose to start KS4 from year 9 (age 13/14). At the end of KS3, learners choose their GCSE options, for which exams are taken at the end of KS4. Depending on which school year a school starts KS4, learners are choosing their GCSE options either as early as year 8 (age 13), or year 9 (age 14). Whilst government language policy makes a language optional for GCSE, schools can choose internally to make an MFL a compulsory GCSE option. Schools who do so are often socio-economically advantaged and/or academically selective: selective schools enter about 30% more students for a language GCSE than comprehensive schools do (Tinsley & Board, 2017a). At the opposite end of the spectrum, schools tend to exclude low-attaining learners from language study and language exams (Education Datalab, 2015; Tinsley & Board, 2017a). This policy is closely linked with socio-economic factors: the higher a school's level of social deprivation, the lower the take-up for languages (Vidal Rodeiro, 2009; Graham, 2017).

It does not seem too far-fetched then to conclude that the language learning landscape of the UK has described a full circle. Starting out from the preserve of the privileged few in the pre-1960s, oriented by goals from the study of classics such as high culture, literature, translation, and analytic skills, the gradual process of widening access to educational opportunities reframed languages as desirable, achievable and even necessary for all. In the 1980s, the then newly emerged discipline of cultural studies encouraged reflection on one's own culture, as well as positive encounters with and attitudes towards speakers of other (European) languages (Wegner, 1999). Currently, language study in schools is again the preserve of the socially advantaged (Tinsley & Board, 2017a). Divided along socio-economic lines (e.g. Corlett, Clarke, & Tomlinson, 2017) the UK is experiencing a climate of anti-European attitudes. The latest British Societal Attitudes Survey (34th report, data collected between July and November 2016) states: "We are more Eurosceptic than ever, with long term trends in Euroscepticism continuing to rise after the referendum in June 2016" (NatCen, 2017).

Having traced the recent history of language study in the UK school system up until the point when Britain is preparing to leave the EU, what follows is a closer look at Europe's most widely spoken language, German, and its position as a foreign language in the UK.

## **1.2. German learning in the UK**

*"I began learning German at the age of 13, and I'm still trying to explain to myself why it was love at first sound"* (le Carré, 2017).

When 85-year old British writer and life-long champion of the German language, John le Carré, made his plea for 'why we should learn German', his words could hardly have contrasted any more starkly with the position German as a school subject occupies in the UK today. Although le Carré's article was applauded by academics and language

enthusiasts (e.g. Martin, 2017; *Guardian comments*, 2017), the figures show that learners typically decide to discontinue German at the same age at which le Carré had his ‘falling in love’ experience in the 1930s (Tinsley & Board, 2017a).

Traditionally in the English secondary school system, French was the most common foreign language taught, followed by German and Spanish. Whilst French and German exam entries have been declining for both GCSE and A’level, Spanish provision and exam entries have been rising, and Spanish is currently the second most taught language after French. At secondary school level, uptake of German post the compulsory age of 14 is declining steeply (Tinsley & Board, 2017a). Whereas French GCSE entries declined by 15% and Spanish entries rose by 50% over the last seven years, German GCSE exam entries declined by 27% (Tinsley & Board, 2017a). 2016 saw the lowest ever number of entries for German GCSEs (German: 48,136; French: 136,862; Spanish: 87,519 (Tinsley & Board, 2017a)). For A’level, the figures are even more stark: whilst overall A’level languages entries have fallen by around one third in the last 20 years, German entries have declined the most by about two thirds compared with 1996 (Tinsley & Board, 2017a). Currently, French and Spanish account for about one third of A’level language entries each, but German accounts for only 13% (Tinsley & Board, 2017a).

In the state sector, languages are even less frequently taught than in the independent sector. This gap is most pronounced for German, where 74% of independent schools offer the subject at KS3, whereas only 44% of state schools do so (Tinsley & Board, 2017a). Although GCSE entries for languages overall rose briefly in 2013, commonly believed to be triggered by the introduction of the EBacc performance measure, German experienced the lowest rise out of the most commonly taught languages. Since the 2013 so-called ‘E-Bacc effect’, numbers have been falling again, and entries for German are now below pre-2012 levels (Tinsley & Board, 2017a).

At primary school level at KS2 (years 3-6, age 7-11), for which language provision became compulsory in 2014, of the 727 responding schools to the Language Trends survey 2016/17 only 5 % offered German (compared with 77% French, 27% Spanish, and 4% Chinese). In the Higher Education (HE) sector, more and more German university departments across the UK are closing. A survey of the availability of language degree courses showed that in the 15 years between 1998 and 2013, the number of UK universities offering German had halved (Bawden, 2013).

The decline of languages at school level in general, but that of German in particular, has attracted the attention of UK national mass media on both sides of the political spectrum, with headlines such as “German could face 'extinction in schools', heads warn” in *The Telegraph* (Espinoza, 2015), and “Poor language skills will see UK pupils 'drift into oblivion' as they are overtaken by Chinese and Indian students” in *The Daily Mail* (Harding, 2015). Some more recent media articles directly link the UK’s need not just for languages (Burns, 2016; Kershaw, 2017), but specifically for German with the Brexit vote of 2016. Headlines include “After Brexit, fluency in German will be a vital tool for success” (*Guardian comments*, 2017), and “Deal or no deal: Why Brexit makes learning German more important than ever” (Martin, 2017).

The above rationales for learning German tend to frame German skills for British people in terms of utilitarian benefit. Whilst it is true that German, for some years, has been the foreign language most requested by UK employers (Tinsley, 2013) as well as the most in demand language by the UK’s top export markets (Tinsley & Board, 2017b), this does not, however, seem to translate into increased German uptake. What motivates school-age learners to study or drop German is a more complex matter and transcends simplistic economic arguments. Past initiatives aimed at increasing uptake, such as the ‘Business Language Champions’ scheme (Mann, Brassell, & Bevan, 2011), or the call by the British Chamber of Commerce for languages to be made compulsory for all up to AS

level (although the MFL AS level is currently being phased out) (British Chamber of Commerce, 2013), have mainly been based on the ‘usefulness rationale’ and have largely not yielded hoped-for results, which also points towards the fact that the utilitarian argument alone does not stimulate learners to continue a language beyond compulsory study (e.g. Taylor & Marsden, 2014). Some scholars (e.g. Ammon, 2014; Ortmanns, 1993), however, claim that the decline in German uptake in the UK was entirely motivated by economic factors, an argument which aligns with a view that uptake is driven by instrumental motifs (e.g. Mitchell, 2011). Others take the view that rationales for language uptake originate at learner level, such as a sense of progress, or perceptions of competence (e.g. Macaro, 2008). The latter view would be supported by a 2014 survey of 1001 young people between the ages of 14 and 24, the largest percentage of whom (48%) said the main downside to learning a language was that the grammar was difficult, followed by 40% who reported that they found vocabulary learning hard. Asked for the reasons why they had not chosen a language for GCSE, the highest percentage of participants said that they found other subjects more interesting, with the other most popular answers pertaining to the perceived difficulty of languages. Only 4% failed to see the usefulness of foreign languages (Young, 2014).

Amongst the factors believed to influence learners’ attitudes towards languages is the idea that the mass media popularise unhelpful messages around language study (e.g. Coleman et al., 2007; Coleman, 2009). Attitudes, however, are generally held to influence motivation for language learning. Gardner and Lambert (1972), pioneers in second language (L2) motivation research, famously proposed that learning a language is fundamentally different from learning any other activity, since learning a language involves attitudes towards the target language, and towards the target language speakers. For this study, this would imply that learners’ motivation for German would be affected by



their attitudes towards the German language, and their perceptions of the Germans, and of Germany.

### **1.3. The research gap**

The study addresses a gap in motivation literature in three different ways. First, existing studies which examine foreign languages in terms of learner motivation, or in terms of how languages are represented in the media, tend to do this under the collective term languages, usually encompassing the three most commonly taught languages in the UK, namely French, German, and Spanish (Coleman et al., 2007; Graham & Santos, 2015; Lanvers & Coleman, 2013). Where a single language is investigated, this is commonly French (Graham, 2002, 2004; Williams, Burden, & Lanvers, 2002). Yet, there is some evidence that learner motivation depends on the language studied. Williams et al. (2002), for example, found that adolescent language learners' motivation was linked with whether learners were studying French or German. The present study thus contributes to the research field by focussing on learner motivation for German as a single language.

Second, there is some consensus that the social context is a key influencer of attitude formation in motivation studies (e.g. Dörnyei, 1994; Ushioda, 2009). Some researchers, (e.g. Bartram, 2010) even argue that the influences of the sociocultural domain outweigh educational determinants of learner attitudes towards languages. Such potential attitude determinants towards German in learners' social contexts might be located at the grassroots level in learners' immediate educational milieu, such as peers, teachers, and school leaders, as well as in their wider social context, such as the public discourse around German, the Germans, and Germany in the media. Whilst the negative portrayal of both languages in general (e.g. Lanvers & Coleman, 2013) and German in particular (Grix & Lacroix, 2006; Tritz, 2007) has been identified, there seems to be a lack of studies which link motivation for German learning with how German, the Germans, and Germany are

represented to learners unofficially (e.g. in the school context) as well as officially (e.g. in the media).

Third, unlike most previous studies of L2 motivation, the present study uses a discourse analysis approach. Discourse theory holds that subjectivity constructs discourses, but is in turn also being constructed by discourses (e.g. Fairclough, 2003). In this view, discourses of both key players in learners' immediate social environments (such as other learners, teachers, and head teachers) as well as wider public discourses (such as in the press) are assumed to contribute to the construction of learner attitudes. The discourse analysis approach is here considered helpful as a uniting principle for the analysis of, firstly, private and public discourses around German, secondly, the relationship of these discourses with each other, and, thirdly, with learner motivation for German. The literature reviews (chapters 2 and 3) will discuss the respective areas in the literature identified as relevant for the present study in more detail.

#### **1.4. Research aim and research questions**

The current study developed out of a personal research interest, as well as an identification of a gap in research literature on British adolescent German learner motivation at the time when learners make choices whether to continue or drop the subject. The research aim of the study is:

To identify the relationship between motivation for German learning and the representations of German, the Germans, and Germany in private and public UK discourses.

(From here on in the thesis, the asterisk symbol (\*) will on occasion be used after the word German (German\*) to denote German, Germans, and Germany).

To fulfil the research aim, the following research questions have been developed:

RQ1: How do motivational dimensions in learning German relate to continuing or dropping the language?

RQ2: How is German\* represented in discourses of key players in school settings?

RQ3: How is German\* represented in newspaper discourses in the UK?

RQ4: What is the relationship between public/official and private/grassroots discourses around German\* in the UK?

### **1.5. Overview of the study**

The thesis consists of nine chapters. The background chapters (chapters 1, 2, and 3) situate the study in the research field, and review previous literature. The current chapter (1) provided an overview of the background to the study, explained the research gap it aims to address, and stated the research aim and research questions. The following chapter (2) traces the development of L2 motivation models via a broadly chronological path, and reviews selected empirical studies which operationalise key elements of these models. Chapter 3 includes academic as well as non-academic literature in a review of representations of languages, German, the Germans, and Germany in public discourses. Whilst chapter 2 covered studies on British adolescent learner attitudes towards German, research relating to UK teenage language learner attitudes towards Germany and the Germans is covered in chapter 3.

Chapter 4 presents the research design and explains the methodology developed to operationalise the research questions.

Chapters 5, 6, and 7 form the empirical section of the thesis and results are organised in four parts, each part in turn addressing research questions 1 to 4. Chapter 5 presents part 1, findings from quantitative data relating to research question 1 (learner

motivation). It also considers variables considered relevant for learner motivation: German uptake decision, socio-economic status, EAL background, and reasons given for continuing or dropping German. Chapter 6 covers part 2 in addressing research question 2, (key player discourses around German), reports results from the qualitative learner, teacher, and head teacher data, and analyses five learner case studies. In Chapter 7, part 3 covers the representation of German, the Germans, and Germany in the UK press, and part 4 brings the public and private discourses together in addressing the relationship between public (press) and private (school) discourses around German.

In chapter 8 (discussion), the implications of the findings are discussed and related to the theoretical framework, which was guided by the research questions (chapter 1), developed via the literature review (chapters 2 and 3), and explained in chapter 4 (methodology). Finally, the conclusion (chapter 9) evaluates the study, summarises the answers to the research questions, explains the original contribution to knowledge made by this thesis, and opens up the study to forward-looking perspectives by suggesting directions of further research.

Whilst on occasion the study refers to language learning in the UK, for reasons of time and resources participants had to be limited to England, and terminology associated with the English education system is used (education in the UK is devolved, and the responsibility of the respective English, Welsh, Scottish, and Northern Irish governments). The language learning landscape in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland can be said to be broadly similar in terms of GCSE uptake (2001-2017 figures by UK country available from JCQ, 2017), with Scotland taking a more pro-active stance by aiming to introduce every learner to two new languages by the end of primary school (Tinsley & Board, 2017b). However, it was felt that the language learning landscape across the four countries of the UK shows enough similarities to warrant, in some instances, generalisations up to national level.

## **Chapter 2: Motivation for Second Language Learning**

The current chapter (2) will outline the theoretical foundations of second language (L2) motivation research considered relevant for the study of school-aged British learner L2 motivation, review empirical literature which operationalises concepts from these models, and explain which concepts have been selected as guiding principles for the research design of this study. The background of foreign language (including German) education in the UK was outlined in chapter 1 above. Guided by this study's research aim of investigating the relationship between learner motivation for German on the one hand, and the representations of German in private and public UK discourses on the other hand, the remainder of this chapter will then review previous research in the field of language learning motivation. Representations of German will be reviewed in Chapter 3.

The selection of motivation theories and models reviewed below follows a two-fold structure. Firstly, since it is considered helpful to understand the development of the theoretical underpinnings of L2 motivation research in relation to the historical and socio-cultural conditions in which they emerged, this review follows a broadly chronological path. Secondly, the review is informed by insights I have gained based on my personal experiences as a German teacher in UK secondary schools over two decades. Over time, I have been able to build up a picture of the motivational forces underlying adolescent German learners from a range of schools and backgrounds. Therefore, theories and models have been chosen to reflect what resonates most with my grassroots experiences with German learners, as far as they relate to factors that are likely to influence subject choices of adolescent learners in England. An initial overview of key theories in the field of L2 motivation is followed by selected empirical studies that seem relevant for examining subject choice among adolescent learners in an Anglophone, classroom-based foreign language learning context.

## **2.1. Theories of motivation and language learning**

There is no “supertheory” of motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 4). Given that the concept of motivation is complex, hard to define and measure, but also held to be a key factor in much human behaviour (e.g. Gardner & Lambert, 1972), outlining what motivation does seems a useful starting point.

Motivation is responsible for:

- *why* people decide to do something;
- *how long* they are willing to sustain the activity
- *how hard* they are going to pursue it (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 4).

Some researchers would suggest, however, that motivation for language learning is fundamentally different from motivation for learning anything else (e.g. Gardner, 1979). They argued that, unlike for learning a purely knowledge-based subject or activity, learning a language involves an engagement and possible identification with the target language, its culture, and its community of speakers. Such a perspective on language learning is represented by the social psychological school of L2 research.

### **2.1.1. A social psychological model of L2 learning**

L2 motivation research originated in Canada with the work of social psychologists Robert Gardner and Wallace Lambert. The Canadian L2 background was formative for Gardner and Lambert’s research perspective, in that it offered a very particular linguistic landscape of two official languages, English and French, with two corresponding distinct ethnolinguistic communities. In this context, a second language here means inevitably English or French, and is seen as a link between those two communities of target language speakers. A social psychological perspective considers learners’ beliefs and attitudes towards the target language, its speakers and its culture(s) as central (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). The social psychological period of L2 motivation research, characterised by the

work of Gardner, Lambert, and Clément, is usually held to have taken place from 1959-1990 (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). In the 1980s, based on his earlier work with Lambert, Gardner developed the socio-educational model of language acquisition (1985a, Figure 2.1. below).

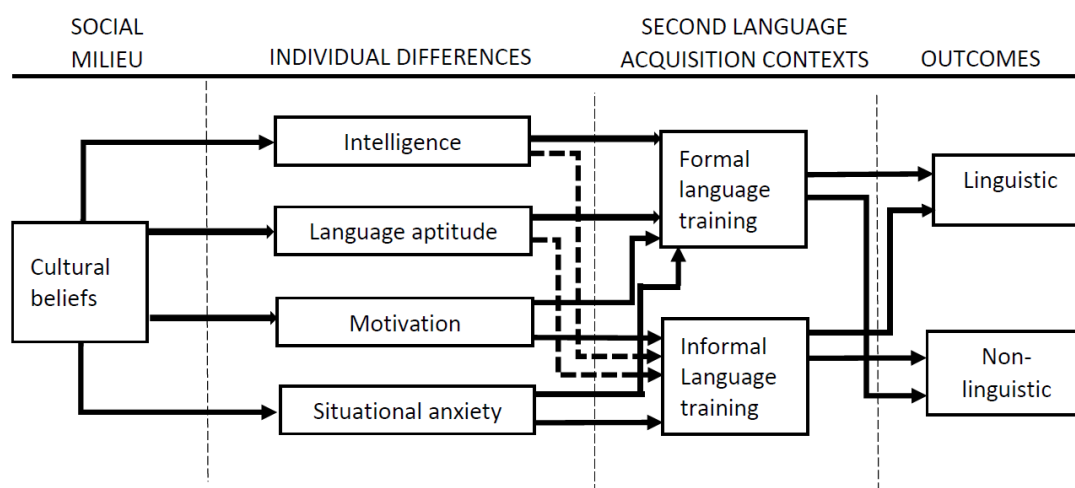


Figure 2.1. Gardner’s socio-educational model (adapted from Gardner, 1985a, p. 147).

A key variable in Gardner’s socio-educational model (Figure 2.1. above) are cultural beliefs stemming from the learners’ social milieu. This means that the attitudes of the learners’ own community towards the target language would influence the language learning process. Gardner (1985a) explains that if, for example, a community believes learning a second language is difficult, in a “self-fulfilling prophecy” (p. 146), learning outcomes in terms of achievement will be low. For Gardner, cultural beliefs influence individual differences, the latter comprising intelligence, language aptitude, motivation, and situational anxiety. As can be seen in Figure 2.1. above, unlike for informal learning contexts, all four individual differences are involved in formal language learning contexts (i.e. language lessons), which in turn influence the learning outcomes. Given that the present study investigates German learning in UK schools, where most, if not all language

learning takes place in instructed settings, it is this formal language learning context which is the most relevant. Gardner (1985a) emphasises that his model is dynamic in nature, in that the learning situation tends to make pre-existing attitudes more salient. Cognitive and affective variables are seen as influencers on learners' behaviour in the learning environment, producing "non-linguistic outcomes", which in turn influence affective variables (p. 150). For the present study this would imply that non-linguistic outcomes, such as the decision to continue or drop German, are affected by the interplay between the learning situation and individual difference variables. However, one important distinction between Gardner's model and a key aspect of this thesis needs to be drawn. The socio-educational model frames learner motivation as one of several variables which influence the focus of the model: learning outcomes in the form of linguistic (and non-linguistic) competence. In contrast, the current study does not focus on language competence, but instead investigates the impact of language learner motivation on the 'outcome' of continuing or dropping the language.

Gardner and his colleagues developed a widely used instrument, the Attitude Motivation Test Battery (AMTB), which, like the socio-educational model itself, has undergone a number of revisions (Gardner, Clément, Smythe, & Smythe, 1979). The AMTB was designed as a questionnaire, and uses Likert-type items in order to test the constructs of (1985 version) integrativeness, attitudes towards the learning situation, motivation, and an attitude/motivation index based on scores from the first three constructs, plus measures of classroom anxiety and instrumental orientation (Gardner, 1985b).

Gardner proposes three key components of L2 motivation: effort, a desire to learn the language, and attitudes towards learning the target language. In his model, the most highly motivated learners will manifest high and positive levels of all three components.



Gardner's model also includes what he terms 'orientations', which serve as antecedents to motivation, principally in the form of the reasons for pursuing language learning.

Gardner famously distinguished between integrative and instrumental orientations. Instrumental orientation refers to utilitarian reasons for learning an L2, such as for career prospects. In this view, instrumental orientation would be seen as attracted by external rewards, which are potentially less durable than internal rewards relating to integrative orientations (Gardner, 1985a). The integrative aspect of motivation has received much subsequent attention from Gardner himself, as well as from other researchers.

Underscoring the need to be specific on the use of terminology in the field of motivation research, the term 'integrative' features in three distinct forms in Gardner's work:

integrative orientation as outlined above, integrativeness, and the integrative motive.

Gardner defines the latter as a "motivation to learn a second language because of positive feelings towards a community that speaks the language" (Gardner, 1985a, p. 82-83). The integrative motive model consists of three principal components:

1. integrativeness: integrative orientation, interest in foreign languages and attitudes to the L2 community
2. attitudes towards the learning situation: attitudes towards the teacher and the language course
3. motivation: desire, effort and attitudes towards learning the L2.

Notably in Gardner's instrumental/integrative model, attitudes feature in different manifestations: attitudes towards the L2 community, towards the concrete learning situation, and towards learning the L2 in general. The construct of integrativeness for foreign language settings has been much studied and questioned, but seems a lasting one (e.g. Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005). Not only had the integrativeness construct been criticised because of its possibly ambiguous appearance in more than one manifestation, but also for its specific connection with the Canadian context with a clearly defined L2 community,

that may not be very generalisable to other contexts (e.g. Chambers, 1999; Lamb, 2004). For example, learning English in a Francophone context in Canada might be characterised by different motivational forces than learning German in an Anglophone context. In the former, the language is more of a ‘second’ language, featuring heavily in the non-educational environment; in the latter, it is a ‘foreign’ language, almost totally absent from learners’ environment beyond the educational context.

Gardner’s notion of integrativeness in the sense that it denotes positive attitudes towards the target language community, and a desire to engage and identify with the target language speakers (Gardner, 1985a), has also been adapted depending on the research context. For research where the L2 under investigation is English, unlike for Gardner’s very specific bilingual Canadian context, or for one where the L2 is a foreign language taught in an Anglophone school setting, no clearly defined community of speakers exists. Out of this lacuna, Yashima (e.g. 2009) developed the concept of international posture, which refers to the relationship built by the learner between him or herself and the international community, rather than any specific L2 group. The concept of international posture was developed for the ‘English as a foreign language’ (EFL) context. However, it might nevertheless still be relevant for non-Anglophone L2 motivation studies (e.g. Lanvers, 2016a), depending on how learners position themselves towards an imagined community of speakers. This relates to the current study, given that for German as a foreign language, the target language speaking community is likely to be conceptually tied up with ‘the Germans’ and ‘Germany’.

### **2.1.3. The classroom learning situation and the social context**

A more recent trend in L2 motivational research rejects the notion of social context as an external variable in favour of integrating motivation and context dynamically and holistically. Ushioda’s person-in-context perspective model (2009) is a response to the

perceived insufficiencies of preceding linear models of motivation, which strived to detect cause-effect relationships with a view to making the findings applicable to intervention programmes, eventually in order to improve learning outcomes. According to Ushioda, such models are by their very nature reductionist and do not consider the multiplicity of factors which all contribute to individual learner identity. Furthermore, even when considering context, they tend to see this as an independent variable, rather than take the postmodern stance that context is shaped by individuals, and individuals in turn are shaped by context. In a conscious departure from such approaches, Ushioda (2009) proposes a multifaceted, complex and individual picture of the learner, who is involved in continuously constructing his or her own context, and is in turn him or herself constructed by that very context. By substituting the word context for discourse, one can easily make the connection between this type of approach and the discourse analysis approach of this study, which also assumes a reciprocal relationship between the agent and context, meaning that discourses construct subjectivity, and subjects in turn construct discourses.

Taking up the focus on the learning situation in the classroom, Williams and Burden (1997) developed their social constructivist model, which emphasised the importance of contextual influences on language learning motivation. Whilst incorporating concepts and insights from cognitively-orientated motivation research, this approach is also characterised by a consideration of social and cultural contextual influences. Williams and Burden's framework splits L2 learning motivation into internal and external factors. Internal factors include intrinsic interest, perceived value of activity, sense of agency, mastery, self-concept, attitudes, other affective states, developmental age and stage, and gender, and relate to aspects of previous research such as Bandura's (1986) social cognitive concepts. External factors may include significant others (such as peers, parents, or teachers), the nature of interaction with significant others, the learning environment, and the broader context. With regard to the present study, which explores the discursive

representation of a foreign language, Williams and Burden's social constructivist framework is a helpful one to consider. Firstly, their model incorporates cognitive (relating to knowledge), conative (driving behaviour), and affective (concerning emotional dimensions), factors which have been shown to influence student behaviour around language-related decision making (e.g. Taylor & Marsden, 2014; Williams et al., 2002). Secondly, it assumes a relationship between the subject and its social context, thus pointing the way towards bridging the gap between cognitive and social perspectives.

Several recent studies of L2 learner motivation have demonstrated the influence of the learning situation as a key influencing factor (e.g. Courtney, 2014; Graham, Courtney, Tonkyn, & Marinis, 2016). Here, an important distinction needs to be drawn between studies in Anglophone, and studies in non-Anglophone settings. For example, Graham et al. (2016) studied the development of 233 young learners' motivation for learning French in England during transition from primary to secondary school in relation to teaching approach (oracy-focussed or literacy-based). The researchers used a questionnaire to operationalise the constructs of current self-efficacy, future self-efficacy, and attitudes towards French. The questionnaire also included two open items relating to what learners had enjoyed about learning French, and whether they preferred French in primary or in secondary school. Results showed that teaching approach made little difference to motivation, and that whilst learner motivation increased during transition, at the end of year 7 (the first year of secondary school) less positive attitudes towards learning French and towards future progress became apparent. It was from the open-ended questionnaire items that interesting results regarding the learning situation emerged. Learners indicated that they perceived a classroom environment which did not allow them to make progress as demotivating. Findings showed a discrepancy between what learners appeared to perceive as the goal of language learning, communicating with native speakers (often seen in conjuncture with travel), and what lessons equip them to do. These findings echo those by

Courtney (2014), who also used a longitudinal design with 26 learners of French across their transition period from primary to secondary school. Courtney observed a drop in language learning motivation in her learners following transition, and argued that as learners progress through the stages of education, the misalignment between what learners would like to achieve through language study (proficiency to enable them to communicate with French speakers), and the reality they experience in the classroom, becomes more pronounced.

The classroom learning situation has been argued to be a key influencer of learner perceptions of self-efficacy. Courtney (2014), Lamb (2007), and Williams and Burden (1999) all found that learners' negative attitudes towards the learning situation influenced their perceptions of self-efficacy. The crucial difference between Lamb's study and the others, however, is that Lamb's participants were Indonesian adolescents learning English as a foreign language in Indonesia, whereas participants in the other studies were learners of French in the Anglophone UK setting. Learners in a non-Anglophone context typically show a higher instrumental motivation to learn English than learners in an Anglophone setting do for learning a foreign language, and several studies have shown how, in non-Anglophone settings, instrumental motivation can override negative attitudes towards the learning situation (e.g. Chambers, 2000; Lamb, 2004, 2007; Tragant, 2006). In particular, comparative studies such as Chambers (2000), who examined the motivation of adolescent British learners of German, as well as the motivation of German learners of English, clarify that with increasing age, most learners tend to become disenchanted with their learning situation regardless of whether their learning context is Anglophone, or non-Anglophone. Within the context of the growing influence of global English, British learners of French or German, whose native language is English, might simply not feel the same wider societal as well as personal instrumental pressures to persist with their language learning if it is optional.

In her recent classroom-focussed study, Wingate (2016) observed 15 German, Spanish, and French KS3 lessons across six London schools, and analysed the results in relation to communicative use of the target language. Her findings showed that through a focus on highly teacher-controlled activities, learners had only limited opportunities for producing the target language. She further observed a culture of low expectations, and the frequent occurrence of “pseudo-communicative ‘fun’” activities (p. 1) in the shape of games which had no clear instructions, no discernible outcome, and elicited mainly one-word answers (in one case not even words in the target language). Unsurprisingly, learners lost interest quickly, and the games disintegrated. Teacher participants told the researcher that they wanted to provide learners with what they thought would motivate them, namely enjoyable and engaging activities which made it easy for learners to succeed. However, based on Wingate’s observations, the resulting games did not achieve the desired pedagogical effect. On the contrary, Wingate concludes that they may even have contributed to learner disengagement and frustration, as they sent out messages of low expectations of learner competence. Through a focus on unchallenging and futile games, learners might further come to associate languages as something that does not need to be taken seriously. Although this small-scale study did not directly measure the impact of teaching-related factors on L2 learner motivation, it provides a snapshot of current MFL learning and teaching practices, for which there is a scarcity of empirical data.

### **2.1.2. A cognitive-situated perspective**

Although Gardner’s model and the AMTB have been widely employed in L2 motivation research, researchers began to question how far this model could be applied outside of the Canadian setting with its very specific language landscape. In their seminal 1991 article, Crookes and Schmidt urged the field to take heed of new developments in mainstream psychological research, as well as to conceptualise and investigate the learning

situation not just in terms of societal values, but also in terms of the detailed and complex dynamics of the classroom. Crookes and Schmidt's paper signalled the beginnings of a paradigm shift in L2 motivation research with the onset of what is commonly termed the cognitive-situated period (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011), signifying a focus on cognitive processes and the realities of conditions in the language classroom. Dörnyei (1994) developed this idea by incorporating the learning situation in his three-tier framework which consisted of

1. language level (integrative/instrumental orientations derived from Gardner),
2. learner level (need for achievement, self-confidence), and
3. learning situation level (situation-specific motives).

Dörnyei based the language and learner levels of his model on theories by Gardner and Clément, and the learning situation level on findings from educational psychology, such as need theories, expectancy-value theories, and achievement goal theories (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). The learner level of Dörnyei's 1994 model included course-specific, teacher-specific, and group-specific motivational components.

## **2.1.4. Self-based models of motivation**

### *2.1.4.1. The L2 Motivational Self-System (L2MSS)*

The L2 Motivational Self-System (L2MSS) was devised by Dörnyei (2005, 2009) in order to integrate mainstream psychological theories of the self with L2-specific motivational concepts. Dörnyei's L2MSS (2005, 2009) combines three elements: 1. the ideal L2 self, 2. the ought-to L2 self, and 3. the L2 learning experience. The ideal L2 self is the learner's vision of him or herself as a successful language learner of the future. Motivational forces take effect when the learner feels compelled to modify his or her behaviour (e.g. make an effort) in order to change his or her current self towards the ideal self. The ought-to L2 self corresponds to forces which demand that the learner studies the

language because he or she should. Here the learner acts in order to avoid negative consequences, such as low grades, punishment, or feelings of embarrassment or guilt. The L2 learning experience relates to the immediate learning environment and experience, that is classroom realities such as the teacher, peer group influences, lessons content, materials, or grades. Unlike the two self-related dimensions, the L2 learning experience is conceptualised as external to the learner (Dörnyei, 2009). In their recent meta-analysis of 416 academic journal articles and book chapters on L2 motivation published between 2005 and 2014, Boo, Dörnyei, and Ryan (2015) found that the L2MSS was the most commonly applied L2 motivation model in L2 motivation research.

When considering any L2 motivation model it is important to be aware, however, that the L2 motivation field is dominated by the study of English as L2, and typically involves adult learner participants (Boo et al., 2015). Most models, including the L2MSS, are based on data obtained from (adult) participants studying English in a non-Anglophone context. The L2MSS could be criticised for its somewhat problematic application to learners studying an L2 other than English, in an English-speaking context. First, for example, the ideal-L2 self could realistically only become a key motivating variable where learning and being able to speak an L2 is indeed an ideal pursuit or goal. Second, the ought-to L2 self would conversely only have an effect on learner motivation in situations where there are considerable pressures to speak a foreign language. Neither of these conditions could be said to apply to Anglophone language learning contexts such as the UK. Furthermore, the L2MSS has been criticised for its limited fit in non-Anglophone EAL contexts, in compulsory language learning settings, and with younger learners. For example, in his study of 527 Indonesian 12 to 14-year-old English learners in one metropolitan, one provincial urban, and one rural school setting, Lamb (2012) found that the ideal L2 self only contributed to learner motivation to a limited extent in metropolitan learners, and not at all in the other two settings. Lamb draws the conclusion that due to the



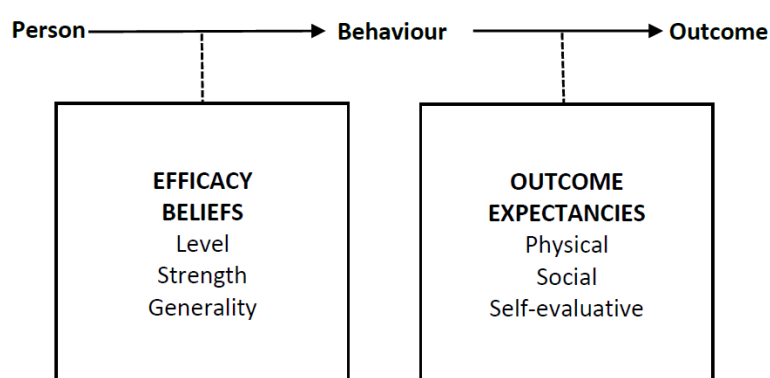
compulsory nature of English in his study, immediate contextual factors might have had a stronger effect on his participants' motivation than an envisaged ideal L2 self. This, again, points to the relative importance of the learning situation as a motivational variable in compulsory instructed settings. In addition, Lamb's findings led him to question the applicability of the notion of the ideal L2 self for adolescent language learners: where the ideal L2 self did manifest, this was often unrealistically fantastical and did thus not have much bearing on language learning motivation, confirming MacIntyre, MacKinnon, and Clément (2009). Further to detecting problems with the ideal L2 self dimension, Lamb's study also confirmed previous research (e.g. Csizér & Lukács, 2010; Kormos & Csizér, 2008) which failed to elicit the ought-to self dimension.

Similarly to Dörnyei's ideal L2 self-based model, Ortega (2009) also proposed reframing Gardnerian integrativeness in terms of a self-based theory, where it "can be more productively redefined as a drive to close the gap or discrepancy between the actual self and an ideal self, who in highly L2 motivated individuals happens to have been conceived as an L2-speaking self" (p. 189). Ortega adapted Gardner's theory by reconceptualising integrativeness in terms of dynamic internal tensions within the learner, with both concepts relating to him or herself, rather than attitudes the learner may hold towards the target language community. Ortega's redefinition of Gardnerian integrativeness is an example of how researchers have attempted to incorporate this concept into seemingly opposing models or theories.

#### *2.1.4.2. Bandura's self-efficacy theory*

Visions of future language selves in the vein of the ideal L2 self will, of course, only be motivating if one feels capable of achieving this vision, and if the vision is valued. This notion links to the concept of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is a social cognitive construct from mainstream psychology (Bandura, 1977, 1997) which is commonly drawn

on in L2 motivation models (e.g. Dörnyei, 1994; Williams & Burden, 1997). It denotes a “belief in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (Bandura, 1997, p. 3). Figure 2.2. below illustrates that Bandura’s theory distinguishes between two types of expectations for success: efficacy and outcome expectations. In this view, whilst learners may well believe in outcomes of success, their negative self-efficacy beliefs might lead them to believe that they are not able to produce the necessary behaviour to achieve said outcome.



*Figure 2.2.* Conditional relationships between efficacy beliefs and outcome expectancies (adapted from Bandura, 1997, p. 22).

Bandura (1977) proposed four major sources of self-efficacy beliefs: personal accomplishments (successful experience of mastery), vicarious experience (observing another person succeed), verbal persuasion (encouragement by others, constructive feedback), and physiological states (e.g. mood, emotions, or stress levels).

Learner self-efficacy levels for languages at secondary school have been argued to be lower than self-efficacy levels for other school subjects (e.g. Graham, 2006; Graham, MacFadyen, & Richards, 2012). Low self-efficacy has been named as a key factor in lack of MFL uptake, where there is a choice (e.g. Fisher, 2001; Graham, 2004, 2007). In their study on the influence of self-efficacy and other motivational self-beliefs on the

achievement of 303 intermediate level students of French in three US universities, Mills, Pajares, and Herron (2007) found, through regression analysis using questionnaire and language test data, that self-efficacy for self-regulation was the only variable which predicted achievement for French. Mills et al. also found that perceived value of French did not predict achievement when other motivational variables were controlled for. However, the authors explain that they operationalised the concept of ‘value’ through nine Likert-scale items relating to students’ perceptions of the value of the French language, and nine items relating to the perceptions of the value of learning about French-speaking cultures. The example for the first value concept (“value of French language”) is “Studying the French language is an enjoyable experience” (p. 428). Arguably, this item could also be said to relate to the learning situation, as well as to value. Since Mills et al. only give two examples of the 18 items used to operationalise value, one cannot be certain that the two concepts do not become muddled. Of course, this only becomes problematic when comparing Mills et al.’s results, which investigates self-belief concepts (i.e. concepts internal to the learner) only, with studies such as the current one, which uses external (e.g. learning situation) as well as internal (such as self-efficacy) concepts.

#### *2.1.4.3. Expectancy-value theories*

A group of theories which seek to explain not just what people do in goal-motivated behaviour, but also why they do it, are expectancy-value theories. As the name suggests, such frameworks link learners’ individual learning expectations, and the value they attach to success therein. Within this paradigm, attribution theories (e.g. Weiner, 1974) focus on learners’ beliefs about the reasons for their success or failure. Attribution theory holds that learners who attribute their success or failure to external factors outside of their control, such as ability or task difficulty, tend to show less motivation than learners who seek the reasons for their success or failure in controllable factors, such as effort

expended. For example, a learner who thinks that he or she failed at a German grammar test because the test was too difficult would likely not be as motivated as a learner who explained his or her failure by a lack of revision. The latter learner would be more likely to revise more for the next test, as this would be within his or her control, whereas the learner who thought the test was too hard might not be moved to modify his or her behaviour and study harder, as this would not be likely to result in a successful outcome anyway. Still, the learner who blamed lack of revision needs to attribute some value to doing well in the test, in order to be prepared to expend the necessary effort required for more revision. This may well come at the cost of missing out on other, possibly preferable activities. In Eccles (Parsons) et al.'s (1983) model (Figure 2.3. below) all choices are assumed to have associated costs, meaning that learners' perceptions of value and likelihood of success are key determinants of choice (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002).

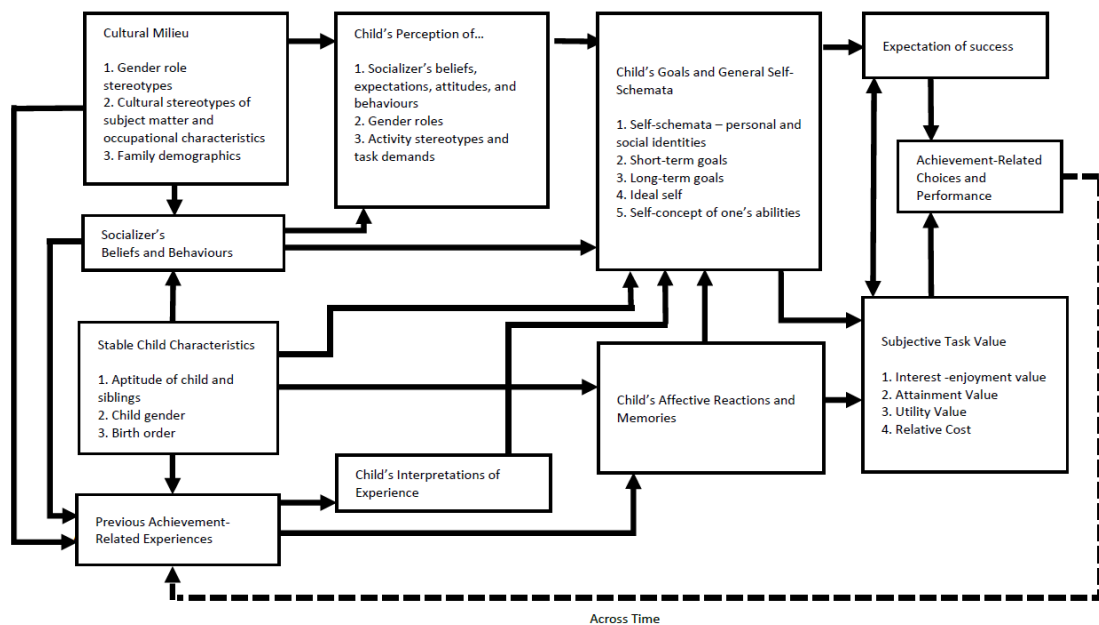


Figure 2.3. Eccles et al.'s (1983) expectancy-value model of achievement (adapted from Eccles & Wigfield, 2002, p. 119).

In their expectancy-value model (Figure 2.3.), Eccles et al. (1983) defined and measured expectancies of success analogously to Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy

expectations (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002), demonstrating links with self-efficacy theory. Importantly, based on their empirical studies, Eccles et al. argue that although theoretically distinct concepts, real world research shows children and adolescents do not appear to distinguish between the highly related concepts of beliefs about competence and expectations of success.

#### *2.1.4.4. Self-determination theory (SDT)*

The notion of the self lies at the heart of self-determination theory (SDT), a mainstream holistic theory of motivation and personality which considers the relationship between the activity and a person's self. Deci and Ryan (e.g. 1985) build their "meta-framework" (<http://selfdeterminationtheory.org/theory/>) on earlier research which distinguished between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (e.g. Lepper, Greene, & Nisbett, 1973). Intrinsic motivation denotes an interest in the activity, whereas extrinsic motivation is driven by something outside of the activity itself, such as external rewards. Deci and Ryan conceptualise intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, together with 'amotivation', on a spectrum with non-self-determined behaviour at the one end, and self-determined behaviour at the other end. In this view, 'amotivation' is located at the non-self-determined end of the spectrum, extrinsic motivation is moving from non-self-determined behaviour towards self-determined behaviour, and intrinsic motivation is seen as the most self-determined form of behaviour (Figure 2.4. below). When intrinsically motivated, a person has the greatest opportunities for engagement, enjoyment, and inherent satisfaction with the activity. An example of intrinsic motivation for language learning might be that a learner would become so interested in the language itself that they would want to engage in the learning process for its own sake, as opposed to attain grades, qualifications, or goals. Realistically, for adolescent language learners, such an intrinsic form of motivation can be assumed to be quite rare. It is more likely that British teenagers' motivation for languages

would be located somewhere on the spectrum between amotivation and extrinsic motivation. SDT holds that within external motivation, a person can, through a process of gradual internalisation, regulate his or her behaviour in a range of styles. In SDT, perhaps counterintuitively, it is not only intrinsic motivation which is seen as self-controlled: extrinsic motivation – although to varying degrees – is also described as self-controlled.

A sub-theory of SDT, organismic integration theory (OIT), describes four different styles in which extrinsic motivation can be regulated, together with the conditions which may promote or hinder these behaviours (Deci & Ryan, 1985). These four regulatory styles are again visualised on the continuum from non-self-determined (controlled) to self-determined (autonomous) behaviour, and are known as external, introjected, identified, and integrated types of regulation (Ryan & Deci, 2000a, Figure 2.4. below).

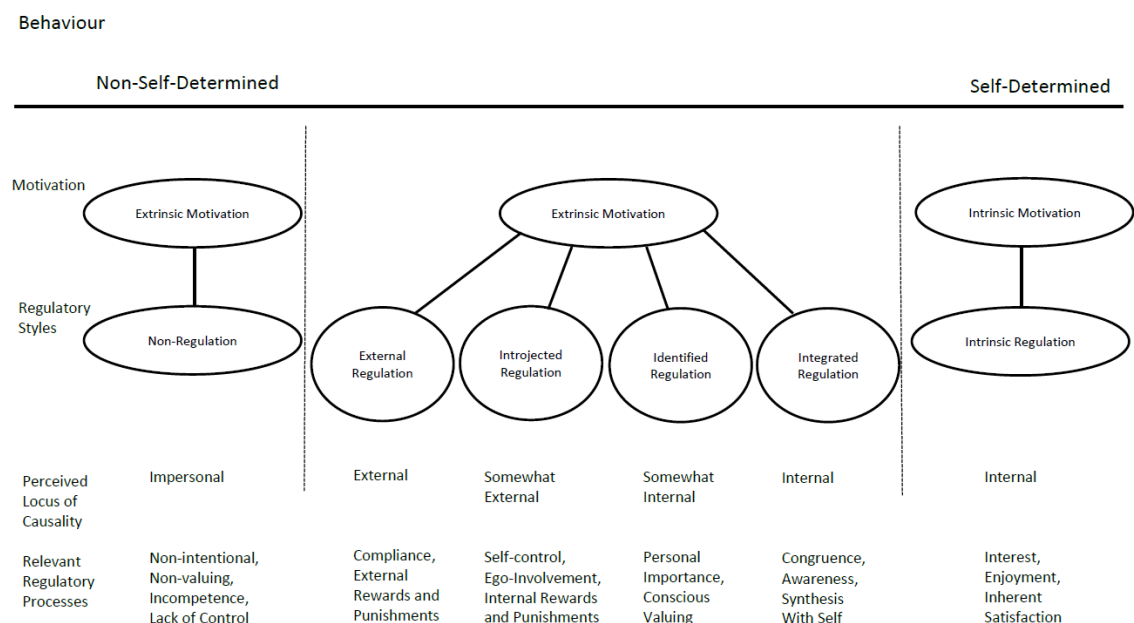


Figure 2.4. Self-determination continuum: Types of motivation, regulatory styles, loci of causality, and corresponding processes (adapted from Ryan & Deci, 2000a, p. 72.).

In Ryan and Deci's model, external regulation is the least autonomous form of regulation. Externally motivated people carry out behaviour because of external rewards or punishment, such as, in the case of adolescent language learning, parental or teacher approval (reward) or additional homework (punishment). Introjected regulation is the most externally controlled style of regulation, and, although to some extent autonomous, introjected behaviour is not fully experienced as part of the self. Hence, some researchers conceptualise introjected and external motivation as a combined controlled motivation composite (e.g. Williams, Grow, Freedman, Ryan, & Deci, 1996). For language learning, introjected regulation might mean that a learner would go along with parents' or teachers' expectations, without endorsing these imposed positive values of languages for him or herself. Introjected regulation, to some extent, aligns with Dörnyei's ought-to L2 self (2.1.4.1. above). In addition, introjected regulation behaviours are typically performed dependent on feelings of self-worth. Here, people are driven to demonstrate competence or avoid failure in order to protect their self-worth, a notion which links with self-worth theory (2.1.4.5. below). Identified regulation is more autonomous than introjected regulation, and denotes a state in which someone identifies with the value of the activity. Language learners demonstrate identified regulation if they consciously perceive a value in learning the language, and if it is personally important to them. Finally, integrated regulation is the most self-determined regulatory style, and refers to a state where identified regulations have been assimilated into the self, and align harmoniously with a person's other values. A language learner who displays integrated regulation would conceptualise language learning as part of his or her identity, integrated into their self. This highly autonomous regulatory style is similar to intrinsic motivation, but the difference between the two is that in integrated regulation it is not interest in the activity itself (such as, for example, the beauty of German grammar) but external factors separate to the activity (such as a strong personal belief that being able to speak the language is important

and part of the learners' identity) which drives the behaviour. Because of shared characteristics with intrinsic motivation, however, some researchers combine identified, integrated, and intrinsic forms of motivation into an autonomous motivation composite (Ryan & Deci, 2000a).

SDT, however, is not just concerned with motivation and personality, but with human wellbeing in general. It considers how social and cultural factors support or thwart people's motivation, performance, and wellbeing. Deci and Ryan (e.g. 2000a) propose the concept of three basic human psychological needs, against which motivational dynamics play out: the need for autonomy, the need for competence, and the need for relatedness. The authors assume that human beings naturally strive towards activity, internalisation, and integration, but that they are also vulnerable to passivity. Socio-cultural conditions are seen as a key factor, as they can support or hinder human development. Deci and Ryan (2000a) found that social contexts which support autonomy, competence, and relatedness fostered greater internalisation and integration than contexts which thwarted it. For language learning at school level, this would imply, for example, that learner subject choice on a voluntary basis (autonomy), robust self-efficacy levels (competence), and caring and supportive interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers (relatedness), would be conditions most likely to foster integrated forms of motivation.

Early studies applying SDT in education have suggested that higher levels of autonomy in learner motivation are associated with positive learner attitudes and learning outcomes. For example, Ryan and Connell (1989) found that identified regulation correlated with more effort, more enjoyment of school and with resilient coping styles in relation to failure. Others have identified that higher levels of self-determined motivation were associated with more learner engagement (Connell & Wellborn, 1991), better performance (Miserandino, 1996), and lower dropout rates (Vallerand & Bissonnette, 1992). More recent findings from the field of L2 motivation seem to support the idea that



when learners decided autonomously to study a language (rather than in compulsory settings) their effort increased (e.g. Busse & Walter, 2013; Chaffee, Noels, & Sugita-McEown, 2014). Where they had higher levels of self-determination, learners also showed greater perceptions of self-confidence (Pae & Shin, 2011), engaged more with the target language community (e.g. Peng & Woodrow, 2010), and reached higher achievement (Alsheikh & Elhoweris, 2011). In short, empirical evidence from the field of L2 motivation suggests that within the SDT framework, higher levels of autonomy are conducive for language learning.

Although a mainstream theory which has been widely applied to a range of contexts, SDT is relevant for the present study as it was developed out a growing understanding that extrinsic rewards and pressures can lead to decreased motivation and well-being (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Adolescent language learners such as the participants in this study can be said to operate under controlling conditions, be it on a micro-level (e.g. being obliged to carry out teacher-directed tasks), on a meso-level (e.g. compulsory language study), or a macro-level (e.g. negative societal messages about languages). Similarly, arguably qualification- and career-focused rationales for language learning can be said to encourage extrinsic goals. Applying an SDT perspective to this study might therefore help to explain learner motivation by examining the conditions under which learners operate.

#### *2.1.4.5. Self-worth theory*

Self-worth theory is a mainstream motivation theory which links notions of competencies and values (Covington, 1992, 1998). Covington suggests that in the educational context, learners' feelings of self-worth can be threatened by implications of lack of academic competence. Consequently, learners will employ strategies to protect their self-worth by minimising the likelihood of suspicions of academic incompetence.

Linking with attribution theory within the expectancy-value framework, self-worth theory explains how, in an attempt to protect their self-worth, learners use attributions for success or failure which frame them as competent (Covington & Omelich, 1979). For example, learners would typically attribute success to ability and effort, and failure to lack of effort (i.e. not to lack of ability). Self-worth theory hinges on the assumption that learners value academic competence, and that it is thus their main source of self-worth. However, other research has shown that non-academic self-concepts, such as physical appearance or social competence, can predict self-worth more strongly than academic self-concepts (Harter, 1990). This has led Eccles and Wigfield (2002) to suggest that the influence of a particular self-concept on one's self-worth would depend on the value one attaches to this competence domain, and that therefore people may lower the value they attach to tasks at which they do not expect to succeed. For the context of this study, this would mean that learners might, in a face-saving attributional shift, reduce the value they put on German if they do not expect to succeed at it, in order to maintain their self-worth.

Recently, Covington, von Hoene, and Voge (2017) applied self-worth theory of motivation to curriculum design. This would be relevant for this study, since language learners in UK schools typically complain about perceived shortcomings of the curriculum, which they tend to view as irrelevant and uninteresting (e.g. Bartram, 2010). Bartram considered curriculum-related factors as so important that he integrated them into his learning situation construct (Figure 2.5. under 2.2. below). Covington et al. problematise the notion that learners, on the whole, enjoy those activities they are successful at, and that intrinsic motivation depends on academic success. Of course, learners cannot be successful at all activities all the time. Therefore, aligned with attribution theory, the authors argue that it is the meaning learners attribute to the causes of success that matter more than success itself. Only if learners view their success as directly derived from their personal effort does it become meaningful. Covington et al. propose three reinforcing elements for

curriculum design, which, they argue, foster learner motivation: “1. maximising meaningful successes, 2. promoting an appreciation for the positive uses of failure, and 3. injecting personal interest into the learning situation” (p. 88). Given that UK adolescent learners’ perceptions of success and failure have been linked with their motivation for language learning (e.g. Graham, 2006, 2007), together with a general learner view of language lessons as uninteresting, Covington et al.’s proposal for a self-worth perspective on curriculum design appears apt for this study.

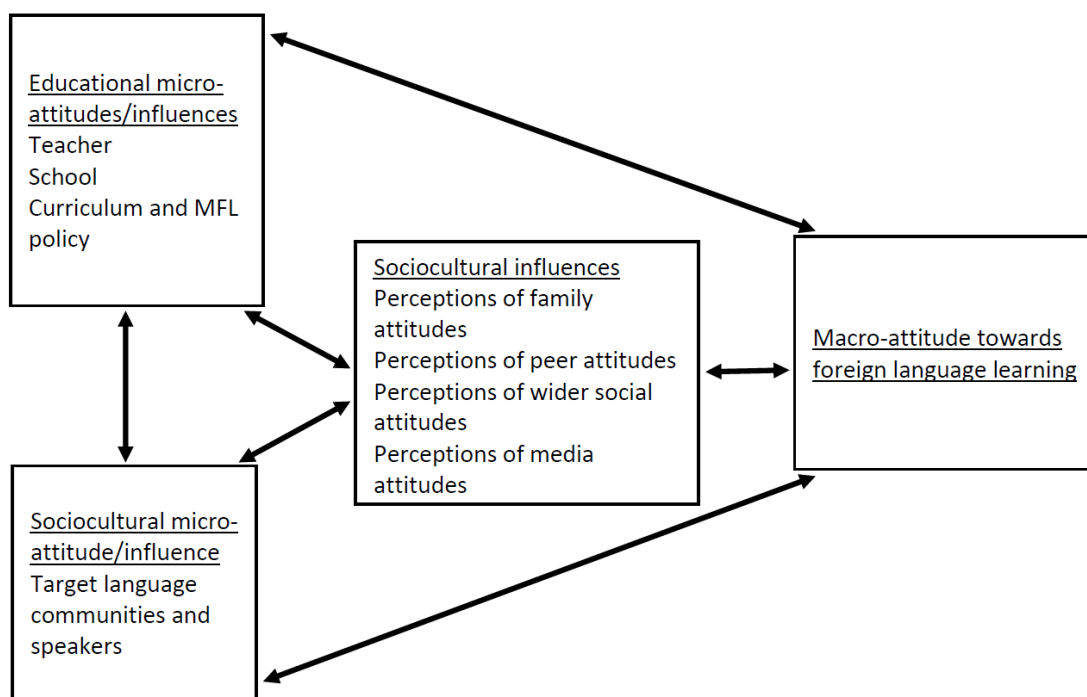
### **2.1.5. Summary of motivation models**

Early second language motivational research in the social psychological period, as exemplified by the work of Robert Gardner in Canada, focused on integrative and instrumental orientation. Gardner argued that language learning motivation is different from other kinds of educational motivation, in that it is linked with issues of identity, and possibly also with issues around the learner’s stance towards the target language (TL) community (Gardner, 1985a). In the 1990s the need for perspectives drawn from educational and cognitive psychology, as well as the importance of the realities of the classroom were flagged up (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991). Current motivational research on instructed language learning settings tends to focus on cognitive factors relating to learners’ thoughts and beliefs, classroom realities such as teacher-student interaction, as well as on notions of the self (Graham, 2013). Models and theories, much like the motivation they describe, are dynamic in nature and should be applied in a dynamic way. For L2 German in an Anglophone context, for example, integrative motivation might be a useful and relevant concept, whereas for L2 English, it may not apply to the same extent.

One common element of L2 motivation models is learner attitude. Therefore, models of attitude, and empirical studies which operationalise these models and which are relevant to this thesis, will be reviewed below.

## **2.2. Attitudes towards language learning**

Attitudes are believed to be closely connected with motivation, yet, the nature of this relationship, as well as that between attitudes and behaviour, is much debated. Several, sometimes conflicting models of attitudes have been proposed, with some social psychological models favouring hierarchical conceptualisations which include cognition, affect, and action as constituent elements (e.g. Baker, 1992). Socio-educational models (e.g. Gardner, 1985a, see 2.1.1. above) distinguish between social and educational attitudes but exclude the conative aspect, which relates to behavioural intention (mediated by thinking and emotion). Influencers of attitudes are equally contested, with variously classroom realities, as well as socio-cultural determinants proposed as factors which affect language learner attitudes (e.g. Bartram, 2010). For example, Bartram (2010) conducted a comparative survey of 15 and 16-year-old secondary students' attitudes towards foreign language learning across two schools each in the UK, Germany, and the Netherlands respectively. He used a word association task (in learners' respective native languages of English, German, or Dutch) with 408 participants between the three countries to elicit attitudes, followed by written accounts from 210 selected learners, and, finally, 14 group interviews. Amongst the three national settings, he found British learners the least motivated in terms of their attitudes towards language learning, and named mixed parental attitudes towards L2 learning, negative societal attitudes, MFL media invisibility, as well as widespread unfavourable impressions of the TLCS (target language communities and speakers) as possible influential factors which contribute to low motivation for language learning. Based on his study, Bartram proposes a model of educational and sociocultural influences on learner L2 attitudes (Figure 2.5. below).



*Figure 2.5.* Model of educational and sociocultural influences on the macro-language learning attitude (adapted from Bartram, 2010, p. 181).

Although earlier research (e.g. Dörnyei, 1998) had claimed that classroom practice was the main factor for learners’ L2 motivation and attitudes, Bartram found this variable only to become important once its definition was broadened to include the curriculum and MFL policy – hence this is included under educational influences in his model (Figure 2.5. above). Bartram’s participants, unlike those in other research (e.g. Chambers, 2000; Williams et al., 2002) did seem to display instrumental orientations, and this appeared to affect their motivation negatively, despite their positive attitudes to the learning situation. This means that positive attitudes to the learning situation can be undermined by attributing low instrumental value to the language learnt, and conversely, negative views of the educational context can be offset by a perception of a high utility value of the target language. Although Bartram’s British learners showed the highest satisfaction levels with their language teachers compared with the Dutch and the German participants, the UK

learners were least motivated and displayed the most negative attitudes for language lessons. Thus, Bartram is clear about the relative importance of educational and social factors: he argues, that, on balance, it is sociocultural factors (family, peer, wider social attitudes and perceptions of media attitudes) which exert a stronger influence on L2 learning attitudes (Figure 2.5. above).

Bartram's study is important for the current one for the similarities in participant age and sample size. Moreover, Bartram has confirmed previous research that learners can hold different attitudes towards different languages. Phillips and Filmer-Sankey (1993) had, in the early 1990s, highlighted the need to study learner attitudes by language, not just under the umbrella of MFL. Williams et al. (2002), for example, had found in their study with 228 12 to 15-year-old learners of French and German across three English schools, that most learners, but particularly boys, showed higher motivation for German than for French. They also identified a gendered view of language in their data, with learners framing French as more feminine than German. Studies such as Bartram (2010) and Williams et al. (2002) lend strength to the present study's focus on one language (German), rather than on learner attitudes to languages in general.

Chambers (1999) conducted a multi-cohort longitudinal study of 11 to 17-year-old UK learners' motivation for German learning between 1992 and 1994, with some comparative elements involving French and English learners from Germany. Although 1,481 learners from England and 1,251 learners from Germany provided data for the study, the number of participants who took part in both phases was 322 in England, and 402 in Germany. In phase one, learners from year 7 (age 11), year 9 (age 13), and year 11 (age 15) across four English schools and their German peers of the same ages across two schools completed a questionnaire designed to measure their motivation for German learning, and 10% of the whole sample took part in an interview. Two years later, in phase two, the same questionnaire was administered to the same learners. Chambers found that

motivation levels declined for both country's groups of learners over time, with the key difference that the perceived higher status of English for career purposes appeared to override negative feelings for the German students of English.

Coleman et al. (2007) also found decreasing motivation levels in their large-scale cross-sectional study with over 10,000 12 to 14-year-old English foreign language learners. The authors named school as well as classroom-specific micro-level factors, such as attitudes not just of the teacher(s), but also of the school's management towards language study, as demotivating factors. Although Coleman et al. emphasised the importance of the learning situation on participants' L2 motivation, they also argued for the involvement of negative societal attitudes, which they linked with British media discourses around languages. The authors' findings are also borne out by a more recent Ipsos Mori poll for the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) of 2014, which conducted research into the perceived reasons for declining uptake of modern language A'level in England. Research instruments included questionnaires with 453 teachers, as well as interviews and focus groups with school and university language staff, school and university language learners, employers, and representatives from organisations with an interest in languages (Ipsos Mori, 2014). Stakeholders felt that British society undervalues the learning of languages by subscribing to the view that for English L1 speakers, foreign language skills are unnecessary. Learners felt that STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Maths) or vocational subjects offered them greater advantages in the job market than languages.

Chambers (1999), Williams et al. (2002), and Coleman et al. (2007) are amongst the studies which report perceived lack of value for career purposes amongst adolescent UK language learners. Stables and Wikeley (1999) produced a highly negative account of learners' instrumental orientations in their cross-sectional study of ten English schools' cohorts of 13-year-old language learners, measured through a questionnaire and a follow-up interview with a stratified sample of 144 learners from four schools. Participants

professed that unless they were going to work in France or Germany, they saw no reason to learn French or German respectively. The subjects which learners rated most highly in terms of utilitarian value were Maths, English, and Sciences – a group of subjects aligning with the STEM subjects grouping.

Other studies such as Bartram (2010), however, suggest that instrumental reasons are not the main driving force behind learners' decisions to study a foreign language, and that other aspects of motivation are more strongly involved. Graham (2004), for example, showed for older learners, who are often assumed to be even more instrumentally driven in their subject choices than younger learners, that 594 French-continuers aged 16-19 gave mainly self-efficacy-related reasons for continuing, that is to say, they continued French for reasons other than instrumental motifs.

Against the backdrop of the continuing rise of English as a world language, it is not hard to see that the motivation for learners in non-Anglophone countries to learn English might be different from the motivation for learners in the UK to learn German. A key difference between motivational forces around English as a foreign language and a language taught in a school setting in an Anglophone country is that the utilitarian benefits of being able to speak English tends to be perceived as stronger in the former context, than they are for other languages studied by speakers in the latter contexts. Some previous research suggests that the value learners in Anglophone contexts place on languages is comparatively weak (e.g. Coleman, 2009), other authors suggest that learners do indeed attribute some value to languages, but that this does not translate into language take-up beyond the compulsory stage of education (e.g. Taylor & Marsden, 2014).

It has been argued that the perception of global English, i.e., the idea that “English-is-enough” (Coleman, 2009, p. 115), links with lower motivation and uptake for languages in Anglophone countries (e.g. Kramersch, 2014; Lo Bianco, 2014). The UK, however, is far from the monolingual English-only-speaking country it is often portrayed as (Booth,

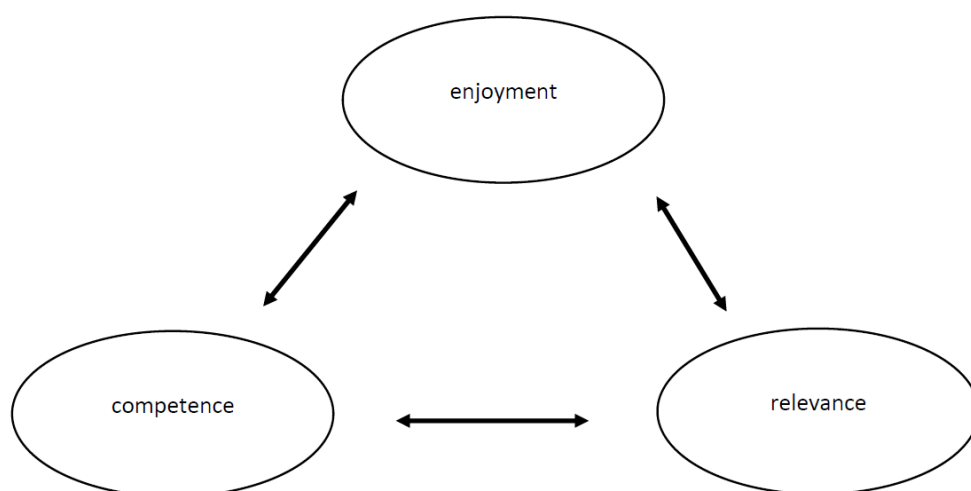


2013). Might there be a difference between the value monolingual English UK learners place on learning languages, and the value learners with English as additional language (EAL) attribute to languages? Lanvers, Hultgren, and Gayton (2016) addressed this question in their longitudinal intervention study of the attitudes held towards languages by 97 KS3 learners in four classes from three schools in England and Scotland. In two lessons over the course of two weeks, the researchers used a custom-made PowerPoint resource (Lanvers & Hultgren, 2014), designed to raise learners' awareness of the spread of English in the world, and the cognitive benefits of multilingualism. Here, perhaps unusually, the status of English as a world language was foregrounded rather than downplayed, with the aim of raising awareness of the parallel phenomenon of global multilingualism. The researchers operationalised the three constructs of "valuing multilingualism", "valuing cognitive benefits of language learning", and "image of languages as a school subject" (p. 10) through 15 Likert-type questionnaire items, administered pre and post-intervention. There was no control group. After conducting independent samples t-tests to compare the before and after intervention attitudes of EAL learners (termed "having a different language to English as L1" (p. 10) or "learners with multilingual backgrounds" (p. 11)) and non-EAL learners, pre-intervention EAL learners already appeared to value the cognitive benefits of languages significantly more than non EAL learners, and this difference between the groups became even more pronounced post-intervention. Whilst pre-intervention, only a trend was observed for EAL learners to hold a more positive image of languages as a school subject, post-intervention, this difference between the two groups became statistically significant. For valuing multilingualism, no statistically significant effect of group on learners was observed, either pre or post-intervention. The researchers concluded that EAL learners appeared to be more susceptible to the intervention than non-EAL learners, and that even before the intervention, EAL learners attributed not just a higher value to languages as a school subject, but that they also showed higher levels of

self-efficacy. However, the concept of self-efficacy is not reported as a variable that was measured in this study. In addition, the sample of EAL learners consisted of only six out of 97 learners, (6% of the whole sample), and thus should be interpreted with caution, as the authors themselves also acknowledge. Finally, with a view to comparing Lanvers et al.'s results with the those of the current study, it is noted that Lanvers et al. studied learners who had indicated that their "first language was a language other than English", which might give different responses from asking learners whether they speak a language other than English in the home. This perhaps underlines the need to define and operationalise 'multilingual' or 'EAL' background more consistently between studies, so that like can be compared with like.

In their longitudinal study of year 9 (KS3) learners from three English schools, Taylor and Marsden investigated whether perceived relevance of languages could be improved through two different interventions (a panel discussion and a lesson with an external tutor), and how change in learner attitudes might be related to subject uptake. Two publications resulted from this study: a research report (2012) and an article (2014). The pilot study with 106 participants was used as the control group for the purposes of the article, hence the 2012 report lists a smaller number of participants (498) than the 2014 article (604). For the intervention, one group of participants attended a panel discussion on the benefits of languages, the other group received a lesson with a guest language tutor. Taylor and Marsden operationalise four variable constructs in a questionnaire, which was administered pre- and post-intervention. The constructs tested were "perceptions of FL class", "intention to take up a FL in year 10", "perceived importance of FL", and "attitudes to language learning in general" (p. 906-907). In the 2012 report, the researchers explain that they also interviewed 48 learners in pairs. Results from the questionnaire indicated that altogether language take-up was higher in the intervention groups compared with the control, but that the type of intervention did not appear to have an effect (Taylor &

Marsden, 2014). Reactions to both interventions were found to be positively correlated with language uptake, as well as related to attitudes and perceptions held before the interventions. As regards uptake, two variables were found to have predictive power: perceived personal importance of a foreign language predicted continuing a foreign language at the optional stage, whereas perceived importance of foreign languages for others predicted dropping the language. By distinguishing between the two concepts of the importance of languages for oneself, and the importance of languages for others, Taylor and Marsden discovered not only that their learner participants indeed conceptualised the value of languages in these two separate concepts, but also that perceived personal relevance was conducive for language take-up, whereas perceived non-relevance was non-conducive. In their 2012 research report, the authors evaluate the findings from their learner interviews, in which they followed up on the questionnaire findings. Here it appeared that learners equated enjoying language lessons with being successful in the language, as well as with the language being relevant for their personal future. The three concepts of enjoyment, competence, and relevance appeared to be connected with each other in a dynamic relationship, which Taylor and Marsden visualise as both a virtuous and a vicious triangle (Figure 2.6. below).



*Figure 2.6.* The enjoyment-competence-relevance triangle (adapted from Taylor & Marsden, 2012, p. 20).

In Taylor and Marsden's enjoyment-competence-relevance triangle (Figure 2.6. above), one element appeared to ensure the other two (virtuous triangle). Equally, when one element was missing, the others did also not materialise (vicious triangle). Taylor and Marsden's study is considered highly relevant for the present one, due to its recency, the similarities in sample size, setting, and age of participants.

One recent study on British adolescent learner attitudes towards German stands out for its methodology of metaphor elicitation. The focus on attitudes and beliefs in the current study aligns with the social and affective qualities of metaphor (Fisher, 2016). Metaphor elicitation has been shown as an effective, indirect methodology for accessing learners' belief systems, which can be held on a subconscious, and therefore not easily articulated level (Low, 2015). Based on her PhD study (2013a), Fisher (2013b) employed a Vygotskian sociocultural theory framework to demonstrate how a classroom intervention using metaphor elicitation and discussion with 59 KS3 German learners in an English school resulted in learners coming to choose metaphors more conducive to German-learning, compared with the control group. Beliefs about language learning have been linked with learning behaviour and learning outcomes (Fisher, 2016). Using a sentence completion task, Fisher (2013a) elicited three types of metaphors around German from two classes of year 8 learners: general metaphors ("Learning German is like"), animal metaphors ("If German was an animal"), and food metaphors "If German was a food it would be a..." (p. 75). She also asked learners to complete a 'because' clause for each of these items. Fisher's (2013a) methodology also involved an affect item, story writing tasks, interviews, classroom observations, and case studies, which, for reasons of space and relevance to this study, will not be reviewed here. Fisher then coded the general, food, and animal metaphors into thematic categories. Categories which emerged were learning German as "difficulty", as "drudgery", as "surmountable challenge", as "mystery", as "pleasure, and as "physical suffering" (p. 122), as "complexity", as "acquired taste" (p.

122), as “physical shape or sound” as well as “other/non-metaphoric/non-categorisable” (p. 125). In a next step, Fisher collapsed the thematic categories into “conducive for language learning”, “non-conducive for language learning”, and “neutral” (p. 129). The conduciveness framework is not rooted in previous theory, but rather based on the researcher’s professional judgement as to whether responses could be assumed to have a positive, negative, or no discernible effect on language learning outcomes (p.89). The purpose of Fisher’s conduciveness coding was to add another layer to the analysis, and to be able to include responses which were miscellaneous (i.e. did not fall under one of the thematic categories which had emerged from the data). In addition, coding responses in terms of conduciveness for language learning allowed Fisher to explore the potential power of metaphor as a tool to improve learning outcomes, in that she used the conduciveness measurements to compare pre- and post-intervention responses. About six months after the collection of the metaphor data, the class teacher conducted the intervention with one of the classes, the other acted as the non-active control group. The intervention took the shape of a class discussion of learners’ anonymised metaphors at the beginning of a lesson on five separate occasions. The teacher facilitated the class discussion by encouraging learners to think about why someone might have used a particular metaphor, and generally explored experiences of learning German. Then, about nine months after the baseline data collection, the metaphor task was repeated with both the intervention and the control group. From the post-intervention metaphors, a new thematic category emerged: “learning German as unpredictability” (p. 150). Using chi-square analysis to compare belief change (operationalised as choosing a different metaphor theme post-intervention compared with pre-intervention), Fisher found that the intervention group changed their beliefs significantly more than the control group. In terms of conductivity for language learning, Fisher deduced from another chi-square test run for the open metaphors only (learning German is like...), that for the intervention group there was an overall trend to change

beliefs towards more-conducive for language learning, as measured by a use of more positive metaphors. Fisher (2013a, b) is relevant to the current study since she has demonstrated that learners as young as age 13 are able think and express themselves metaphorically under task conditions, and that the data generated through metaphor elicitation provided valuable insights into learners' more subconsciously held beliefs about German. Arguably, it was this methodology which enabled Fisher to access beliefs with a distinctly affective dimension. For example, learner responses such as “[learning German is like] getting stabbed repeatedly” (2013a, p. 152), or “like going on a long tedious journey on a lopsided camel across uneven terrain” make the underlying emotions (pain and struggle, respectively) easily apparent. In my view, based on personal observations as a German teacher and on previous literature in the field, the affective dimension of motivation is key in a study of English teenagers' motivation for German, and the uptake decisions they make. Therefore, the role of affect in language learning and decision making will be discussed below.

### **2.3. Affect, language learning, and language uptake choices**

Eccles and Wigfield (2002) have argued that the focus on beliefs, values, and goal constructs in mainstream cognitive-oriented motivation research has, apart from attribution theory, neglected affective processes. Dörnyei and Ryan (2015) argued that a similar disregard for the role of affect currently exists in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) research. The authors called for a new direction in the research field, which, they suggest, should overcome the “emotional deficit” in the cognitivist-dominated paradigm of SLA (p. 10). However, the notion of affect does feature in L2 motivation models (e.g. Gardner, 1985a) as well as in empirical studies (e.g. Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). Krashen (1982), based on work by Dulay and Burt (1977), popularised the concept of the affective filter, a conceptual internal mechanism which, when activated, reduces learners'

understanding and processing of the target language. Implications for practice would be, for example, for teachers to facilitate a non-threatening learning environment. Although Gardner's pioneering concept of L2 motivation (1985a) included positive as well as negative emotions, research has in the past often focussed on the impact of negative emotions, such as language anxiety, building on a seminal study by Horwitz et al. (1986). More recently, researchers have begun to also investigate the effect of positive emotions on language learning. MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012) explain how, in line with a positive psychology approach, positive emotions can have numerous desirable effects, such as strengthened ability to absorb the target language, and increased resilience in the face of failure. Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) proposed the concept of foreign language enjoyment (FLE) to counterbalance the negatively-focussed notion of foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA), and devised a Likert-item scale to measure FLE. In their study with 1,740 learners of all ages from many countries, respondents linked higher levels of FLE with learners' self-reported performance and proficiency levels. The classroom environment appeared to be a key factor for FLE experiences: activities which gave students a sense of autonomy, aligned with their concerns and interests, and allowed them to be creative, not only led to increased FLE levels, but also to increased performance in the foreign language (although it needs to be noted that performance was measured through learners' self-reported perceptions). Dewaele, Witney, Saito, and Dewaele (2017) build on earlier work by Dewaele (2010, 2011, 2015) by arguing that language classrooms can often be "emotionally uninteresting or emotion-free" (p. 5), leading to a lack of learner engagement. Given the link between a positive emotional atmosphere for L2 learning and FLE as demonstrated by Dewaele and colleagues, it is not hard to make the link between L2 learner disengagement and declining L2 uptake numbers, and the commonly emotionally barren conditions seen in UK classrooms. Whilst enjoyment, however, is

clearly an important factor in motivation, exactly what learners understand by this term might require more detailed analysis.

Affect in language learning as explored above refers to the role of emotion in the language learning process. However, there is also a second way in which emotions are relevant for the present study. A key focus of this thesis is learner German uptake choice, as research question 1 investigates learner motivation for German at the time learners have to decide whether to continue or drop the subject. Decision-making is often assumed to be a cognitive process based on rational thought. Rational choice theory (e.g. Elster, 1986) has been developed as a framework for understanding human behaviour, and is based on the premise that behaviour is motivated by a wish to fulfil a desire on the basis of beliefs. However, emotions have also been linked to how people make decisions, and relatively recently, evidence from the field of neuroscience has demonstrated the link between emotions and so-called rational decision-making (e.g. Immordino-Yang & Damasio, 2007; Sołtys, Sowińska-Gługiewicz, Chęć, & Tyburski, 2017). In 2017, a Nobel prize was awarded to Richard Thaler for his work in the field of behavioural economics, a sub-discipline of economics which considers emotional biases underlying individual decision-making (e.g. Thaler, 2015).

A further link between affect and cognition could be said to manifest in the psychological stress people can experience when they hold two or more contradictory beliefs. Cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957) proposes that people strive for consistency amongst their values and beliefs. If one experiences contradictory beliefs one might employ a range of strategies to minimise the negative emotions triggered by the dissonance. An example of a dissonance reduction strategy in the context of this study might be that a young student who struggles with learning German would on the one hand subscribe to the view (widely reported in young beginner learners) that speaking a foreign language is a valuable and enjoyable pursuit. If this learner then fails to be successful, he



or she might reduce the positive value they attribute to learning German, akin to the face-saving attributional shift phenomenon identified in the self-worth framework (2.1.4.5.). Similar cognitive dissonances might be the result of conflicting information from school and the immediate and wider social context. The message for a German learner in a compulsory setting is, on the one hand, that he or she is required to engage in this activity and that it is valuable, whereas the learners' peers, family, and wider social environment may very well send out conflicting, much less positive messages. To what extent learners are susceptible and internalise messages around German from their social context would therefore be a worthwhile area of enquiry.

A factor which has emerged from a review of the language learning landscape in the UK is the growing trend towards social division in language learning. Although this is a key characteristic of L2 learning in instructed settings in the UK today, the study of the impact of socio-economic variables on learner L2 motivation has not been reflected widely in the field. Some of the few recent studies which do so will be reviewed below.

#### **2.4. Language learning and socio-economic status (SES)**

Whilst there is strong evidence of a continuing process of elitification in language learning in the UK, (e.g. Tinsley & Board, 2017a), with decreasing numbers of learners from lower socio-economic status (SES) groups studying a language beyond the compulsory stage (KS3), few studies have examined the relationship between SES and language learning. In one of the rare studies to do so, Gayton (2010) interviewed eleven language teachers across three schools in Scotland, Germany, and France, and found that teachers from all three countries perceived a link between learner SES and language learning with regard to learner mobility, as they assumed that disadvantaged learners would have fewer opportunities for travel. It would appear that, based on these teachers' perceptions, the effect of SES on language motivation did not differ across the three

different national school contexts. In her 2016 study, Gayton interviewed four language teachers from two schools with different socio-economic intakes. As in her previous study, teachers perceived a link between language learner SES and motivation via opportunities for travel. Extending the 'school key players' variable from teachers to school leadership, Lanvers (2016a) found that based on teacher perceptions at management level, the tendency to link social disadvantage and perceived lack of value of language study for learners was even more pronounced than at classroom teacher level. However, in contrast with teacher and senior management perceptions, Lanvers found little evidence of perceptions of SES-related differences in attitudes towards languages amongst her learner participants, when she conducted focus groups with 83 year 9 language learners from across four schools with a range of free school meal indices (a measure of deprivation).

Coffey (2016) draws on Bourdieu's social practice theory (1986, 1998) and Foucault's notion of the discursive field (1972) in conceptualising the value of language study as an asset in terms of cultural capital. In his interview study of year 9 London language learners, Coffey unpicks the underlying power dynamics which play out along the lines of social class, by examining how positive messages about the importance of languages are embedded in visions of the future, in which the learner takes an imagined role, usually involving travel and service encounters with native speakers. In this perspective, learners from a higher SES would have easier and more frequent access to such positive discourses around languages, transcending domains of school, home, and wider society. Learners from a higher SES would therefore more readily assimilate such positive value discourses around languages, and adopt them for themselves in attributing a higher value to language study than would learners from a lower SES. Coffey's approach exemplifies a potentially useful methodology for exploring the qualitative data of the current study based on the patterns suggested by the results of the quantitative part.

However, the results of Gayton, Lanvers, and Coffey need to be treated with a little caution, since in these qualitative studies learner SES was not operationalised on an individual level, but on the basis of school attended. Gayton (2016) and Coffey covered only two school settings, Gayton (2010) three, and Lanvers (2016a) four. Furthermore, both of Gayton's studies were based on teachers' perceptions only. Operationalising learner SES on an individual basis would have increased the validity of these studies, and possibly provided more nuanced results. Building on methodology modelled by these qualitative studies on learner SES and language learning motivation, the current study will triangulate the data by employing quantitative as well as qualitative methods of analysis.

### **2.5. Synthesis of research findings and key concepts relevant to the study**

A picture of complex motivational dynamics has emerged from previous research on foreign language learning at school level. Adolescent motivation for language learning in compulsory UK school settings seems to be characterised by different forces than language learning in non-Anglophone contexts, where instrumental orientations are stronger, and can, through a protective motivational factor, override feelings of dissatisfaction with the learning situation (e.g. Lamb, 2004, 2007). Learners in the UK seem to struggle against a background of socio-economic division and perceptions that languages have low utilitarian value. There appears to be a misalignment between what learners hope to engage in and gain from language learning (communication in the target language) and experiences of the classroom learning situation and learning outcomes (limited communication and success). The models and the empirical studies which tested them reviewed above had initially been chosen for their supposed relevance for this study. After evaluation of these models, it seems that a combination of elements from a range of models is likely to be the best fit to investigate adolescent learner motivation for German in the UK. Given that the data required to answer the research questions of the study are

necessarily diverse, an eclectic theoretical framework drawing on aspects from a number of theories was considered most suitable.

Gardner's influential socio-educational model incorporates three aspects which have emerged as relevant for the current study. The first is the motivational variable of perceptions of the value of the target language, framed by Gardner as cultural beliefs in the learners' home community's social milieu. The second is the focus on the learning situation and its impact on learning outcomes, and the third is the view of language learning as a social process. However, Gardner's model includes motivation as only one of four individual difference variables, and the other three (intelligence, language aptitude, and situational anxiety) are not only complex, but also debated constructs, which remain outside of the boundaries of the present study. Furthermore, Gardner's inclusion of informal language learning contexts seems much more relevant to a bilingual language landscape such as Canada, where the model was developed, but is not a perfect fit for the study of adolescent UK learners who learn German at school. Gardner's concepts of integrative and instrumental orientation seem useful constructs, but would most likely need to be adapted for British learners, for whom, arguably, integrating with the target language community might not be a key motivating factor. Nevertheless, Gardner's model combines concepts considered relevant for the present study, and theorises them in a model based on empirical foundations.

Gardner was amongst the first researchers to formally propose a definition of motivation and attitudes. His definitions for these key terms incorporate concepts considered relevant for the study, which are, in the case of motivation, effort and affect. Gardner (1985a) defined motivation as "the effort, want (desire), and affect associated with learning a second language", which is "important in determining how actively the individual works to acquire second language material" (p. 147). This definition of motivation will be adopted as a working definition in this study. Gardner defined an

individual's attitude as "an evaluative reaction to some referent or attitude object, inferred on the basis of the individual's beliefs or opinions about the referent" (p. 9). Gardner's definition of attitude will be followed for the purposes of this study, since a general definition of attitudes (albeit one from an L2 scholar) allows for a broader application of the term referring to language learning, as well as related concepts such as the target language community and its speakers.

Several models and empirical investigations have demonstrated the importance of the learning situation (e.g. Dörnyei, 1994; Williams & Burden, 1997), which appears to become an even more crucial factor in settings such as the UK, where languages are generally perceived to possess low instrumental value (e.g. Courtney, 2014). Self-efficacy theory seems highly pertinent for the UK context, where learners commonly report that they find languages difficult. Yet, those learners who do choose to continue beyond the compulsory stage, appear to not only possess higher self-efficacy levels, but also report that they enjoy lessons more than their peers who decided to drop the language (e.g. Graham, 2004). Whilst to date, evidence around whether learners attribute instrumental value to languages is conflicting, there seems to be a consensus that for UK learners, a sense of personal (as opposed to general) utility is paramount (e.g. Taylor & Marsden, 2014).

From the range of self-based models reviewed above, Dörnyei's L2MSS model seems useful in its emphasis of the importance of the learning situation, but less applicable to the learners of this study in the ideal and ought-to L2 self dimensions for reasons of Anglophone setting, and age of learners. However, the notion of the self is undoubtedly relevant for L2 learning motivation. Expectancy-value, self-determination and self-worth theories all seem useful for exploring this factor in connection with perceptions of value, and the emotional and psychological phenomena involved not just in language learning itself, but in making language-uptake decisions.

After careful consideration of the literature in the field, the variables which have been considered most appropriate for investigating young UK German learners' motivation in connection with uptake choices are the learning situation, self-efficacy, and perceptions of value of German. These would correspond to Dörnyei's 1994 model of 1. language level (value/reasons for learning the language), 2. learner level (self-efficacy) and 3. learning situation level. Learner attitudes to learning situation, self-efficacy, and perceptions of value of the language appear to be closely linked (e.g. Taylor & Marsden, 2012), but the exact nature of this relationship is not entirely clear. Further research to unpick the complex interplay of the constructs of learning situation, self-efficacy, and value in relation to UK learners might therefore be helpful. In addition, socio-economic factors have emerged as a demographic variable, whose impact on the language learning landscape in the UK has been noted in surveys, but less so in academic research. Affective factors have been shown to underlie decision-making processes as well as learner motivation for the language itself, and Fisher's studies have demonstrated how metaphor elicitation can be a helpful methodology for accessing this area.

Attitudes are held to be a key influencer of motivation. Whilst research has shown a link between learner attitudes and motivation, influences on learner attitudes beyond the classroom environment are not easy to pinpoint. Overall, sociocultural factors tend to be seen as more influential than educational ones (e.g. Bartram, 2010). For the UK context, the mass media are commonly blamed for the spreading of negative public values around languages (e.g. Coleman et al., 2007). Yet, whilst the impact of negative messages around languages in the mass media on learner attitudes is a frequent assumption, very few, if any, studies have investigated this relationship empirically, leaving a gap in the literature which the present study aims to address. Researchers from different traditions in the field appear to agree that attitudes towards the target language speakers and communities affect attitudes towards the target language (e. Bartram, 2010; Gardner, 1985a). It would follow,

that for learners of German, the picture they have formed of the language, the target language community of speakers, and the country where most of this target language is spoken, might well have an impact on their attitude formation, and link with their German learning motivation. The current study therefore takes up the notion of the influence of societal attitudes on learner attitudes and learner motivation, and makes this a focus of the investigation. Therefore, the next chapter (3) will review how languages, German, the Germans and Germany are represented in UK school settings as well as in wider society.

## **Chapter 3: Representations of German, the Germans, and Germany**

A common claim made in relation to L2 motivation in the UK is that the UK media portray languages in a negative light, and that this biased representation is linked with reduced language learning motivation and uptake (e.g. Coleman et al. 2007). A sometimes unsubstantiated, but nevertheless fundamental assumption of discourse theory is that widely circulated discourse permeates through various domains of communication (Roth, 2013). Hence, widely circulated discourses around languages, German, the Germans, and Germany, such as results of polls and surveys, are also covered in this chapter. The following review provides an account of public representations of languages, German, Germany, and the Germans in a range of domains, world-wide and in the UK. It then directs its focus back to the main participant groups in the present study, adolescent German learners in a UK school setting, and reviews evidence on how these learners perceive Germany and the Germans (perceptions of German as a school subject were, wherever it was possible to separate these concepts, reviewed in chapter 2 above).

### **3.1. Representations of languages in the media**

Two recent studies which explore the representation of foreign languages in the media, using a critical discourse analysis or a corpus linguistics approach, are Lanvers and Coleman (2013), and Graham and Santos (2015). Lanvers and Coleman confirm previous research findings (e.g. Coleman, 2009; Ensslin & Johnson, 2006) that the media tend to perpetuate the “English is enough” fallacy (p. 19), with the national press focussing on the political dimension of the so-called language learning crisis, and the few positive examples of reporting on language learning found in the local (rather than the national) press. Through identifying themes in a range of UK newspapers, the authors showed how these themes relate to the respective target readerships and the specific language-policy



related context in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Wales. From these data, Lanvers and Coleman distinguish between two themes: language as product, and the benefits and challenges of language learning. Interestingly, stakeholders' views of what exactly the problems and the solutions are regarding language learning differed widely, which may have implications for possible lobbying strategies to increase the uptake of foreign language learning.

Graham and Santos (2015) employed corpus analysis techniques in order to examine public discourse on languages as represented by language-related policy documents, reports, curriculum documents and press articles. The authors focussed on the years 2007 and 2013, a period which covered a change of government from a Labour to a Conservative/Liberal coalition government in 2010. The authors identified a persistent negative portrayal of languages by the press, both in terms of achievement, and in the framing of languages as 'in crisis', even when there was an increased uptake in languages in 2013 (probably due to the EBacc effect, see 1.1. above). They report that while the 2007 policy document (National Curriculum, NC) suggested that languages can or should be enjoyable, achievable, and generally part of the learner's wider context, the 2013 NC document focussed not on skills but on higher standards, and on teaching rather than learning. The notion that an educated person studies languages is put forward, however, the purpose or value thereof remains unclear. Most notably, whereas the government language reports portrayed a utilitarian view of languages, the selected UK press articles did not frame languages in terms of value, personal development, or employment. Linking the portrayal of languages in public discourse with concepts such as perceptions of value and self-efficacy, which have both been shown to not just play a key part in language learner motivation, but also to correlate with each other (Mills et al., 2007), Graham and Santos conclude that " it is therefore perhaps not surprising if learners themselves do not understand clearly what the value of language learning is, or do not see success in that

enterprise as a goal that is achievable or worth pursuing” (p. 19). Both the above articles are considered useful methodological models for the public discourse aspect of the present study.

### **3.2. World-wide perceptions of Germany**

In recent world-wide surveys with adult participants, Germany ranked either at first position or very near the top in terms of positive attitudes held towards it. Four such surveys are outlined below. The Country Brand Index 2014/15, published in November 2014, measures “country as brand perceptions” of 75 countries. In a quantitative and qualitative survey of 2,530 participants, who were asked about perceptions of awareness, familiarity, preference, associations, consideration, decision/visitation, and advocacy, Germany came out third after Japan and Switzerland (Futurebrand, 2014).

The latest GFK Nation Brands Index (GFK, 2017), placed Germany in first position, after France and the UK. This survey, which has ranked Germany consistently in the top three countries since its inception in 2005, measures global perceptions of 50 countries, based on twenty-three different attributes that make up the six overall dimensions of exports, governance, culture and heritage, people, tourism, and investment and immigration. A total of 20,185 online interviews were conducted across 20 panel countries.

No rankings emerged from the 2012 survey of the German Society for International Cooperation (Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit; GIZ, 2012), a qualitative study of 120 interviews from 21 countries, including the UK, which aimed to ascertain a picture of the representation of Germany in these countries. In keeping with the results above, this survey found generally positive perceptions of Germany, paired with high expectations of Germany’s future role in the world. The survey was repeated in 2015 with 179 interviewees from 26 countries (GIZ, 2015). Results showed continued positive

perceptions of Germany, together with a sense of an increased dominance of Germany's role in Europe, and even higher expectations (compared with 2012) of Germany playing an active part in world politics (including military engagement), the environment, and in terms of refugee issues and migration. The following quote illustrates a view of Germany as expressed by a Dutch participant: "If Germany was an animal, it would be an elephant or a rhinoceros. It is clearly noticeable, big, can survive centuries, and one must deal with it carefully. But it is not fast enough" (p. 1, my translation).

The only worldwide survey discussed here which provides a breakdown of attitudes towards Germany by nation is the BBC Country Ratings Poll (Globescan, 2014) of 2014, a worldwide poll of 24,542 participants in 24 countries. Respondents were asked to rate 16 countries and the EU in general on whether they considered their influence in the world "mostly positive" or "mostly negative." This suggests that Germany was seen as the most popular country in the world: 60% of the 24,542 participants rated Germany positively, which is the highest rating amongst the 16 countries (and the EU) which the survey focussed on. The latest edition of the BBC Country Ratings Poll (Globescan, 2017) showed that the perception of Germany's influence in the world declined by 1 percentage point, positioning Germany second (59%) in the world, just behind Canada (61%).

### **3.3. Representations of Germans and Germany in UK school settings**

The representation of Germany in UK history curricula is commonly invoked as a contributor to public associations between Germans and the Nazi era (e.g. Wittlinger, 2004). Whilst the potential influence of textbooks and the history curriculum on learners' attitude formation is acknowledged, it is beyond the scope of the present study to explore this aspect further. However, a brief mention of the general tenor of representations of Germany and the Germans in German teaching textbooks and the history curriculum is considered necessary. In the 1990s and 2000s, it became almost a tradition for German

ambassadors to the UK to complain about the representation of Germany in the British media and history textbooks. Wittlinger (2004) points out: “pupils in secondary schools in the UK learn more about the Holocaust than about all other historical events taken together” (p. 463).

In 2003 the British government issued a somewhat ambivalent response to the complaints, when the then Education Secretary Charles Clarke announced that the UK would “look at the way to update Germany’s image in classes”, since Germans were “making a perfectly fair point and we are certainly having to think about it”, whilst simultaneously informing British journalists that “Hitler would stay on the curriculum” (cited in Ramsden, 2006, p. 393). For a more historical perspective on the representation of Germans and Germany in British textbooks, McLelland’s 2015 study provides a chronological account of German learning and teaching in Britain, spanning five centuries.

German language teaching in the UK has been called upon to not only be aware of the media and other hegemonic discourses on Germany, but integrate them into the curriculum through awareness-raising and critical discussion (Tenberg, 1999a). This is where intercultural knowledge has a role to play. The idea is to identify stereotypes with a view to critically evaluate and deconstruct them.

Byram’s (1993) study of the representation of Germany in language textbooks in the UK found that there was less cultural content in German language teaching books used in the UK than in their equivalents used in Germany. Byram stresses the importance of cultural content and proposes explicit criteria and systematic content for this.

Over a decade later, in an article based on her doctoral thesis, Maijala (2004) focussed on the representation of history in German language textbooks in selected European countries. According to Maijala, a distinguishing feature of the representation of history in German language text books in Britain appears to be the oral format, i.e. conversations or interviews on the topic of history, specifically World War Two (WWII).

Maijala interpreted this as an attempt to encourage empathy and a critical engagement with these events and the culture they are set in, although other interpretations of this strategy are possible. In Maijala's analysis British textbooks also differed from other European books used in the study, in that they named Nazi-era personalities, as well as East German politicians, and, foreshadowing the Brexit vote of 2016, and as the only textbook in the study to do so, presented European integration as a possibly problematic concept.

In sum, learner materials such as German textbooks but also history learning content and materials seem to be a potentially important variable, which might influence learner attitudes, yet, for reasons of time and space it has been decided to not include materials in the current study. Therefore, findings must be considered with this lacuna in mind.

### **3.4. Public UK perceptions of Germany**

Whilst a number of surveys investigate the image of Germany in the world (as reviewed above), studies of the British public's attitudes towards Germany are rare. Some surveys which encompass the UK as well as other nations can be broken down by participating country. Examining the world-wide BBC Country Ratings Poll survey data by nation of participants, interestingly the most positive ratings of Germany, 86%, came from the UK (jointly with Australia), with similar figures for the 2017 survey, where Germany's highest ratings also came from the UK (84%, jointly with China). According to this survey, in 2014 Germany was the most favourably viewed country both world-wide and in the UK, with Canada only just overtaking Germany in world-perceptions in 2017 (Globescan, 2014, 2017).

An online Goethe Institute survey of 2011, with 13,000 participants from 18 countries, can also be broken down by the respondents' home country. Four hundred and six participants from the UK took part in the Deutschlandliste 2011 (Goethe Institut, 2011),

for which they were asked to answer ten “who, which, or what”-style questions, such as “For you, who is the most important German”, “For you, which German-language book is the best”, or “What do you like best about Germany” (my translation). The survey seems to only have been available in German, which implies that the respondent sample would have to be limited to self-selecting, German-speaking participants. The ten most frequent answers are listed for each question, of which the most relevant for this study are “What do you not like about Germany” and “What do you like best about Germany” (my translation). Amongst UK respondents, the least liked feature of Germany was correctness/bureaucracy, and the most liked was culture.

Polls and surveys of world-wide as well as British adults, such as the ones outlined above, appear to paint a picture of overall positive perception of Germany, which may, to some, come as a surprise. A similar discrepancy between perceived negative societal, if not attitudes and opinion poll data was already pointed out by Földes in the year 2000: “The striking declaration of the federal government: The most popular nation of Europe is – Germany! [...] seems – unfortunately – rather strange to me” (Földes, 2000, p. 282, my translation).

It needs to be noted that the above surveys were conducted with adult participants, who were not necessarily German learners. The present study explores adolescent learners’ attitudes towards German, the Germans, and Germany, and therefore studies with participants who were German learners and/or of a younger age group are reviewed below.

### **3.5. Depictions of Anglo-German relations**

The present study is concerned with contemporary representations of German, the Germans, and Germany. Whilst it is acknowledged that such representations are likely be coloured by the past through, for example, processes related to cultural memory (e.g. Assmann, 1992; a construct that denotes how objectified and institutionalised events of the

past can have an effect on people's attitudes in the present), in order to bound the research frame, a historical cut-off point had to be determined. The cut-off point adopted in this thesis was the date of German reunification on 3 October 1990, as this date appeared to coincide with a reported change in public attitudes towards Germany (e.g. Kettenacker, 2000). Therefore, in this section, studies from the 1990s onwards will be reviewed.

German reunification in 1990 seems to have triggered a renewed phase of negative representations of Germany in UK discourses. In this context the so-called Ridley and Chequers affairs of July 1990 have received much media attention (e.g. Moyle, 1995). In these two separate incidents connected by the revelation of highly negative anti-German attitudes, first, the then Secretary of State for Trade and Industry Nicholas Ridley, had to resign for making outspoken Germanophobic remarks in an interview. Second, a seminar held by the then Prime minister Margaret Thatcher at the country house Chequers in March 1990 made headlines, when minutes taken by Thatcher's foreign policy advisor Charles Powell were leaked to the press. In this memorandum, traits of "the German character" were listed as "angst, aggressiveness, assertiveness, bullying, egotism, inferiority complex, and sentimentality", coupled with a reported "capacity for excess, to overdo things, to kick over the traces", and "a tendency to overestimate their [the Germans'] own strengths and capabilities" (Powell, 1992), p. 8). Klein (1996) also explored the Ridley and Chequers affairs in her discussion of British views on German unification. Her interpretation of the public opinion data suggests that the British public was mostly in favour of German reunification, but that it was the anti-German attitude of Margaret Thatcher herself which appeared more prominent in the public arena than alternative views.

Michail (2001) examined British attitudes towards Germany following the end of WWII in 1945, and following the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. His research aims were to identify the origins of negative images of Germany in Britain, and to examine the legitimacy of the widely accepted view that Britain has adopted a lasting negative attitude

towards Germany. His findings of British Europe-phobia, Germano-phobia, and reproduction of outdated stereotypes lead him to turn the focus back on the UK, as opposed to Germany, as the “European abnormality”. Michail’s article and a paper by Wittlinger (2004) are discussed further in the context of media representation under 3.6. below. The latter article combined the evaluation of existing attitudinal survey data with an analysis of representations of Germany in the British press. Wittlinger concluded that British perceptions of Germany and the Germans are still negative, and dominated by images of WWII.

In his review article, Hughes (2006) gives an overview of events in the Anglo-German history usually termed “affairs”. The author called for an expansion in the scholarship on the Anglo-German relationship in history, which should address the positive as well as the negative “to demonstrate that Britain’s ‘German affair’ is about so much more than Hitler, the Nazis and the two World Wars” (p. 283).

Rathje’s (2005) study is unusual, in that the author used spoken, not written language as her focus for analysis. She investigated how national stereotypes are constructed and how they manifest themselves in spoken language. Rathje conducted 31 interviews, most of them with young adults aged 19 to 27, and analysed them at content, as well as at language level. Her findings were of generally negative attitudes towards Germany, reflecting tendencies of media discourse. Of particular interest for the interview part of this study is Rathje’s experience of the researcher effect. It emerged that interviewees were reluctant to share their negative beliefs about Germany honestly with her, as the researcher was a member of the outgroup (i.e., she was German herself). Respondents either did not wish to offend her, or did not want to appear to be subscribing to stereotypes. One strategy to avoid this phenomenon for the present study would be to design the research instruments in such a way that respondents can distance themselves from the statement made, without feeling that they are invested personally.



One notable recent phenomenon in the British publishing landscape has been the emergence of a plethora of books about Germany. Whilst these are acknowledged to play a part in the representations of Germany and the Germans in public discourse, for space reasons, this aspect cannot be explored in this study. Examples of this type of publication are *Springtime for Germany or how I learned to love Lederhosen* (Donald, 2007), *Germania* (Winder, 2010), *Keeping up with the Germans* (Oltermann, 2012), *Noble Endeavours: the Life of two countries, England and Germany, in many stories* (Seymour, 2013), *Reluctant Meister: How Germany's past is shaping its European future* (Green, 2015), *Make me German* (Fletcher, 2015), and *The Shortest History of Germany* (Hawes, 2017). The publication which accompanied the British Museum's popular 'Germany: Memories of a nation exhibition' (16 October 2014 – 25 January 2015), topped the bestseller lists in 2014 (MacGregor, 2014). The Migration Museum's 'Germans in Britain' touring exhibition was launched in September 2014, and at the time of writing is still travelling around locations in the UK, including the University of Reading (January-March 2017).

### **3.6. Representations of Germany and Germans in UK print media**

Cullingford and Husemann's (1995) edited collection of essays on various aspects of the Anglo-German relationship includes Cumberbatch and Wood (1995) on representations of Germans in the British press in two distinct samples of 1991 and 1990-1994. The authors' methodology consists mainly of key word searches and little statistical analysis, and their conclusion is, somewhat vaguely, that "Germans do not get a fair coverage in the media" (p. 118).

A bilingual collection of essays edited by Tenberg (1999b) includes contributions on the representation of Germany in the media and in language teaching in the 1990s, the latter from an angle of *Landeskunde* (intercultural knowledge). In this volume, both Krönig

and Tenberg (1999a) reported on anti-German sentiments expressed in the British press, which they put down to British concerns about the arguably more powerful, newly-unified Germany, reinforced by perceived challenges to Britain's own identity. Theobald (1999) took this point further by arguing that anti-European discourses in the British media draw on historical and easily-accessible negative German stereotypes in order to support an anti-European agenda.

Wittlinger (2004) (see also 3.5. above) picked up on Krönig and Tenberg by highlighting how the relatively good post-war Anglo-German relations, as represented in the media, started to deteriorate in the late 1980s. Wittlinger attributed this development to a variety of factors, including WWII and the Holocaust (p. 464). Importantly for this study, Wittlinger also identified a connection with and therefore an opportunity for German language teaching at school level, and suggests changes to the 'Hitlerised' history curriculum as well as the inclusion of more cultural content in the German language textbooks used in the UK.

Grix and Lacroix's (2006) paper, which includes a Germany-EU case study, positions itself as "one of the few empirical studies" to investigate (over time) stereotypical reporting on other countries, and in this instance, Germany, by the press. The authors organise their findings under eight 'core stereotypes', and distinguish between newspapers, target readership, tone, and frequency. The paper takes a cultural approach on the effects of the media: long-term exposure to national stereotypes can lead to their 'embeddedness' (p. 376). It is important to note that although the paper was published in 2006, articles were sampled from the year 2001. Samples were taken from the British national newspapers *The Sun*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Times*, and *The Guardian*. Eight stereotypes were identified: 1) war prone, 2) engine or leader of the EU, 3) German-British football rivalry, 4) highly intellectual, educated or creative, 5), German cars and engineering, 6) German companies hindering or taking over British ones, 7) controlled, restricted or highly

legislated economy or society, 8) organised, punctual or boring. Somewhat surprisingly, *The Sun* as the only tabloid in the study was found to be adopting the least stereotypical stance towards the Germans and Germany, contrary to *The Guardian* (considered a left-leaning broadsheet; Duffy & Rowden, 2005), which displayed the most stereotypical reporting (p. 381). Almost half (485) of stereotypes were categorised as negative, 32% as neutral, and 20% as positive, and whilst German stereotypes were widely distributed through all types of articles, categories of stereotypes were found to be different from paper to paper. Overall, German-related coverage was negative in tone. Grix and Lacroix's article is useful for the current study both for its successful use of relevant methodology and for comparative purposes.

Tritz (2007) analysed Germany-related articles from *The Guardian*, *The Times*, *The Sunday Times*, and *The Sun* between November 2004 and August 2006 with regard to the change of government from the left-leaning *SPD* to the more conservative *CDU* headed by Angela Merkel, in November 2005. For her investigation of the representation of Germany and the Germans, Tritz employed the methodologies of evaluation and frame analysis. Frame analysis is a theoretical approach which involves the investigation of how a communication source defines and constructs a political issue for an audience (e.g. Nelson, Oxley, & Clawson, 1997). This approach aligns with discourse analysis, which similarly explores the relative positions of speaker and reader in the construction of discursive events (e.g. Fairclough, 2003). Although Tritz found an improvement of the representation of Germany with the appointment of Angela Merkel as Chancellor, averaged out over for the whole time span of the study she reported an overall slightly negative representation. Interestingly, Tritz's study also considered snapshot empirical public opinion data in the form of a questionnaire completed by 100 British Londoners, which confirmed the findings of the newspaper analysis. Tritz read that as confirmation that the media influence public opinion. Unfortunately the questionnaire is not included, and the study did not consider

any possible effect of the World Cup 2006, which has been linked to a change in public attitudes towards Germany (e.g. Harding, 2006).

Employing an interdisciplinary approach which included stereotype research and critical discourse analysis, in her doctoral thesis Demleitner (2008) analysed themed British and German stereotypes in both the British and the German press, and the linguistic devices expressing those stereotypes. Similar to Grix and Lacroix's study, one needs to be aware that although the thesis was submitted in 2008, the newspaper articles for the specialised corpus were collected between May and July 1998. Demleitner gives a chronological overview of the representation of Germany in the UK, beginning with the Victorian era. Taking up the argument that the 1980s are supposedly the 'golden era' of Anglo-German relations, she explored the fragility and superficiality of positive broadsheet representations versus public opinion surveys. Reunification is seen as a turning point for any tendencies towards positive images and attitudes, with some media moving seamlessly from the portrayal of Germany as a war enemy, to Germany as a European Union enemy, intent on subjugation of the UK (p. 45). The ambivalent stereotyping of Germany and the Germans by the British press, which has been dichotomised into the "war-story-German" and the "Vorsprung durch-Technik-German", (a sentiment echoed by Matussek (2005)), leading to a 'two-Germany-theory', are examined and put into context (p. 47). In keeping with previous results of the studies she reviews, Demleitner found on the whole negative representations of Germany in the British press: "Germans are portrayed as uninteresting, unappealing, arrogant, boring, hypercorrect, humourless, submissive to authority, dominant and too predictable. They occupy sun loungers and inform on each other" (p. 389, my translation). Figure 3.1. below is a typical graphic tabloid representation of such a view:

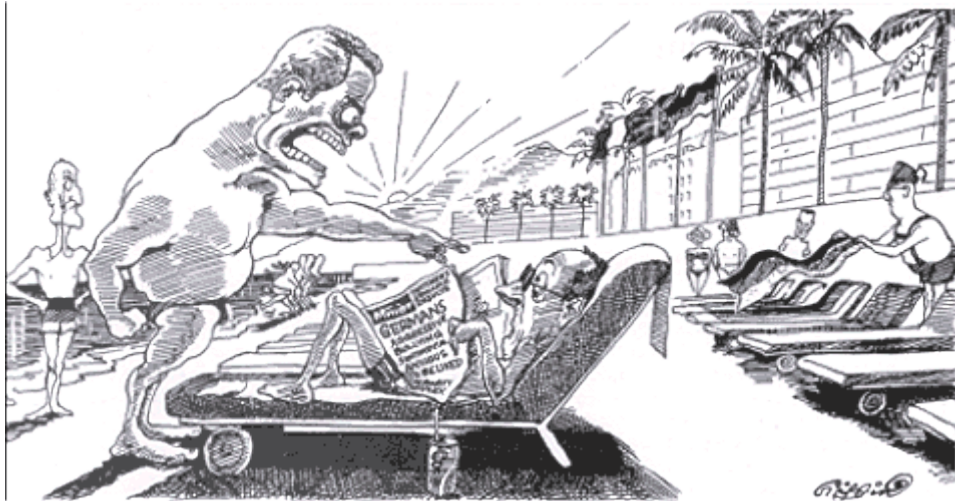


Figure 3.1. Vell, Englander, answer ze kvestion! Vy do you no like us? (Charles Griffin, *Daily Mirror*, 17th July 1990, reprinted in Ramsden, 2006, p. 403).

One single event which has been highlighted as a turning point in the negative representation of Germany in the British press was the 2006 FIFA (Football) World Cup. Beck (2003) had noted the absence of the theme of football in the study of Anglo-German relations. This is surprising, as a number of studies refer to the anti-German reporting of the 1996 European Football Championships (Euro 96) by the British press, which was found to be characterised by a notable revival of war imagery. For example, Maguire, Poulton, and Possamai (1999) quote the French magazine *L'Equipe*, which commented that British reporting of the England – Germany match made one feel “as if Germany had never made peace with the Allies. It was almost as if they once again bombed London with their V1s” (quoted in Michail, 2001). The authors compared German and English print media regarding their reportage of Euro 96, considering stereotypes, national habitus codes, identity issues, Europeanisation processes and politics, and explored how the thus formed respective national identity discourses relate to a particular agenda regarding European integration. In separate chapters, Head and Brooker also discuss Euro 96 and the related representations of the Germans and Germany in the UK in Emig’s (2000) edited volume.

In their analysis of press reports of the football match between Germany and England during the following round of the same Championship four years later, Euro 2000, Bishop and Jaworski (2003) argue that the formulation of nationalism and the homogeneity and unity of the nation in the British press in relation to the England - Germany football match takes the form of three main identified strategies: a separation of 'us' and 'them', conflict as expressed through war imagery, and typification, i.e., stereotypes. The authors show how these strategies are used by the press to support and uphold a hegemonic world order of sovereign nation states.

Harding (2006) conducted a case study of the 2006 Football World Cup media coverage by the UK press. The author describes the 2006 World Cup as "a defining moment in Germany's post-war journey towards normalization. It changed popular British perceptions of the Germans" (p. 23). Harding traces how the attitudes of the British media changed from "unable to write about Germany without touching on the Third Reich" (p. 8, citing Kielinger, 2006) to tabloid headlines such as "Love is in the Herr. England-fans love Germany" (p. 14, citing Perryman, 2006). The author sees the cause for the shift in attitudes in the fact that a large number of football fans and journalists travelled to Germany and experienced it first-hand. Tellingly, writing in 2006, Harding poses the question "whether the more positive image of Germany will endure or whether tabloid newspapers will revert to the old clichés of Hitler and the Second World War" (p. 23), which will be explored as part of this study's investigation relating to research question 3.

### **3.7. UK German learner perceptions of Germany and the Germans**

Studies of UK learners' beliefs and attitudes around German, the Germans, and Germany are usually positioned in the broader context of motivation for language learning. One focus of the current project, however, is to explore the relationship between UK learners' attitudes towards and motivation for learning the German language on the one hand, and their attitudes to Germany and German speakers (i.e., the target language

community and community of speakers), on the other. In an attempt to disentangle these three interrelated concepts of attitudes towards German, the Germans, and Germany, this current section deals with studies or parts of studies which focus on school age learners' beliefs and attitudes towards Germany and the Germans, whereas learner attitudes to German learning and German as a school subject were discussed in the previous chapter, with some inevitable overlap of the literature.

Narrowing in on the world-wide perspectives on Germany to attitudes held by school-age learners from the mid-1990s onwards, the on the whole positive perceptions of Germany emerging from recent surveys, as outlined under 3.2. and 3.4. above, are balanced by a rather more complex picture when learner perspectives are taken into account.

Cullingford (1995) conducted an interview study with 160 British primary-age learners. His key findings were that Germany was associated with war, and that the Germans came up as a 'disliked people'. The methods of this study remain somewhat unclear. The statistics programme SPSS is mentioned, but no inferential statistics are reported. The chapter is dominated by quotes from participants about the negative attributes of Germans.

The Goethe Institut commissioned a large-scale study with 1695 student-participants of an average age of 14.7 from GB and Ireland, conducted by Sammon (1996, 1998). Sammon reported largely negative attitudes, as well as a preoccupation with German Nazis and sports personalities, both illustrated and undercut by the quote "Hitler, Klinsman, Mataus [sic]. Don't know any other footballers" (in Bowcott, 1996). However, Sammon's study is open to criticism due to several weaknesses, such as the problematic justification of the overrepresentation of independent schools in the sample "because their students have an important influence on British society" (Sammon, 1998, p. 76; my translation). In addition, the methodology of providing a tick list of suggested adjectives to

describe “a typical German” could be said to itself encourage stereotyping, whilst the author’s groupings of said adjectives into positive, negative and neutral categories are not justified by a rationale and appear rather arbitrary. Sammon refers to a survey commissioned by the computer company Gestetner in 1996, which, whilst not discussed in academic literature, received much press attention at the time. When 800 British school pupils between the ages of 10 and 16 were asked about their attitudes towards other European countries, Germany emerged as the most boring, the least attractive to visit, the poorest, and associated with WWII and with Hitler (Bennet, 1996).

If Sammon’s study appears problematic, Keller (1991) also seems lacking in academic rigour. Keller states that his questionnaire is informed by research dating from between 1933 to 1963 (p. 121). The list of 148, from a contemporary point of view highly problematic, characteristics which German and British school pupils were asked to rate each other’s nations against, include “effeminate”, “men of the world”, “beautiful women”, and “good housewives” (p. 133-135). References cited in Keller’s study date back to the 1950s and are no more recent than the 1970s. To avoid the forming of negative stereotypes during a school visit abroad, Keller has this advice: “... pupils should be given the chance to meet representatives from different social groups (political parties, trade unions, age groups, denominations)” (p. 135). One might be inclined to explain the shortcomings of this study due to it being dated, however it was published without any modifying editor’s comments as late as 1991, and is quoted for its supporting evidence in more recent publications (e.g. Baumann & Shelley, 2003).

In a departure from the pattern of negative attitudes emerging from the studies above, Thornton and Cajkler (1996) used a questionnaire with 178 learners from seven English schools who were of the same average age as Sammon’s participants (14.7.) , and found learners’ attitudes towards German culture, life, and “the German character” generally positive, with little negative stereotyping. Interestingly, this study identified that



learners did not refer to their German lessons as a source of information for their perceptions of German culture. It emerged that whilst learners were generally positive and curious about Germans and Germany, they based this attitude on very little factual knowledge or experience. The authors point out that while school exchanges are meant to further cross-cultural knowledge and understanding (e.g. King, 1992), their data suggests that such opportunities are only available to some learners, typically along a regional and socio-economic division. For example, in one of the participating schools 66% of learners had taken part in an exchange to a German-speaking country, whereas in another 0% had. This led the authors to suggest that exchange programmes might in fact increase the gap between advantaged and disadvantaged learners. Yet, such experiences with the target language community contributed not just to positive attitudes, but also to a perception of higher competence in German for learners in Thornton and Cajkler's study.

In his study with a main focus on English German learner motivation, Chambers (1999) examined attitudes of 11 to 17-year-old students and also found largely positive attitudes held by UK learners about the Germans. However, in a more fine-grained analysis, Chambers asked his participants to describe German people based on Gardner and Lambert's (1972) ethnocentricity questionnaire items. Results were then coded into "negative", "don't know", "positive", and "varied", according to the adjectives learners used in their responses (p. 111). At age 11, most English learners were positive about Germans, and around one third held negative attitudes. Responses two years later showed that learners became more positive and less negative about the Germans, however, this pattern was reversed for the age 13 to 15 cohort. Data from follow-up interviews with 10% of learners led Chambers to suggest that the increase in negative responses between age 13 and age 15 was linked with exchange visits, appearing to contradict Thornton and Cajkler's results. All of Chambers 15 to 17-year-old learners, however, viewed Germans either positively, or gave varied responses.

Interestingly, in their large-scale study with a 25% sample from 14 to 17-year-old language learners across 100 Scottish secondary schools, McPake, Johnstone, Low, and Lyall (1999) found that although learners held generally negative attitudes towards MFL learning, they did not express correspondingly negative attitudes towards the target language communities and speakers. This would support the discussion of attitudes towards country and speakers on the one hand, and towards the language as a school subject on the other, as distinct concepts.

Lee, Buckland, and Shaw (1998) split pupils' responses to questions regarding attitudes towards the target language speakers into German and French in their study of 62 year 9 students in London. They reported neutral to positive attitudes towards both German and French lessons, and generally positive attitudes to both the German and the French people. This study was preceded by similar results found by Phillips and Filmer-Sankey (1993), who also noted that learners of German were more keen on contact with Germans, than learners of French were with native French speakers.

A survey which does not seem to be discussed in academic literature is the 'Mutual perceptions research' by the British Council and the Goethe Institut (British Council Berlin & Goethe Institut Berlin (2004). In this quantitative study, 1,000 young people aged 16 to 25 in the UK and Germany were asked about their opinions of each other's countries and people. It is important to note that the UK participants were not necessarily learning German at the time of the survey or previously, and only 12.8% were school students at the time of the survey. A key finding regarding UK participants was that they did not seem to have much knowledge about Germany. Culture was named both as the most positive thing about Germany (40%), and as the most negative (42%). Both positive (27%) and negative perceptions of Germany (18%) were reported to have been influenced by German people the participants had met personally. As in earlier surveys, Germany's national socialist past as well as sports personalities dominate the 'most famous Germans' list.

### **3.8. Synthesis of research findings**

The worldwide as well as UK-specific highly positive perception of Germany in the survey data (3.2. and 3.4. above), might lead to the expectation of an equally advantageous picture emerging from student attitude data, representations in the print media, and general ‘Anglo-German relations’ discourse. However, the literature revealed a more complex situation. Firstly, a distinction should be drawn between, on the one hand, the concept of Germany as a nation brand or force of political power, informed by data from adult participants, and, on the other hand, perceived characteristics of ‘the Germans’ which school-aged German learners are typically surveyed about. The confusion already starts with the fact that so-called ‘images of Germany’ of some studies on closer inspection turn out to be images of Germans, the people. This may have something to do with the idea that researchers might have thought it helpful to provide a list of adjectives to choose from, which may or may not describe a ‘typical German’, probably imagined – as problematic as that construct may be – as an individual, rather than relating to a rather more abstract concept of ‘nation state’. This points to the importance of as much clarity as possible around what is being investigated and consequently reported. For the adjective ‘German’, in some instances it may be difficult, if not impossible to distinguish between the language of German, and the attribute of German, as in ‘Germanness’. In existing studies, the problem of the exact object of investigation not being defined can lead to methodological issues. Even some much-quoted studies seem, on closer examination, methodologically dubious (e.g. Sammon, 1996, 1998).

Studies of representations of German in UK print media paint a slightly more consistent picture of generally negatively stereotyped tendencies. Shifts in the negative/positive reportage balance have been linked to historical events such as reunification, a change of government, and the Football World Cup in Germany in 2006. Nevertheless, stereotypical notions such as the war theme seem to be enduring, however

much an era of change is heralded after an event which allowed Germany to be represented in a positive light (e.g. Harding, 2006).

Studies into representations of German in the British media tend to focus on the concepts of ‘Germany’, and ‘the Germans’, rather than the German language or German as a school subject. There seems to be a feeling that the relatively good post-war relations between Germany and the UK, as represented in the media, started to deteriorate in the late 1980s. Studies variously identified a plethora of alleged contributory factors to anti-German public discourses, such as German reunification, economic differences, European integration, the Third Reich, WWII, war-related anniversaries, the Holocaust, post-war challenges to Britain’s identity, and an anti-European agenda of some print media (e.g. Krönig, 1999; Tenberg, 1999a; Wittlinger, 2004). Most of these alleged determinants are topics which learners are likely to encounter not only in their history lessons but also in their language lessons, as well as outside the educational context. This suggests that a closer look at how these topics are represented in media as well as in private discourses would be a useful line of inquiry for this study.

As demonstrated above, the academic landscape around representations of German in UK discourses is rather inconsistent. Methodologies are found wanting and results are inconclusive or conflicting. Studies which do not stand up to rigorous academic scrutiny are being quoted and re-quoted in the literature, whereas high-quality papers seem to exist in isolation. Where further investigation is invited, these avenues are left unexplored. In how far teacher, but especially learner discourses can be traced back to press discourses may be a difficult question to establish, but the question of whether a discursive relationship exists between the two is considered worth exploring.

### **3.9. Approach taken in the study**

After an evaluation of previous literature in chapters 2 and 3 it was decided that a discourse analysis approach would be appropriate in addressing the research questions. Several studies have been conducted into reasons for low levels of motivation and uptake of German in UK schools, as well as of representations of the Germans or Germany in the British press. However, none appear to have taken a discourse analysis approach. The discourse analysis approach adopted in the current study was chosen for its ability to go beyond the surface of the spoken or written word. It can thus reveal underlying attitudes and beliefs, which the speaker or writer might not even be aware of. It also allows for triangulation along the principles of a mixed methods approach, in order to evaluate a range of data formats. Most importantly, it was chosen because it would facilitate the linking of the two discourse domains of private (school settings) and public (the press) through a common approach. Building on the two academic cornerstones of motivation in language learning and discourse theory, the current study endeavours to help fill the research gap by employing a discourse analysis approach to examine grassroots and official discourses around German\*, the relationship of these discourses with each other, and with motivation for German learning.

Discourse is often used synonymously with the term language, but it is important to distinguish between the two. Whilst there are a number of suggestions by various theorists as to what constitutes discourse, the one used in this study follows Brown and Yule (1983), who define discourse as ‘language in use’. Discourse can be analysed by studying forms and functions of language, consequently, discourse analysis (DA) is the study of language in use. According to Paltridge (2012), “discourse analysis considers the relationship between language and the contexts in which it is used and is concerned with the description and analysis of both spoken and written interactions” (p. 3). In DA the emphasis lies not on how language works, but on how it is used to create meaning in

different contexts and social situations. In this study, a social constructivist perspective of discourse is taken, which views texts as embedded in social and cultural practices. Several discourse theorists have suggested that such a view stands not in contrast, but rather has synergies with more linguistic-textually oriented discourse analysis (e.g. Fairclough, 2003; Cameron & Kulick, 2003). In this view, discourses involve socially constructed identities, thus theoretically underpinning notions of identity formation in the language learning process.

For critical discourse analysis (CDA), like for DA, no single definition exists. Fairclough and Wodak (1997) state that the principles underlying CDA include an interdisciplinary and problem-oriented approach, eclectic methodologies, and a consideration of the historical context. In CDA, social and political issues are seen as constructed and reflected in discourse, which is a site where power relations are negotiated and performed. CDA as a framework is considered suitable for the present study, in that it typically draws on and reconceptualises concepts from a range of theories (Forchtner & Wodak, 2018). Gee (2012) questions the distinction between DA and CDA, and suggests that discourse analysis should be inherently critical and political.

For this study, by applying (C)DA methodologies to the study of private (learner) and public (press) discourses around German, it is hoped that something can be learnt about how these discourses interact, how they create meaning, and how this affects learner motivation for German.

The next chapter (4) will explain the research design and justify the methods developed for the empirical part of the study (chapters 5-7).

## **Chapter 4: Methodology**

The research aim of the study is to identify the relationship between motivation for German learning and the representations of German, the Germans, and Germany in private and public UK discourses. The current chapter presents the research design of the study and the methodology developed in order to answer the four research questions (RQs):

- RQ1: How do motivational dimensions in learning German relate to continuing or dropping the language?
- RQ2: How is German\* represented in discourses of key players in school settings?
- RQ3: How is German\* represented in newspaper discourses in the UK?
- RQ4: What is the relationship between public/official and private/grassroots discourses around German\* in the UK?

### **4.1. Paradigm rationale**

After critical review of the literature in chapters 2 and 3 above, it was decided that an approach that draws on key aspects of a range of models would be most suited to do justice to the various facets of adolescent motivation for German learning in the UK context. For this study, this means that aspects of the theoretical models discussed in chapter 2 above will be combined as an underpinning framework for the research. This eclectic approach was then also applied to the research design, which is largely driven by pragmatism, but also draws on constructivist and interpretative assumptions. Pragmatism is the approach most commonly associated with mixed methods research (Feilzer, 2010). It offers an alternative ontological position to the positivist/postpositivist and constructivist/interpretivist paradigms usually linked with quantitative and qualitative methods respectively (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). A pragmatist outlook is considered

useful for this mixed methods study, in that it focuses on a real world problem to be researched, and the consequences of that research, for which it aims to produce “socially useful knowledge” (Feilzer, p. 1).

In this study, which investigates motivation through the lens of discourse, discourse analysis is employed in order to allow access to underlying, subconsciously-held attitudes and beliefs. In triangulating the data, the mixed methods approach has the advantage of bringing out the strengths of the respective quantitative (e.g. generalisability) and qualitative (e.g. deeper exploration of complex issues) paradigms, whilst reducing the weaknesses (Dörnyei, 2007). The mixed methods approach allows for the use of inferential statistics and the identification of broad patterns and trends, but it also enables the posing of relational questions of ‘how’ and ‘why’. For this study, this approach was considered not just appropriate but indeed necessary in order to both illuminate qualitative data from a respondent’s individual discourse, as well as to identify patterns in larger groups through quantitative data and statistical analysis. This view is supported by Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011):

Mixed methods research recognizes, and works with, the fact that the world is not exclusively qualitative or quantitative; it is not an either /or world, but a mixed world, even though the researcher may find that the research has a predominant disposition to, or requirement for, numbers or qualitative data (p. 22).

This perspective links with the choice of research instruments (questionnaires, focus groups, interviews, and corpus), in that it is underpinned by the composite, discourse-oriented theoretical framework, which was developed out of the literature reviews (chapters 2 and 3).

#### **4.2. Research design**

In the iterative process of the study’s mixed methods approach, the red thread running through the research design is the awareness of how the data relate to the research



questions and to each other. Thus, following on from the research questions, a key question related to which data were needed from which sources, and which instruments would be most helpful in collecting the data. In summary, RQ1 explores adolescent motivation for German, RQ2 investigates how German, the Germans, and Germany are represented in key player discourses in school settings, RQ3 asks how these key terms are represented in wider discourses, and RQ4 is concerned with the relationship between the two discourse domains of private and public discourses around German. For RQ1 and RQ2, in order to find out about learner motivation as well as learner attitudes towards German, the Germans, and Germany, it was considered important to develop an instrument which facilitated the generation of both quantitative and qualitative data. A questionnaire with some items which elicited quantitative, as well as with items which elicited qualitative data, was chosen to fulfil this aim. Once the questionnaire data had been assessed, emerging themes were explored via focus groups. Further data to enrich the picture of discourses around German at school level were then drawn from teacher and head teacher interviews, and lesson observation field notes. For RQ3, a corpus of articles from a broad selection of UK national newspapers in order to access discourses around German\* in the public domain was compiled. RQ4 addresses how the data from research strand 1 (grassroots discourses) and research strand 2 (public discourses) relate to each other. For RQ4, the data mainly from the qualitative part of the questionnaire, as well as the newspaper data, were put into relation with each other. The rationales underpinning the study's methodological choices are explained in more detail and for each instrument below.

## **4.2.1. Participant Selection**

### *4.2.1.1. Sampling of schools*

The study investigates learner motivation for German, and discourses around German\* in UK secondary schools and in national print media. For the selection of participating schools, the main criterion was to cover a range. Guiding criteria for the selection of a range of schools were socio-economic status (SES) of students (free school meals (FSM) index), location (rural/urban), type of school (e.g. state-maintained or independent), and MFL-specific details. Of these, the FSM index was the main guiding criterion, because socio-economic factors have been closely linked not just to educational outcomes in general (Hartas, 2011), but also to access to languages, language learning motivation, and language uptake (Jin, Muriel, & Sibieta, 2010; Tinsley & Board, 2017a). This means that differences between learners, using, for example, SES as a grouping variable, would be more likely to become apparent in the data if participants from a range of socio-economic backgrounds were recruited. The FSM index was chosen as a criterion for school sampling, as it has been reported as a reliable indicator of social deprivation (Crawford & Greaves, 2013; Shuttleworth, 1995). In addition, FSM data for each school is updated yearly, and therefore more current than other UK deprivation indicators such as postcode-based IDACI (income deprivation affecting children index), the most recent data sets for which (2010) are based on data collected in 2008 (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2010). Furthermore, independent schools are typically not limited to a geographical catchment area of the surrounding postcode zones, which is why IDACI data can be misleading if used to infer demographic data of its intake. Until its decommissioning in March 2016, FSM and other school-related data were publicly available via the Ofsted school data dashboard. Since then, the Department for Education (DfE) has opened up its ‘School Comparison Tool’ (available in BETA version at

<https://www.gov.uk/school-performance-tables>), which provides data (including FSM information) by school.

In addition to aiming for a balanced variety of schools, other criteria such as helpfulness and level of interest of the contact teacher, feasibility of travel to the school, and support from the head teacher might have to be taken into account. As data from current German learners at the end of KS3 as well as KS4 were needed for the study, only schools where German is currently taught at KS3 and KS4, and where German is also offered in the 6th Form would be suitable for the study.

Schools would be approached via the Head of German, building on the researcher's network of contacts as a former German teacher and researcher in MFL-learning and teaching-related projects, and as an active member of the Twitter 'Edusphere' and the 'Mfltwitterati' (social media networks based around (language) education). The main rationale for contacting the Head of German in the first instance was the hope that he or she would want to help with a study which sought to support their specialist subject. It was felt that the chances of a head teacher agreeing for their school to participate were higher if they were approached by one of their staff, who was already amenable to conducting the research. Based on an average of the number German learners at local schools, the target number of schools was four.

#### *4.2.1.2. Sampling of learners*

The study explores learners' attitudes towards German around the time of their decision-making regarding exam subjects, a time that is crucial for uptake of the subject throughout the school. Therefore, data from learners across all four schools in the last year of key stage 3 (KS3) and 4 (KS4) respectively needed to be collected, as GCSE option subjects are chosen at the end of KS3, and 6th Form choices (A'level or IB (International Baccalaureate, an alternative qualification to the traditional A'level which includes at least

one language)) are made at the end of KS4. In the English Education System, KS3 traditionally comprises years 7, 8, and 9, (age 11-14), KS4 years 10 and 11 (age 14-16), although schools may decide to start KS4 in year 9. Therefore, whilst end of KS4 choices (going into KS5/6th Form, age 17-18) are always made in year 11/age 16, depending the school curriculum KS3 into KS4 (GCSE options) choices might be made in year 8/age 13 or year 9/age 14 for KS3.

The number of participants in each school depended on the size of the school as well as that of the German learner cohort in the relevant years. The target was to conduct the study with the whole German cohort in the last year of KS3 (year 8 or 9, depending on the school) and KS4 (year 11) respectively. Based on an average number of German learners at local schools and the target number of participating schools (4), the overall target for learner participants was 400 for KS3, plus 80 for KS4. Lesson observations were going to be conducted with one KS3 and one KS4 class per school, and four learners would be selected for idiographic level analysis, representing a range of motivation levels and both genders and key stages, as well as German continuers and discontinuers.

Once questionnaire data had been preliminarily explored, focus groups would be conducted with up to twelve learners per school. For this reason learners from participating schools would be asked to indicate whether they would be willing to take part in a follow-up focus group interview. Focus group participants would be selected to represent, as far as possible, a range of learners, based on their motivation score, German learning choices (continue/drop), gender, socio-economic status, and their views expressed in other parts of the study (representing both typical and extreme views).

#### *4.2.1.3. Sampling of teachers and head teachers*

One-to-one interviews would be conducted with the head teacher and the Head of German, as these roles are seen as key player positions in the field of German at a

secondary school. In previous research, heads of departments named organisational factors such as timetabling and resourcing as influential on modern language learning and teaching, whereas head teachers pointed to the quality of language staff as the key factor for a successful department (Evans & Fisher, 2009). Either way, both the head teacher and head of department were regarded as key players as they were likely to be influential on the success of a subject. Furthermore, in a report for Teach First (an initiative which aims to address social inequality by placing professionals in disadvantaged schools), Hooley, Watts, and Andrews (2014) stressed the role of subject teachers, middle leaders and senior leaders in guiding learners in terms of careers and employability. Given that the vocational aspect of German learning is commonly used in schools to promote the subject, interviewing the head of department as both a subject teacher and a representative of middle leadership, and the head teacher as the senior leader per se, would be pertinent.

Table 4.1. below shows the planned number of participants by research instrument.

Table 4.1. *Planned number of participants by research instrument*

<u>School</u>	<u>Interviews</u>			<u>Observations</u>			<u>Focus groups</u>			<u>Questionnaires</u>			<u>Case studies</u>		
	<u>HT*</u>	<u>Teacher</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>KS3</u>	<u>KS4</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>KS3</u>	<u>KS4</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>KS3</u>	<u>KS4</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>KS3</u>	<u>KS4</u>	<u>Total</u>
1	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	100	20	120			
2	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	100	20	120			
3	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	100	20	120			
4	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	100	20	120			
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>480</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>

\*Head teacher

#### 4.2.1.4. Sampling of newspaper articles

Strand 2 of the study is concerned with discourses around German\* in wider circulation. Whilst the notion of ‘commonly held stereotypes’ abounds, the concept is problematic, as it is mainly based on assumption and intuition. Depending on a multitude of factors, individuals making up UK society may hold very different beliefs about both their own and other people’s attitudes towards German\*. This is where corpus methodology can be helpful in identifying patterns in language use.

To build a specialised corpus it was important to be clear about the place, time, and genre that the data were drawn from. Since the study is set in the UK, the data would of course also have to be drawn from the UK. The time frame for sampling the specialist corpus data started on 1st January 2012, which is the beginning of the year in which the eldest learner participants in the study (currently year 11/KS4/age 15-16) started secondary school. The end date of the sampling time was 30 April 2015, which is the last full month during which the corpus was compiled. Finally, the genre of the corpus data was mass media discourse on German\*. For practical reasons, in the present study media data were restricted to online newspaper articles. Compiling a corpus of large amounts of texts can be time-consuming, especially if transcription is involved. The advantages of online newspaper articles are that they are already available in written, digitalised form, and can be downloaded from the internet using customised search criteria.

For the data collection via the Lexis Nexis database ([www.lexisnexis.com/en-us/home.page](http://www.lexisnexis.com/en-us/home.page)), a range of UK national daily newspapers together with their Sunday editions was chosen with the aim of accessing wider discourses in circulation over the last few years. Papers selected were *The Guardian*, *The Daily Mirror*, *The Independent*, *The Times*, *The Daily Mail*, and *The Telegraph*. The former group of three newspapers is regarded as politically left-leaning, and the latter group of three as right-leaning (Duffy & Rowden, 2005). *The Guardian*, *The Times*, *The Independent* and *The Daily Telegraph* (and

their Sunday editions) can be counted as broadsheet, or quality newspapers, whereas *The Daily Mirror* and *The Daily Mail* and their Sunday editions are usually regarded as tabloids or red-tops. These newspapers were chosen in order to cover a range of papers with a variety of readership as regards demographics and political orientations. The National Readership Survey shows that UK broadsheet readers tend to belong to a higher society-economic group than tabloid readers (Boykoff, 2008). The classification of selected newspapers as either left-leaning or right-leaning is based on voting intentions of readerships (Duffy & Rowden, 2005). Table 4.2. below shows the newspapers from which articles were selected for the corpus by type and political orientation of readership.



Table 4.2. Newspaper selection by type of newspaper and political orientation

<u>Newspaper</u>	<u>Broadsheet</u>	<u>Tabloid</u>	<u>Left-leaning</u>	<u>Right-leaning</u>
<i>Daily Mail/ Mail on Sunday</i>		✓		✓
<i>Daily Mirror/ Mirror on Sunday</i>		✓	✓	
<i>The Guardian/ The Observer</i>	✓		✓	
<i>The Independent/ Independent on Sunday</i>	✓		✓	
<i>The Telegraph/ The Sunday Telegraph</i>	✓			✓
<i>The Times/ The Sunday Times</i>	✓			✓

Final search term for Lexis Nexis was ‘ATLEAST3(German!)’. This code specifies ‘German’ must appear at least three times in a document. The truncation (!) was used to include other endings of the word ‘German’, and therefore also produced results for ‘Germans’, and ‘Germany’. The search term code specified that ‘German’ as well as words starting with ‘German’ and followed by any ending must appear at least three times in an article, and was arrived at by trial and error: spot-checks revealed that searches where ‘German!’ appeared fewer than three times resulted in a number of unrelated articles, whereas searches for four mentions or more missed out relevant articles. No target for the number of articles was set, rather, however many articles were found in the specified time frame made up the sample. Altogether 40,169 articles were found, and downloaded. In

order to upload a single text file containing all the articles to an online corpus analysis tool, all the individual Microsoft Word files were combined into one large 'txt' file.

### **4.3. Development of research instruments**

#### **4.3.1. Questionnaire**

The instrument chosen to investigate learner motivation for German learning was a questionnaire. Advantages of a questionnaire include that data from a large sample of learners can be collected in a short space of time, and that previously empirically tested items can contribute to the validity of the study. A disadvantage of a questionnaire might be that items can be misunderstood by learners. To address the latter, a pilot study was conducted (reported under 4.4. below). In order to avoid social desirability bias (where learners choose 'dishonest' responses in order to portray themselves as more socially acceptable), participants were informed that the questionnaire data were anonymised. The questionnaire could be completed within 15 minutes and administered by the class teacher.

Whilst questionnaires in motivation research have traditionally been used within a quantitative framework, the questionnaire was designed to generate both quantitative and qualitative data. The former allows for use of previously tested items and computable comparison of data both within and without the study, whereas the latter, in line with the theory behind discourse analysis and by using open questions, provides learners with the opportunity to creatively express their own, individual perspective around German. It was developed in the hope that the resulting data would lend themselves to interpretation consistent with the discourse view that meaning is constructed not just on the surface level of the text, i.e. through *what* something is said, but also on a deeper, more subconscious level through *how* it is said. A copy of the learner questionnaire (pilot version) can be found in Appendix A.

The questionnaire is organised in five sections (A-E). Each section is a combination of previously tested and new items, which were developed to operationalise research questions 1 and 2 through quantitative as well as qualitative data.

#### *4.3.1.1. Section A: Metaphor elicitation task*

Section A elicits qualitative learner data based on a questionnaire used by Fisher (2013a), where metaphor is employed as a tool to elicit learner beliefs around German learning. By employing the creative method of metaphor elicitation, Fisher showed convincingly how this technique allowed the researcher to access participants' beliefs at an image level (such as 'German as food', or 'German as an animal') which might be subconscious, not fully thought through or at the very least previously unarticulated, and which might be difficult to access via more direct methods. Based on Fisher's successful use of this methodology and following Low's (2015) guidelines for metaphor elicitation in L2 research, section A (the metaphor section) of the questionnaire was developed in order to gain insights into how adolescent learners conceptualised German.

The metaphor section of the questionnaire was designed as a discourse completion task, also known as a production questionnaire. Dörnyei (2010) excludes such tasks from use for the purposes of second language research because they are "written, structured language elicitation instruments, and, as such, they sample the respondent's competence in performing certain tasks, which makes them similar to language tests" (p. 7-8). However, Dörnyei's reason for not recommending this task for second language (L2) assessment purposes was exactly the reason for including it in the present study: in the questionnaire it elicits responses from the learner in their first language (L1), not for language assessment purposes but for the purposes of providing linguistically rich data which, seen from a discourse perspective, may be indicative of underlying beliefs and attitudes.

In the questionnaire, the following completed example with a handwritten sample response was given: (handwritten response rendered in bold below):

Example: For me, playing football is like: ***eating chocolate***

because: ***I love football and chocolate.***

The three metaphor items learners were asked to complete were

1. For me, learning German is like..., because...
2. If German was a food it would be a..., because...
3. If German was an animal it would be a..., because...

Based on Fisher (2013a) and results of the literature review (e.g. Dewaele, 2010), the following affect item, designed to harness the emotional dimensions of learners' response to learning German was also included: 4. When I'm learning German I feel... . Processing details for the metaphor section of the questionnaire will be reported under 6.1. below.

#### 4.3.1.2. Section B: Family Fortunes task

Section B, the Family Fortunes task, was developed for two main purposes: firstly, to access learners' awareness of wider discourses around German (RQ2), and secondly, to access learners' own stance towards their perceptions of 'other people's beliefs', i.e., learners' positioning towards these wider discourses (RQ4). ). The task takes its title from the catchphrase of the popular UK television show 'Family Fortunes': "We asked 100 British people to name a (for example: French food) and they said (for example: croissant)". This was adapted to

If we asked 100 random British people about the first thing that comes into their heads when they think of a particular word, what do you think they would say?

Please write it down. Then, circle whether you think this opinion is totally correct or totally incorrect, or somewhere in between (please circle a whole number).

Learners were asked to write down which word or phrase they thought the British public might associate with a) German, b) the Germans, and c) Germany.

The questionnaire used the word ‘shark’ as an example, with the word ‘danger’ hand-written on the response line, illustrating that learners were being asked to fill in the phrase that the British public might associate with the trigger word. Learners were then asked to indicate, by circling a number on a rating scale (Dörnyei, 2010) which took the form of a 6-point Likert scale, to what extent they agreed or disagreed with this ‘opinion’, ranging from 1 = totally correct, to 6 = totally incorrect:

German:

---

In my view, that opinion is:

<i>Totally correct</i>					<i>Totally incorrect</i>
1	2	3	4	5	6

A six-point scale was chosen so that there was no middle point, and learners were forced to make a decision to either agree or disagree (Dörnyei, 2010). Processing details of the Family Fortunes task are reported under 6.4. below.

#### *4.3.1.3. Section C: People who learn German*

Section C was directed at accessing learners’ beliefs around stereotypes not around German or the Germans, but around ‘what kind of person’ studies German. This was going to be evaluated in relation to whether the respondent had indicated that they are going to continue with German or whether they are planning to ‘drop’ it, and relates to Williams and Burden’s (1997) self-concept. However, after analysis of the other questionnaire items

it was decided that these provided enough salient data to explore this aspect. Therefore, section C is not analysed or discussed further in this thesis.

#### *4.3.1.4. Section D: Motivation questionnaire*

Section D is based on motivation questionnaires used and tested in previous literature, such as Busse and Williams (2010), Gardner's (1985b) Attitude/Motivation Test Battery, Taylor & Marsden (2014), and a doctoral study of motivation among young language learners (Courtney, 2014). As motivation is a latent variable which cannot be measured directly, motivation was here operationalised via the three motivational constructs which emerged from the literature review (chapter 2) as the most appropriate for the circumstances of the current study, namely classroom learning situation, perceptions of value of German, and self-efficacy, plus the Gardnerian concepts of instrumental and integrative orientations. Since participants have been known to interpret questionnaire items differently depending on how they are phrased (Converse & Presser, 1986), a multi-item (or summative) scale was developed, i.e. a group of differently worded items relating to the same target construct (Dörnyei, 2010). Altogether nine items were developed, with three items representing learning situation, two items each representing self-efficacy and perception of value, and the instrumental/integrative scales being represented via just one item each. Although including more items per scale (especially the integrative and instrumental constructs with just one item per scale) would have been preferable (e.g. Dörnyei, 2010), for reasons of time and space the limited number of items per scale was considered sufficient. In addition, negative participant responses to a high number of items which appear to enquire after the same topic have been reported (Ellard & Rogers, 1993). A six-point Likert scale was chosen for participants to indicate a level of agreement on a scale of totally correct (1) to totally incorrect (6). Table 4.3. below shows the questionnaire items by scale.

Table 4.3. *Pilot motivation questionnaire: Items by scale*

<u>Scale</u>	<u>Items</u>		
Learning situation (3*)	Qu.1: I enjoy German lessons	Qu. 4: I don't like our German learning materials (like for example text books)	Qu. 7: My teacher makes German lessons fun
Self-efficacy (2*)	Qu.7: I am good at German	Qu.9: When I leave school I will have a good level of German	
Value (2*)	Qu.4: For me personally, it is important to be able to speak German	Qu.3: For people in the UK today, it is not important to be able to speak German	
Instrumental (1*)	Qu.3: German is useful for getting a good job		
Integrative (1*)	Qu.6: I would like to travel to Germany someday		

#### *4.3.1.5. Section E: German choices and demographics*

Section E of the questionnaire asks for information whether the learner has chosen German or rejected German as an option for the following year. It also asks learners to indicate who, if anyone, gave them advice regarding their choice, and finishes with demographic items such as gender, English as an additional language (EAL), and parental occupation (which was used to infer socio-economic status, (SES)). SES and EAL however, emerged as a potential influencing variable of motivation from the literature review (chapter 2) and will therefore be explored in relation to RQ1. Regrettably, for reasons of space and scope of the study, not every variable in the questionnaire, such as gender, could be reported in this thesis.

#### **4.3.2. Focus groups**

Focus groups were chosen because they can provide more in-depth details than questionnaires, and, through dialogue and group discussion, can explain issues or indeed raise issues not previously considered. A strength of focus groups is that actual words of participants, without the mediating effect of the research instrument (i.e. the questionnaire) can be used to ascertain their thoughts and feelings around a topic (Krueger & Casey, 2014). Whilst this is also true for one-to-one interviews, the peer group setting was thought to offer teenage learners a more comfortable and familiar environment than a one-to-one interview with a previously unknown adult. Moreover, focus groups are more time-efficient as they allow for several learners to be interviewed at the same time. Thirdly, from a constructivist perspective, conducting the focus groups constructs meaning in itself through the process of interaction between the researcher and the participants, and the participants with one another. In this way, the emergence of a different angle on how learners view German-related issues may be encouraged through the format of the focus group.



The focus groups were designed to offer an opportunity to explore learner motivation in more depth than the questionnaire. Therefore, two identical tasks to some questionnaire sections were included (Appendix A): the metaphor elicitation task (section A) and the Family Fortunes task (section B). The schedule also included a task called *Alien visit*, for which learners were asked to describe to an alien who knew nothing about life on earth what the words ‘German’, ‘the Germans’, and ‘Germany’ mean. This task was designed to elicit learners’ thoughts around these key terms when they discussed their answers within their peer group.

#### **4.3.3. Case studies**

Learner case studies can be helpful in that the data can be drawn together at an idiographic level from the quantitative and qualitative data from the questionnaire and the focus groups, and this can be useful to do justice to the complexity of an individual learner’s motivation. Fisher (2013a,b) has demonstrated how the exploration of selected learners’ motivation at a more in-depth level can be helpful for a more nuanced analysis.

#### **4.3.4. Interviews**

Interviews with the German teacher and the head teacher (Appendix B) were intended to paint a more complete picture of discourses around German at a particular school.

Teacher and head teacher interview schedules included the same tasks as the focus group schedule which also featured in the learner questionnaire: Family Fortunes and the Metaphor task. It also included the Alien visit task (4.3.2. above). Using the same tasks for the learner focus groups and the teacher and head teacher interviews was intended to generate data which could then be compared across data sets. The staff schedules were adapted slightly to reflect the interviewee’s role, for example the teacher schedule asked

what teaching German (as opposed to learning German) was like. The head teacher schedule omitted items which referred to teaching German.

#### **4.3.5. Lesson observations**

In a school setting it can be difficult to obtain data of naturally occurring discourses around German. The chances of generating enough data for the main study by recording 'language' in a purely ethnographic manner would simply be too low, which is why the questionnaire and interviews were designed to elicit discourses around the object of study. However, lesson observation were planned in order to get an idea of how German is talked about by learners and teachers in the classroom without any stimulus. For this, the possible impact of research taking place in the classroom on the behaviour of the participants was reduced as much as possible by not video or audio-recording the lesson, but rather through the researcher sitting quietly at the back of the classroom and making field notes as a non-participant observer (Cohen et al., 2011). A semi-structured, 'pen and paper' observation schedule would be used to record participants' classroom talk around German (teacher-student interactions as well as student-student interactions) as and when it occurred, supplemented by notes which recorded the structure of the lesson.

#### **4.3.6. Press corpus**

Linguistic corpora consist of large amounts of digital texts, which can be used as an evidence-based data source in order to identify which language patterns are typical. For the purposes of the study therefore, a specialised searchable corpus which represented public discourses around German\* was required. For this the place, the time, and the genre of the corpus data had to be specified (explained under 4.2.1.4. above).

The corpus was used as an empirical method to identify discourses around German\*. The claims made about the nature of this discourse were based on evidence

drawn from large amounts of data, which should contribute to the credibility of the study. Relatively recent advances in technology mean that in corpus linguistics, previously unimaginably large amounts of data can be harnessed and then investigated with digital tools, which can compute extremely complex analytics. The results may reveal linguistic patterns which would otherwise have remained invisible, thus providing an evidence-based reference point.

The tendency for words to systematically co-occur is known as collocation. Taking a closer look at the nature of collocates may reveal speaker attitudes. The evaluatively loaded relationship between a word (or more specifically, a word form, or lemma) and a set of semantically related words is known as discourse prosody. Sometimes the terms ‘semantic prosody’ or ‘pragmatic prosody’ are also used; in the current study, following Stubbs (2002) ‘discourse prosody’ will be used for “a feature that extends over more than one unit in a linear string” (p. 65). In Stubbs’ famous example, the verb ‘to cause’ shows a negative discourse prosody, whereas ‘to provide’ collocates with positive words (Stubbs, 2002).

A corpus can also add to the accountability of the study by minimising researcher fallacies such as confirmation bias, primacy effect, and hostile media effect (Partington, Duguid, & Taylor, 2013). These relate to often subconscious biases in decision-making regarding data selection: evidence in confirming one’s conviction can be favoured (confirmation bias), information encountered first may be weighted more heavily (primacy effect), and, particularly relevant for the media element in the current study, media coverage can be seen as biased against one’s own ‘cause’ (hostile media effect) (Baker, 2006). However, whilst the principle of total accountability is generally applied and accepted in Corpus Linguistics (McEnery & Hardie, 2012), one must be aware that the corpus for this study is by necessity restricted to an arguably subjective selection of data of wider discourse. In addition, whilst the corpus was used as evidence for phenomena

regarding discourses around German\*, the absence of a phenomenon does not mean that this phenomenon does not exist outside the data selected for this study. The corpus was used with the online corpus analysis tool Sketch Engine in order to identify language patterns contributing to dominant as well as more hidden discourses around German\*.

Researchers disagree on the effect of mass media on individuals. A constructivist, discourse-oriented approach would take the view of cultural effect theories (e.g. Williams, 2003) whereby the effects of the media on individuals might not be immediate but rather constructed over time, leading to embedded, easily-recognisable stereotypes (Grix & Lacroix, 2006). Whether a relationship between media discourse around German\* and that of school-age learners can be established, is addressed by research question 4. Whether learners actually read the papers themselves is therefore not regarded as important. In fact, it has been reported that because non-newspaper readers are closer in demographics such as age and social class to the country as a whole, non-newspaper readers' views are closer to the average national view than those of readers of particular newspapers (Duffy & Rowden, 2005). This means, based on the assumption that learners in the study actually do not read the sampled newspapers, their views as non-newspaper readers would be closer to the majority views in the country, than if they did read newspapers. Baker, Gabrielatos, and McEnery (2013) make the point that in today's world, where controversial stories are widely publicised online via social media, the image of the loyal newspaper reader who regularly purchases periodicals seems outdated. Having said this, online newspaper articles can also be widely circulated via, for example, social media.

Regardless of the extent to which newspapers might have an opinion-forming effect on the participants of this study, possibly also via the reading behaviour of their parents and carers, the purpose of the newspaper corpus here was to provide a snapshot of wider discourses currently in circulation.

Corpus studies have been accused of disregarding context (e.g. Mautner, 2007), in contrast to discourse analysis, which is characterised by a focus of language in context (e.g. Partington et al., 2013). In order to do justice to the complexity of the discourse-orientated view of language taken in this study, methods from both corpus linguistics and discourse analysis were used, and quantitative as well as qualitative methods were employed to analyse the data. The discourse approach is useful for analysing the corpus (and other) linguistic data as it views language as social practice and asks questions about context, and aligns with corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS, Partington et al., 2013). Table 4.4. below shows details of Strand 2 (wider discourses) research instruments and data.

Table 4.4. *Public discourses research instrument and data*

<u>Research instrument</u>	<u>Data source</u>	<u>N articles</u>	<u>N tokens/words</u>	<u>Time of data collection</u>
Press corpus	Selection of UK national newspapers articles around German* (1 January 2012 – 30 April 2015)	40,169	tokens <sup>1</sup> : 35,959,493 words <sup>2</sup> : 30,376,325	April 2015

<sup>1</sup> Individual occurrence of a word. <sup>2</sup> A word form (identical words are only counted once).

#### **4.4. Pilot Study**

##### **4.4.1. Pilot study participants**

The learner questionnaire, learner focus groups, and teacher interviews were piloted before the main study was embarked on. Participants for the questionnaire were two year 8 (KS3) German classes ( $N = 54$ ) in a state comprehensive school in England (School A). School A started KS4 in year 9, and at the time of data collection all pilot participants had

chosen whether to continue or drop German for their GCSE options. The focus groups and teacher interview were piloted in a boys' state grammar school (School B) with year 9 and year 11 German learners. The pilot interview took place with their German teacher, who is also the Head of German.

#### **4.4.2. Pilot study procedures and analysis**

After ethical approval for the pilot study had been granted by the university, information sheets and consent forms for the pilot study were produced, and the appropriate permissions were obtained.

##### *4.4.2.1. Questionnaire*

The questionnaire was piloted with two year 8 German classes in School A, a large mixed comprehensive school, in July 2015. The researcher was known to the school from previous research projects, and she administered the questionnaire herself in both classes with each class teacher observing. It took learners a maximum of 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire. After the class had completed the questionnaire, learner feedback was invited. Participants indicated that although they did find some of the questions unusual (such as 'if German was a food', 'if German was an animal'), they could, in fact, cope with this kind of task, and that they found filling in the questionnaire interesting. It became clear that learners were keen to share their answers and to engage in discussions about what they had written. Most learners were able to answer all the questions. Learners' answers in section B, the Family Fortunes task, showed that participants were able to distinguish between their own opinion and their perception of public opinion. The questionnaire was administered in hard copy, and some learners' handwriting proved hard to decipher, which would be a good reason to provide the questionnaire in digital format for the main study.

Learners' responses to the qualitative questionnaire items were thoughtful and creative. For example, one learner wrote "*If German was a food, it would be a mushroom, because I can't understand why some people like it*". Such a response condenses several levels of meaning in one short statement, as it provides an insight into the learner's attitudes towards German (they do not like it), their perceptions of other people's attitudes (some like it), but also their own positioning towards other people's attitudes (the respondent does not understand them).

Learner motivation data from the pilot were analysed statistically via SPSS. Learners were split into 'German continuers' and 'German droppers'. Non-parametric (Mann-Whitney U) tests, chosen because the data were not normally distributed, showed that continuers displayed significantly higher motivation levels than droppers for perception of value and self-efficacy, but not for learning situation or for overall motivation. Full results are not reported for reasons of space. This result was promising in that it foreshadowed differences between learners' motivation levels by sub-scale, which was going to be investigated further in the main study.

Regarding the sub-scales of the composite motivation construct (learning situation, self-efficacy, value, instrumental and integrative orientation), scale reliability tests with the pilot study data indicated that it would be make the motivation questionnaire more robust if more items per scale than just one or two could be included.

#### *4.4.2.2. Focus groups*

Two learner focus groups were conducted in School B in March 2015, and consisted of four students each; one year 9 (KS3) and one year 11 (KS4) group. Focus groups took 45 minutes and were conducted in lesson time. Some learners in each focus group had chosen German for the following year and some had not. The pilot focus group schedule (Appendix C) included group tasks which were the same as the individual

questionnaire tasks, where learners were asked to engage in a group discussion in order to come to a consensus about their answers. On reflection it was felt that it would be more useful for the study proper to use participants' questionnaire responses, and responses in the focus group on the themes of the motivation questionnaire, as a basis for group discussion. This would allow learners' previously stated beliefs to be explored more deeply, rather than opening up new lines of enquiry through new activities.

#### *4.4.2.3. Interviews*

The pilot teacher interview took place in March 2016 with the Head of German from School B. The interview schedule contained some of the same tasks as the focus group schedule, however the words "learning German" were replaced with "teaching German" for the teacher interview. The teacher interview began by the interviewer asking the teacher to set the scene as regards language learning at the school, followed by the tasks, followed by a similar discussion around German learning choices to the student focus group, adjusted to take the interviewee's role into account. On reflection it was felt that there was more to be gained from using the time available to gain the teacher's insights into their perception of the attitudes of their students towards German, rather than on the tasks.

#### *4.4.2.4. Press corpus*

As the school settings research instruments were being developed and piloted, the press corpus based on articles around German, the Germans, and Germany (4.2.1.4. above) was being compiled, and preliminary explorations were conducted. The corpus was cleaned of metadata and duplicates, and compiled through the uploading of the text file containing all 40,169 UK articles on German\* onto the online corpus analysis tool Sketch



Engine. The uploaded corpus consisted of 35,959,493 tokens, or 30,376,325 words. In this context, a token is each individual occurrence of a word, whereas in corpus linguistics a word means a word form, so identical words are only counted once (hence the number of tokens is usually higher than the number of words). Explorative queries for collocates of German, Germans, and Germany were run. This procedure consisted of the generation of concordance lists for each node word of German, Germans, and Germany. A concordance is a list of all the occurrences of a search term in a corpus, with some co-text (text occurring immediately to the left and right of the search term). From each of these three concordance lists, a collocation list was compiled, and sorted by Log-Likelihood (LL), a measure of statistical significance. A high LL-score denotes a strong relationship between the two collocates. Collocates were then categorised, with a light touch, into themes. Some meaningful themes such as politics/politicians, other European countries, and the East/West split, and the Nazi past, could be already be gleaned from these lists, but needed to be explored in more detail as the context in which they were used would be crucial for interpretation. Full details of corpus data processing are given under 7.1. below.

Nevertheless, piloting of the corpus data indicated that pursuing the lines of enquiry by thematically categorising collocates for German, Germans, and Germany appeared to be a worthwhile endeavour.

#### **4.4.3. Changes implemented after the pilot study**

##### *4.4.3.1. Changes to the questionnaire*

On the basis of the pilot study some adjustments were made to the questionnaire for the study proper (Appendix D). The motivation section was streamlined so that there were an equal number of items (three) per motivation scale for the main study. Learning situation, self-efficacy, and perception of value of German were kept as sub-scales of

motivation in this study, however the one-item constructs of instrumental and integrative orientation were discarded.

Based on Cronbach's alpha reliability scores, some items of the pilot questionnaire were reworded. Pilot item 2, "I don't like our German learning materials (like for example text books)" (learning situation) was changed to "I don't like the activities we do in German lessons". Pilot item 8, "my teacher makes German lessons fun" (learning situation) was changed to "German lessons are fun". These items were changed to divert the focus away from the teacher and specific materials such as text books, to the learning situation in general.

The sub-scales of the overall motivation constructs were revised as follows. Pilot item 6 "I would like to travel to Germany one day" (integrative) was discarded, instead, a third item relating to self-efficacy was developed ("When I speak German I am unsure of myself"). "German can get you a good job", categorised as instrumental orientation in the pilot questionnaire, was recategorised as a third item to operationalise perceptions of value. Table 4.5. below shows the revised final questionnaire items for section D, motivation, for the main study.

In order to vary the agree/disagree-keyed questionnaire items with which learners were presented (Ellard & Rogers, 1993), six of the nine questionnaire statements were positively phrased, three were negatively phrased. Each of the individual motivation scales contained two positively and one negatively phrased item. Internal consistency for the revised questionnaire for use in the main study was assessed via the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient, and results are reported under 5.1.1. below, as are further processing details of the motivation questionnaire. The revised questionnaire (used in the main study) can be found in Appendix D.

Table 4.5. *Main study motivation questionnaire: Items by scale*

<u>Scale</u>	<u>Items</u>		
Learning situation (3*)	Qu.1: I enjoy German lessons	Qu. 4: I don't like the activities we do in German lessons	Qu. 7: German lessons are fun
Self-efficacy (3*)	Qu.2: When I leave school I will have a good level of German	Qu.5: I am good at German	Qu. 9: When I speak German I am unsure of myself
Value (3*)	Qu.3: For people in the UK today, it is not important to be able to speak German	Qu.6: German is useful for getting a good job	Qu.8: For me personally, it is important to be able to speak German

\*Number of items per scale

#### *4.4.3.2. Changes to the focus group schedule*

Based on the insights from the pilot, the focus group schedule was adapted to make it more suitable for the main study. Therefore, the focus group schedule was revised to map more closely onto the three motivational variables of learning situation, self-efficacy, and perception of value (Appendix E).

#### *4.4.3.3. Changes to the interview schedules*

On reflection it was felt that there was more to be gained from using the time available to gain the teacher's (and head teacher's) insights into their perceptions of student attitudes around German, and school-specific aspects such as the particular situation regarding German at their school, and how they saw their own role in this. Therefore, the tasks 'Alien visit', 'Family Fortunes', and 'Metaphors' were omitted from the main study interview schedules. Revised schedules for use in the main study can be found in Appendix F and G. Table 4.6. below summarises the changes to the learner questionnaire (section D), the focus group schedule, and the teacher and head teacher interview schedules.

Table 4.6. *Changes to research instruments after the pilot study*

<u>Instrument</u>	<u>Pilot study</u>	<u>Main study</u>
Questionnaire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 motivation subscales of 3, 2, and 1 items each</li> <li>• items refer to teacher and textbooks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 motivation subscales of 3 items each</li> <li>• items do not refer to teacher or textbooks</li> </ul>
Focus group schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 tasks</li> <li>• interview exploring learning situation, self-efficacy, perception of value of German</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• no tasks</li> <li>• interview exploring learning situation, self-efficacy, perception of value of German</li> </ul>
Teacher /head teacher interview schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 tasks</li> <li>• interview exploring perception of learner attitudes towards German</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• no tasks</li> <li>• interview exploring perception of learner attitudes towards German</li> </ul>

## **4.5. Main study participants**

### **4.5.1. Schools**

The schools in the study were sampled carefully in order to represent a range, and altogether four schools took part: School S02, S04, S05, and S06. A fifth School (School S03) was part of the study until inconsistencies around administering of the questionnaire and around ethical issues (it had become apparent that the questionnaire was not administered according to the instructions, and that parent and carer information sheets were not handed out to learners) eventually led, unfortunately, to its exclusion from the study. The school did not respond to repeated attempts to remedy the situation and continue with data collection. At that stage two German lessons had already been

observed, and two teacher interviews as well as one head teacher interview had been conducted. Learner data had been collected via the questionnaire from one class. However, it seemed that the questionnaire part of the study was not conducted according to the expected professional and ethical protocol. Therefore, it was decided to exclude any data obtained from School S03 from the current study. Any reference to data and schools in this thesis is solely based on data collected from Schools S02, S04, S05, and S06.

Table 4.7. below shows details of the participating schools, and Table 4.8. shows their respective MFL policies.

Table 4.7. *Sample schools*

<u>School</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>GCSE C or better<sup>a</sup></u>	<u>FSM<sup>b</sup></u>
S02	rural, mixed, comprehensive	73%	12.9%
S04	urban, girls, private, selective	99%	N/A <sup>c</sup>
S05	rural, mixed, comprehensive	77%	10.1%
S06	urban, mixed, comprehensive	56%	41.4%

<sup>a</sup> pupils achieving grade C or better in English and Maths GCSEs (2016), national average: 59.3%.

<sup>b</sup> pupils eligible for free school meals at any time in the last six years (2015/2016), national average: 29.3%). <sup>c</sup> FSM data not available for private/fee-paying schools.

Table 4.8. *MFL policies of sample schools*

<u>School</u>	<u>MFL policy</u>			
	<u>Yr 7</u>	<u>Yr 8</u>	<u>Yr 9</u>	<u>Yr 10/11</u>
S02	50% F <sup>a</sup> , 50% S <sup>b</sup>	100% G <sup>c</sup>	continue with 2 FLs <sup>d</sup>	1 FL compulsory for most
S04	100% F	choice of G or S	continue with 2 FLs	1 FL compulsory
S05	alternating: 100% F, 100% G	100% other FL than the one started in year 7	continue with 2 FLs	FL optional. S offered as GCSE option ab initio
S06	100% F	G for most	start GCSE	FL optional

<sup>a</sup>French <sup>b</sup>Spanish <sup>c</sup>German <sup>d</sup>Foreign Language.

#### **4.5.2. Learners**

Altogether 506 learners participated in the study; 411 from KS3, and 95 from KS4. Amongst the participating schools of the study, School S02, S04, and S05 started KS4 in year 10, School S06 started KS4 in year 9. The intention was to administer the questionnaire after learners had already made their choices, however, in order to fit in with the schools' preferences for timing the data collection, learner data from School S02 and School S06 were collected pre-decision for both KS3 and KS4. However, most learners had already made up their mind, and out of 506 participants only 13 indicated they had not yet made their decision whether they wanted to continue or drop German (henceforth: maybes). The maybes were all from KS3: 12 from School S02, and one from School S04. Up to eleven learners per school were selected for taking part in a focus group, one group for KS3 and one for KS4.

In order to provide background information and to supplement the overall picture of German as a school subject at each school, altogether five lesson observations were conducted in the same classes who completed the questionnaire in Schools S02, S05, and S06 for KS3, and in Schools S02 and S06 for KS4.

Once questionnaire data had been preliminarily explored, focus groups were conducted with between three and eleven learners per school, who had filled in the questionnaire and who had indicated that they would be willing to take part in a follow-up group discussion. For practical reasons such as pupil absence and number of volunteers the number of focus group participants varied per focus group.

#### **4.5.3. Teachers and head teachers**

One-to-one interviews were conducted with the head teacher and a German teacher from each of the four schools. Although it had been planned that teacher interviewees would be with the Head of German, this was found not to be possible in all classes.



However, all four teacher interviewees were German teachers. In addition to the role of German teacher, Teacher\_S02 was also Head of Learning for year 10, Teacher\_S04 and Teacher\_S05 were also Heads of Languages, and Teacher\_S06 was also assistant head teacher.

#### **4.5.4. School settings data**

The data generated for the study via the various research instruments described above ultimately consisted of text documents. The learner questionnaires were all completed by hand on paper copies, and were digitalised so that the resulting text documents could be processed by qualitative data analysis software, such as NVivo. The focus groups and teacher interview recordings were transcribed via Soundsciber into Microsoft Word documents. The quantitative questionnaire data were analysed via SPSS. A unique reference number was assigned to each anonymised questionnaire, identifying the participant's anonymised personal identifier, school, and key stage, such as S03\_KS3\_f\_d\_23, where S03 refers to the school, KS3 to the key stage, f to the gender (female/male), d, c, or m to German uptake decision (dropper, continuer or maybe), and 23 to the individual questionnaire number.

The qualitative data part of the questionnaire, the learner focus group interviews, the teacher interviews, and the head teacher interviews were imported into NVivo and coded thematically, following a two-cycle coding process as recommended by Saldaña (2015). The approach here was bottom-up and inductive in that themes were allowed and expected to emerge from the data in the iterative process of familiarisation, coding, and re-coding. Using NVivo facilitated examining large amounts of qualitative data holistically for general themes, as well as being able to slice through the data in a matrix-style enquiry.

## **4.6. Main study procedures**

Data collection in the four participating schools (S02, S04, S05, and S06) took place between January and July 2016. Procedures are described by instrument below.

### **4.6.1. Learner questionnaire**

After the appropriate permissions had been obtained (see 4.7. below), the learner questionnaires were administered in hard copy by the four participating German teachers to current German learners in their last year of KS3 and KS4 respectively. Altogether 506 useable questionnaires were returned (411 from KS3, 95 from KS4). A disadvantage of a hard copy questionnaire might be, as the pilot went on to show (see 4.4. above), that learners' answers may be hard or impossible to read, and also would need to be transcribed into a digital version, which is why it was originally planned to also offer the questionnaire in digital format. However, as all teachers from all sample schools declined the digital option and preferred to administer the hard copy questionnaire only the 'pen and paper' format of questionnaire was employed. To ensure parity of conditions of questionnaire administration in the four schools, the questionnaire procedure was standardised. Large envelopes to collect filled-in questionnaires per class were provided for each class, which would be sealed in front of the class by the administering teacher, in order to ensure respondent anonymity. An instruction sheet for the teacher, including instructions to be read out to the class, was glued to the envelopes. The instruction sheet can be inspected in Appendix H.

### **4.6.2. Learner focus groups**

Focus groups took place during school hours and lasted between 30 and 45 minutes (depending on lesson time). As a balance of learners representing continuers, droppers, boys, girls, high motivation and low motivation learners from both key stages was striven

for, group size varied between three and eleven participants. Although one focus group per school was aimed for, unfortunately School S04 was only able to offer one focus group (KS3). The purpose of the focus groups, after the insights from the pilot study discussed under 4.4.4.2. above, was to follow up on key themes gleaned from the questionnaire. At the stage of the focus group interviews, learners had already completed the questionnaire, and were given the opportunity to elaborate on their answers. The focus group schedule (Appendix E) was based on the three motivational scales from section D of the questionnaire: learning situation, self-efficacy, and perception of value of German. Themes based on the motivation section were explored in both focus groups, which meant that the two instruments of motivation questionnaire and focus groups worked together harmoniously to allow a more complete picture of learners' beliefs around German to emerge. In order to facilitate comparison and replication but still allow for spontaneous contributions, a semi-structured design was used. Whilst any personal questions which may create awkwardness were avoided, the semi-structured format facilitated a flexible agenda to draw out more detail behind participants' beliefs around German, as and when such points emerged from the questionnaire data, or during the focus groups. To mitigate against participants modifying their potentially negative responses so as not to offend me as a German/ German speaker, I planned to show a positive reaction to any respondent contribution. Finally, in order to draw out beliefs learners' may be more comfortable expressing on behalf of another person rather than for themselves, a new question for learners not previously addressed in the questionnaire was what advice they would give a new student at their school, who is debating whether he or she should choose German or not.

#### **4.6.3. Learner case studies**

From the questionnaire and the learner focus groups, five learners' responses across these two research instruments were selected for analysis at idiographic level. This allowed for a more in-depth exploration of learners' complex attitudes towards German. Learners were selected to represent high/low motivation learners, continuers/droppers, both sexes and both key stages. Full details of case study sampling, processing and results are given under 6.3 below.

#### **4.6.4. Teacher and head teacher interviews**

Interviews were conducted around the interviewee's perception of attitudes of other people and students at their school towards German, the Germans, and Germany. Discussions explored the head teacher's and the teacher's beliefs around the value of German, and school-specific aspects such as the particular situation regarding German at their school, and how they saw their own role in this, as well as respondents' perceptions of learner attitudes.

#### **4.6.5. Lesson observations**

One lesson per year group per school was going to be observed and field notes taken, however, School S04 declined the request for lesson observations and consequently no lessons were observed at this school. Table 4.9. below shows research instruments and participant numbers for the school setting strand.

Table 4.9. *Main study school settings research instruments by school and frequency*

<u>School</u>	<u>Interviews</u>			<u>Observations</u>			<u>Focus groups</u>			<u>Questionnaires</u>			<u>Case studies</u>		
	<u>HT*</u>	<u>Teacher</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>KS3</u>	<u>KS4</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>KS3</u>	<u>KS4</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>KS3</u>	<u>KS4</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>KS3</u>	<u>KS4</u>	<u>Total</u>
S02	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	142	21	163	1	-	1
S04	1	1	2	-	-	-	1	-	1	41	17	58	1	-	1
S05	1	1	2	1	0	1	1	1	2	119	43	162	-	1	1
S06	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	109	14	123	1	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>411</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>506</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>

\*Head teacher

#### **4.6.6. Newspaper corpus data**

The analysis for the newspaper data strand was corpus-assisted (Partington et al., 2013), bringing together corpus linguistics and discourse analysis. Corpus linguistics tends to be associated with quantitative methods (Baker, 2006). However, although quantitative frequency patterns in the corpus data were identified, qualitative methods were also employed to categorise highly frequent and salient collocates into content themes. Sampling details for the corpus were given under 4.2.1.4. above, and the development of the corpus research instrument was explained under 4.3.6.. Piloting took the form of exploring the corpus with a light touch, and confirmed the chosen line of enquiry as worthwhile (4.4.2.4.). No changes were made as a result of the corpus pilot. Full processing details for the corpus data can be found in the results section under 7.1. below.

Figure 4.1. below shows a timeline for the pilot and main study data collection:

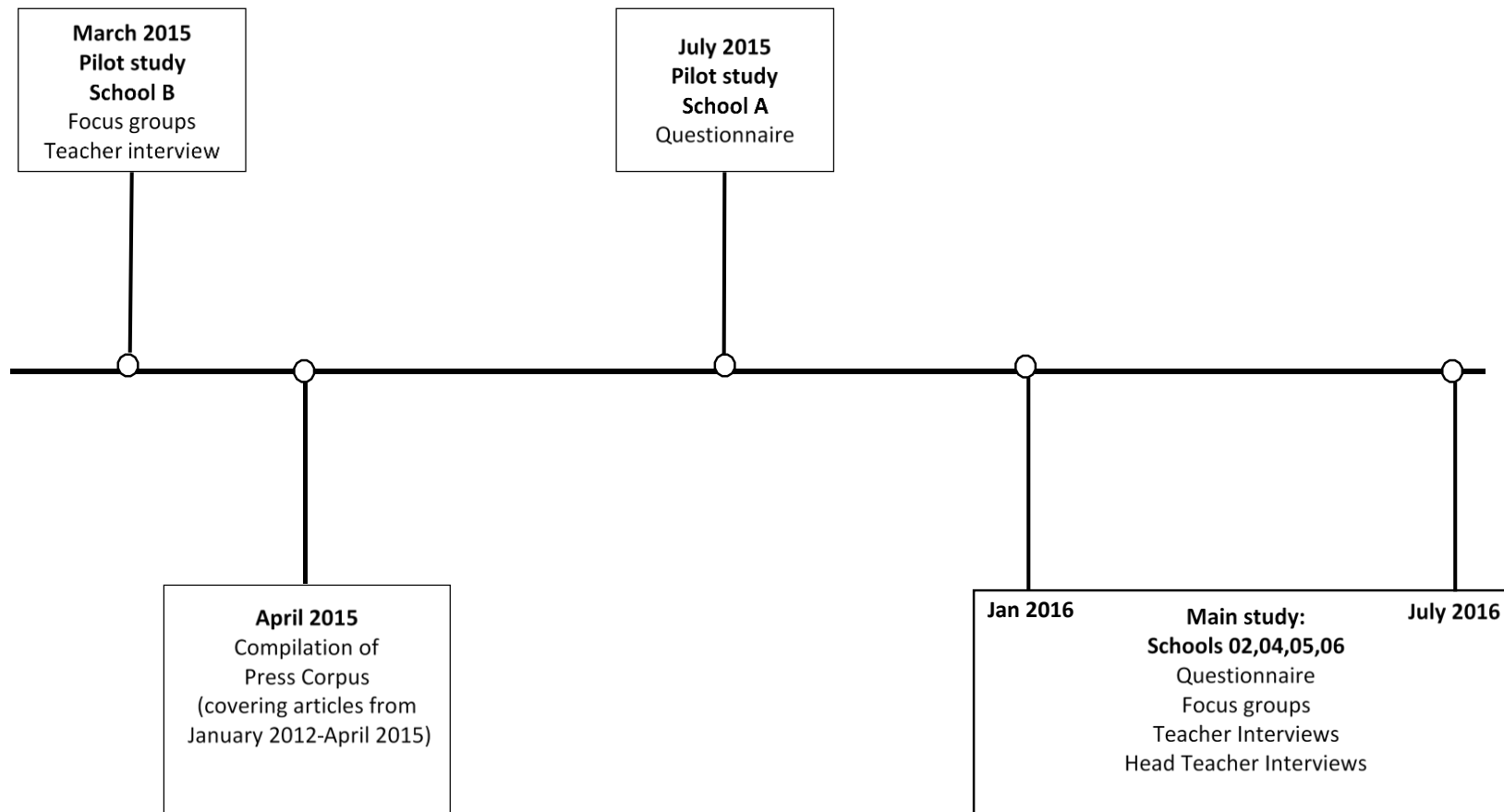


Figure 4.1. Time line: Pilot and main study data collection

#### **4.7. Reliability and validity**

For the current study, the principle of triangulation of data was followed (Creswell, 2013). This took the form of using both qualitative and quantitative data to explore the phenomenon of learner motivation for German. To increase reliability, a codebook was produced, and a second rater coded a 10% sample of the data, before results were compared with the original coding. The agreement percentage was found to be above 90%, and rose to 100% in post-interrating meetings. Whilst the results of the study cannot categorically be generalised, external validity is addressed through a relatively large sample (learner sample  $N = 506$ ). It is also important to bear in mind that inductive forms of research, such as the current study, aim to explore a field not test a hypothesis (David & Sutton, 2011).

As well as to data analysis, reliability relates to the extent to which findings can be repeated, i.e., consistency (although the reliability/ internal consistency of the motivation questionnaire can also be assessed via the Cronbach's alpha coefficient). Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest the term 'trustworthiness' in relation to the reliability of a study. In the current research, Bassey's (1999) advice was followed: "Work out your own methods - from a clear ethical standpoint, and based on your research questions" (p. 81).

#### **4.8. Research Ethics**

The starting point for considering the Ethics issues of the study was Merriam (1988): "The best that an individual researcher can do is to be conscious of the ethical issues that pervade the research process, from conceptualizing the problem to disseminating the findings" (p. 184). The study was conducted with an awareness that the first and foremost responsibility was to the adolescent learner participants of the study, and it was guided by recommendations by the British Educational Research Association



(BERA, 2011). Informed consent was obtained from learner participants and their parents and carers, as well as from the staff participants (German teacher and head teacher). Information sheets outlining the purpose of the project and how data were used were produced. Participants and parents were informed that taking part was on a voluntary basis, with no repercussions for withdrawal. Whilst questionnaire consent was sought via opt-out forms, separate, explicit opt-in permission for focus group/interview participation and audio-recording were obtained. Participants were reassured that taking part would not affect their grades, and that their data would be anonymised and not shared with their parents or teachers.

Ethical approval for the pilot study as well as the main study were obtained following University of Reading procedures. Ethics documents including information sheets and consent forms can be found in Appendix J. There are strict government guidelines regarding contact with children, and schools may also have their own safeguarding rules. For example, one school preferred the focus group interviews to take place in the presence of a ‘chaperone’ (in this case, a teaching assistant). At the time of school visits, I was in possession of an enhanced Disclosing and Barring Service (DBS) certificate.

#### **4.9. Methodological limitations**

Four schools in England can never represent all secondary schools in the UK, and generalised conclusions can only be drawn with caution. Credibility and accountability was striven for through approaching the data from different angles and via quantitative and qualitative methods for the purposes of triangulation. Furthermore, in the thematic coding, assumptions may have been made, and others may have made different coding decisions. For this reason, notes on decision-making processes were kept, and, as explained under 4.7. above, an inter-rating procedure was followed. Additionally, a ‘researcher-effect’

among participants may have unintentionally been created, which means that participants behave differently to how they would normally because of the artificially constructed research situation. At all times sensitive and low-key behaviour around learners in the school environment was aimed for.

#### **4.10. Chapter 4: Summary**

This chapter presented the research design and explained the methodology developed to operationalise the four research questions. The study uses a cross-sectional, mixed methods design. RQ1 investigates 411 KS3 and 95 KS4 learners' motivation for German at secondary school, and is operationalised via questionnaire items which generate mainly quantitative data. RQ2 addresses key player (learner, teacher, and head teacher) discourses around German, the Germans, and Germany, and is accessed via mainly qualitative questionnaire items. RQ3 explores how German\* is represented in public UK discourses, and is examined via a specialised corpus of just over 40,000 newspaper articles, which was compiled for this purpose. RQ4 investigates the relationship between the public and the private discourse domains, and this is addressed by cross-referencing emerging themes from both data sets. The overarching research aim is the identification of the relationship between the representation of German, the Germans, and Germany, and learner motivation. Hence, findings will be related to motivation for German learning. The following three chapters (5, 6, and 7) report further data processing procedures as well as the findings from the empirical part of the study. The next chapter (5) addresses RQ1 and reports findings from the mainly quantitative questionnaire sections, including learner motivation by language uptake decision, by socio-economic status (SES), and by English as an additional language (EAL) background. It also presents findings on learners' self-reported reasons for continuing or dropping German, and on learner perceptions on advice they received regarding language uptake choices.

## **Chapter 5: Learner motivation for German**

Results are presented in three chapters (5-7). The present chapter (5) addresses RQ1, which relates to learner motivation for German at the time when German learners were asked to decide whether to continue or drop the subject. Chapter 6 reports results relating to RQ2, key player discourses around German in school settings, and chapter 7 addresses RQ3 (representation of German\* in UK newspapers) and RQ4 (relationship between private (school) and public (press) discourses around German).

The current chapter presents results on learner motivation for German, which, as a latent variable that cannot be measured directly, was operationalised through the three sub-variables which emerged from the literature review (chapter 2) as most fitting for this study: the learning situation, self-efficacy, and perceptions of the value of German. Results were related to German uptake decision (continue, drop, or maybe), learner SES, and EAL background. Moreover, the chapter includes findings regarding learners' self-reported rationales for continuing or dropping German, as well as their perception of language guidance they received.

In light of the range of research instruments and number of questionnaire items, the presentation of findings in the three results chapters is organised by research instrument, with a description of the data analysis process preceding each results section. Table 5.1. below sets out which data answer which research question, and where in the thesis the respective results are reported.

Table 5.1. *Research questions, data, foci, and thesis sections*

<u>Research aim</u>	To identify the relationship between motivation for German learning and the representations of German, the Germans, and Germany in private and public UK discourses		
<u>Research question</u>	<u>Data</u>	<u>Focus</u>	<u>Results reported in</u>
RQ1: How do motivational dimensions in learning German relate to continuing or dropping the language?	questionnaire section D (motivation)	uptake decisions, SES, EAL	5
RQ2: How is German* represented in discourses of key players in school settings?	1. questionnaire: metaphor section	motivation, SES	6.1
	2. learner focus groups	motivation	6.2.2
	3. teacher/HT interviews	emerging themes	6.2.3
	4. learner case studies	emerging themes	6.3
	5. questionnaire Family Fortunes part 1	learners' perceptions of public discourses	6.4
RQ3: How is German* represented in newspaper discourses in the UK?	press corpus	emerging themes	7.1
RQ4: What is the relationship between public/official and private/grassroots discourses around German* in the UK?	press corpus and Family Fortunes part 2, metaphors, focus groups	links between discourses	7.2

Where possible, separate results for KS3 and KS4 are presented, as for the purposes of this study the two groups are regarded as two distinct populations. KS3 and KS4 learners differ not just in age and maturity, but also in terms of motivation levels and attitudes. The decision-making processes demanded of a KS3 learner who has to decide which subjects to choose for GCSE are likely to be different from the ones required of a KS4 learner selecting subjects for A'level. School-related factors such as a compulsory language for GCSE, or a minimum number of A'level students required to run a course, may also play a role: all KS3 learners in the study were learning German in a compulsory setting, whereas all KS4 learners had freely chosen German as a GCSE option. Splitting the data into separate groups for KS3 and KS4 allows for comparisons between those groups.

The current chapter is based on findings from the quantitative motivation section (D) of the questionnaire (Appendix D), as well as on selected items linking to learners' motivation for German (SES, EAL, reasons for continuing, perception of language advice given). The questionnaire can be regarded as the main research instrument of this study, with the other instruments playing a supporting role. Four hundred and eleven useable questionnaire responses were collected from KS3, and 95 from KS4 learners across four schools in the South of England. Data from the hard-copy questionnaires were transcribed into SPSS23, and the qualitative data transferred into NVivo11. For qualitative questionnaire items, data were coded in NVivo to allow the generation of thematic codes, which were then converted into SPSS codes by assigning a number per code. This was done to enable statistically meaningful calculations to be made, exploring, for example, differences between groups of learners. Questionnaire results are presented in section order, and, where appropriate, broken down into discrete items. For example, section A, metaphors, lends itself to a structure by individual metaphor, whereas for section D,

motivation, it is more helpful to break down the results by motivational scale. Details of data processing and results relating to research question 1 are presented below.

### **5.1. Motivation data**

Section D of the questionnaire was designed to measure learners' motivation levels. As the construct of motivation is a latent variable and cannot be measured directly, results are broken down into a) an overall motivation scale, and b) its constituent parts of attitudes towards the learning situation, self-efficacy levels, and perceptions of the value of German.

#### **5.1.1. Data processing**

The motivation questionnaire data were entered into SPSS as a score between 1 and 6, expressing to what extent the learner agreed or disagreed with each statement (scale range: 1 = learner thinks statement is totally correct, 6 = learner thinks statement is totally incorrect). Each of the individual motivation scales of learning situation, self-efficacy, and perceptions of the value of German contained two positively and one negatively phrased item. Within a scale of 1 to 6, 1 equals the lowest motivation possible, and 6 the highest. This meant that the six positively phrased items (items 1,2,5,6,7,8) had to be recoded with reversed values.

Example:

item 1: I enjoy German lessons

learner response: 2 (“a little less than totally correct”)

SPSS value for analysis: 5 (“a little less than the highest motivation score”).

An individual motivation score based on the nine motivation questionnaire items was calculated for each learner in four areas: overall motivation, as well as the three composite sub-scales of learning situation, self-efficacy, and perception of the value of German. In an attempt to measure the latent construct of motivation, overall motivation

here is taken to consist of the sum of the three sub-scales. In order to test the internal consistency of the three motivational sub-scales, Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients were calculated separately for both KS3 and KS4. Unlike other correlation-type statistics, the acceptability of the Cronbach's alpha is not related to its statistical value, rather, researchers tend work on the basis of the absolute value of .7 as an acceptability measure (Bryman, 2015). For perception of value of German (KS3 and KS4) and for self-efficacy (KS4), the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was found to be just below .7. Although deleting one item from each scale in each case would have raised the Cronbach's alpha above .7, it was decided not to exclude any item for theory-related reasons (both self-efficacy and value of German and had emerged as important motivational areas in previous research; self-efficacy: e.g. Bandura, 1997; value: e.g. Taylor & Marsden, 2014). In addition, the questionnaires were not deemed 'high-stakes', which lent weight to the decision to not exclude any items for statistical analysis. The acceptability of a Cronbach's alpha value lower than .7 is also supported by Loewenthal (2001), Berthoud (2000), Csizér and Kormos (2009), and Dörnyei (2010).

Table 5.2. below shows descriptive statistics for the learner motivation data by key stage. The data were further broken down by learner groups of droppers, continuers, and maybes, i.e., groups reflecting learners' stated intention regarding whether to continue with German or whether to drop it. This was done to enable exploration of any differences between the different groups of learners. Table 5.3. below shows descriptive statistics, again by key stage, for continuers, maybes, and droppers. Since at two of the participating schools language study at KS4 was compulsory, and at the other two non-compulsory, KS3 motivation data were further split by compulsory/non-compulsory schools. Table 5.4. below shows descriptive statistics for KS3 data split by compulsory (Schools S02 and S04)/non-compulsory (Schools S05 and S06) groups. However, when interpreting these data split in this way, it must be borne in mind that factors other than the compulsory or

non-compulsoriness of language study are likely to play a part in motivational dimensions and learner uptake decisions. For example, as regards SES of intake (which is related to language study, e.g. Tinsley & Board, 2017a), the compulsory group includes an academically selective private school (S04), and the non-compulsory group includes the school with a highest level of deprivation (as measured by FSM index).



Table 5.2. Descriptive motivation statistics by key stage

<u>Scale</u>	<u>KS3</u>						<u>KS4</u>					
	<u>n</u>	<u>Min</u>	<u>Max</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>Cronbach's α</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>Min</u>	<u>Max</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>Cronbach's α</u>
Overall motivation (items 1-9)	404	1	6	3.47	.98	.86	95	1.89	5.44	3.83	.77	.77
Learning situation (items 1,4,7)	403	1	6	3.66	1.22	.81	95	1.67	6	4.04	.99	.77
Value of German (items 3,6,8)	403	1	6	3.48	1.13	.70	95	1.67	6	3.77	.98	.55
Self-efficacy (items 2,5,9)	404	1	6	3.27	1.16	.67	95	1	6	3.70	1.05	.69

Table 5.3. Descriptive motivation statistics by uptake grouping (n) and key stage

<i>n</i>	<u>KS3</u>				<u>KS4*</u>		
	<u>Continuers</u>	<u>Droppers</u>	<u>Maybes</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Continuers</u>	<u>Droppers</u>	<u>Total</u>
	<u>(136)</u>	<u>(252)</u>	<u>(13)</u>	<u>(401)<sup>1</sup></u>	<u>(14)</u>	<u>(81)</u>	<u>(95)</u>
%	33.92	62.84	3.24	100	14.74	85.26	100
<b>Scale</b>							
Overall motivation <i>M (SD)</i>	4.23 (0.83)	3.04 (0.81)	3.82 (0.59)	3.47 (0.99)	4.37 (0.51)	3.74 (0.77)	3.83 (0.77)
Learning situation <i>M (SD)</i>	4.53 (1.07)	3.17 (1.04)	3.85 (0.79)	3.65 (1.22)	4.43 (0.63)	3.97 (1.02)	4.04 (0.99)
Value of German <i>M (SD)</i>	4.15 (1.02)	3.10 (1.02)	4.05 (0.61)	3.49 (1.13)	4.48 (0.92)	3.64 (0.94)	3.76 (0.98)
Self-efficacy <i>M (SD)</i>	4.02 (0.97)	2.86 (1.06)	3.56 (0.81)	3.28 (1.16)	4.21 (1.00)	3.61 (1.04)	3.70 (1.05)

\* *Note.* There were no ‘maybes’ for KS4. <sup>1</sup> Excluded (*n*): 10 (2.4%)

Table 5.4. KS3 descriptive motivation statistics by compulsory/non-compulsory language group, uptake grouping (n) and key stage

	<u>Compulsory group (S02, S04)</u>				<u>Non-compulsory group (S05, S06)*</u>		
	<u>n</u>	<u>Continuers</u> (60)	<u>Droppers</u> (108)	<u>Maybes</u> (13)	<u>Total</u> <sup>1</sup> (182)	<u>Continuers</u> (76)	<u>Droppers</u> (147)
%	33.00	59.3	7.1	100	33.2	64.2	100
Scale							
Overall motivation							
<i>M (SD)</i>	4.25 (0.79)	3.18 (0.82)	3.82 (0.59)	3.58	4.22 (0.86)	2.95 (0.79)	3.39
<i>Mdn</i>	4.33	3.22	4.00	3.56	4.31	3.00	3.56
Learning situation							
<i>M (SD)</i>	4.59 (1.11)	3.33 (1.07)	3.85 (0.79)	3.78	4.48 (1.04)	3.05 (1.01)	3.55
<i>Mdn</i>	4.67	3.33	4.00	3.67	4.67	3.00	3.67
Value of German							
<i>M (SD)</i>	4.11 (0.99)	3.16 (0.95)	4.05 (0.61)	3.54	4.18 (1.04)	3.06 (1.07)	3.43
<i>Mdn</i>	4.33	3.33	4.00	3.33	4.00	3.33	3.33
Self-efficacy							
<i>M (SD)</i>	4.03 (0.85)	3.05 (1.04)	3.56 (0.81)	3.41	4.02 (1.05)	2.73 (1.06)	3.16
<i>Mdn</i>	4.33	3.00	3.33	3.33	4.00	2.67	3.33

\* There were no maybes in the compulsory group. <sup>1</sup> Invalid (n): 1 (0.5%) <sup>2</sup> Invalid (n): 6 (2.6%)

### 5.1.2. Results

Looking at descriptive statistics for each learner group (Table 5.3. above), for KS3 almost twice as many learners chose to drop German (62.84%) rather than continue it (33.92%). Very few learners were undecided (3.24%). Nearly six times as many KS4 learners as KS3 learners (85.26%) chose to drop the subject over continuing it (14.74%). On average, KS4 motivation means were higher than for KS3 overall, as well as for the sub-scales of learning situation, self-efficacy, and perceptions of the value of German. All KS4 participants indicated that they had made their decision regarding their German subject choice. On a scale of 1 to 6, with 1 being the lowest or no motivation, and 6 the highest, or most positive motivation, a mean learner motivation score higher than 3 denotes overall positive motivation. When grouped by German uptake decision, all groups (continuers, droppers, and maybes) were positively motivated overall, if, for KS3 droppers, only just (Table 5.3.) When motivation scores were split by scale (learning situation, self-efficacy and perception of value), groups were still positively motivated apart from the one group of KS3 droppers for self-efficacy. The least motivated learners had the lowest levels of language self-confidence (KS3 droppers) whereas the most motivated learners felt best about German lessons (KS3 continuers).

To ascertain whether there were statistically significant differences in motivation means between droppers, continuers, and maybes, a one-way ANOVA was carried out for KS3 (as there were three groups). For the same reason, an independent samples t-test was carried out for KS4 (as for KS4 there were no maybes and hence only two groups: droppers and continuers). Before a one-way ANOVA can be used, six basic assumptions must be met (Field, 2013):

1. the dependent variable must be at interval level
2. the independent variable consists of two or more independent groups
3. there must be independence of observations

4. there must be no significant outliers
5. the dependent variable should be normally distributed
6. there must be homogeneity of variance.

Assumptions 1 to 3 above were met through the nature of the research design.

Assumptions 4 to 6 were tested statistically in SPSS.

Regarding assumption 4, outliers, data were tested using the outlier labelling rule (Hoaglin, Iglewicz, & Tukey, 1986), and no outliers were identified.

Assumption 5, normal distribution, was tested using the Shapiro-Wilk test. Data were found to be normally distributed for KS3 overall motivation, and for all four scales for KS4 (overall motivation, perception of value, learning situation, and self-efficacy). For the three KS3 sub-scales, although not normally distributed as determined by Shapiro-Wilk tests, histograms and Q-plots indicated that the data were sufficiently close to normal distribution to use ANOVA which, although a parametric test, has been shown as robust when dealing with slightly non-normal distribution. In addition, normality is generally regarded as less of an issue with large samples sizes, such as the ones used in the present study (Field, 2013).

As regards assumption 6, homogeneity of variance, for both KS3 and KS4 local homogeneity of variance (as per Levene's test) could be assumed for all four scales of overall motivation, learning situation, perception of value, and self-efficacy. Thus it was decided that the data met the assumptions for ANOVA. For post-hoc tests, the conservative Bonferroni test, which is robust in terms of type I error rate (Field, 2013) was used, with adjusted  $p$  values for this test from SPSS reported.

For KS3, a one-way ANOVA indicated a significant effect of group for all four motivation scales: overall motivation ( $F(2,398) = 96.04, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .33$ ), learning

situation ( $F(2,397) = 75.17, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .28$ ), perception of value of German ( $F(2,397) = 49.45, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .20$ ) and self-efficacy ( $F(2,398) = 57.48, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .22$ ).

For KS4, a significant effect of group was found for overall motivation ( $F(1,93) = 8.77, p = .004, \eta_p^2 = .09$ ), perception of value of German ( $F(1,93) = 9.60, p = .003, \eta_p^2 = .09$ ) and self-efficacy ( $F(2,93) = 4.11, p = .046, \eta_p^2 = .04$ ), but not for learning situation ( $F(1,93) = 2.61, p = .110, \eta_p^2 = .03$ ).

Effect sizes for KS3 can be considered to be large, following Miles and Shevlin (2001, citing Cohen, 1988), who state that for partial eta squared and eta squared, effect sizes are considered large if above .14.

Bonferroni post-hoc tests for KS3 revealed statistically significant differences between the continuers and droppers in terms of all four motivation scales (overall motivation ( $p < .001, d = 1.45$ ), learning situation ( $p < .001, d = 1.29$ ), perception of value ( $p < .001, d = 1.03$ ), and self-efficacy ( $p < .001, d = 1.14$ ). They also revealed that maybes showed statistically significantly higher motivation levels than droppers in terms of overall motivation ( $p = .003, d = 1.09$ ), perception of value ( $p = .003, d = 1.13$ ), and self-efficacy ( $p = .049, d = 0.74$ ). No statistically significant difference was found between the maybes and the droppers in terms of learning situation ( $p = .070, d = 0.73$ ).

No statistically significant differences for any of the four motivation scales were found between the KS3 continuers and the maybes (overall ( $p = .241, d = 0.57$ ), learning situation ( $p = .073, d = 0.73$ ), perception of value ( $p = 1.000, d = 0.11$ ), and self-efficacy ( $p = .367, d = 0.52$ ).

In order to determine effect size, Cohen's  $d$  based on the pooled average of each pair's standard deviations was calculated (reported as  $d$  above). Cohen suggests that a value of 0.2 counts as small, 0.5 medium, and 0.8 and above large (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Following Cohen's guidelines, effects for the statistically significant results for KS3

can therefore be said to be large, or, in the case of difference between maybes and droppers in self-efficacy, bordering on large.

For KS4, for which there were only the two groups of droppers and continuers, an independent samples t-test showed that continuers displayed significantly higher motivation levels than droppers in terms of overall motivation (continuers:  $M = 4.37$ ,  $SD = 0.51$ , droppers:  $M = 3.74$ ,  $SD = 0.77$ ,  $t(93) = 2.96$ ,  $p = .004$ ,  $d = 0.41$ ), perception of value (continuers:  $M = 4.48$ ,  $SD = 0.92$ , droppers:  $M = 3.64$ ,  $SD = 0.94$ ,  $t(93) = 3.10$ ,  $p = .003$ ,  $d = 0.90$ ), and self-efficacy (continuers:  $M = 4.21$ , droppers:  $M = 3.61$ ,  $SD = 1.04$ ,  $t(93) = 2.03$ ,  $p = .046$ ,  $d = 0.60$ ), but not in terms of attitude to learning situation (continuers:  $M = 4.43$ ,  $SD = 0.63$ , droppers:  $M = 3.97$ ,  $SD = 1.02$ ,  $t(93) = 1.61$ ,  $p = .110$ ,  $d = 0.54$ ). The effect size was small to medium overall, but large for perception of value, and medium to large for self-efficacy.

Given that motivational forces for KS3 learners for whom at least one modern language is compulsory in KS4 might be different from those of KS3 learners for whom language study at KS4 is optional, statistical tests comparing motivation means were conducted treating learners from a compulsory KS4 language setting (Schools S02 and S04) and those from a non-compulsory KS4 language setting (Schools S05 and S06) as separate groups. The assumptions for ANOVA, as outlined above, were tested, and assumptions 4 (significant outliers) and 5 (normal distribution) were found to be violated. Therefore, non-parametric tests were conducted.

For the KS3 compulsory language group, an independent samples Kruskal-Wallis test showed a significant effect of group for all four motivation scales (overall motivation ( $\chi^2(2) = 52.68$ ,  $p < .001$ ; learning situation  $\chi^2(2) = 43.07$ ,  $p < .001$ ; value  $\chi^2(2) = 33.80$ ,  $p < .001$ , and self-efficacy  $\chi^2(2) = 34.15$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

Next, a series of Mann-Whitney U tests were conducted. A conservative  $\alpha$ -level with Bonferroni-correction was calculated by dividing the conventional  $p$ -value by the

number of tests (3) conducted, resulting in an adjusted  $\alpha$ -level of  $p = .017$ . Median values for the compulsory/non-compulsory groups are reported in Table 5.4. above. The Mann-Whitney U tests showed that, in the compulsory group, continuers showed higher levels of motivation than droppers for all four motivation scales: overall motivation ( $U = 1105.00, p < .001$ ), learning situation ( $U = 1284.00, p < .001$ ), perception of value ( $U = 1603.00, p < .001$ ), and self-efficacy ( $U = 1493.00, p < .001$ ). The tests also revealed statistically significant differences between the maybes and droppers regarding overall motivation ( $U = 360.00, p = .005$ ) and value ( $U = 295.50, p < .001$ ), but not regarding the learning situation ( $U = 487.00, p = .077$ ), or self-efficacy ( $U = 494.00, p = .088$ ). For the maybes and continuers, statistically significant differences were found only for the learning situation, for which continuers showed higher levels of motivation than maybes ( $U = 216.50, p = .012$ ). However, the result for this scale could be said to be bordering on non-significant, bearing in mind the Bonferroni-adjusted  $\alpha$ -level of  $.017$ . No statistically significant differences were found between the maybes and continuers for overall motivation ( $U = 245.00, p = .036$ ), self-efficacy ( $U = 255.50, p = .050$ ), or for perception of value ( $U = 357.00, p = .632$ ).

For the non-compulsory KS3 group, there were no maybes so the only two groups to be compared were the continuers and the droppers. Therefore, a series of Mann-Whitney U tests were conducted. These tests showed that in the non-compulsory group, continuers showed higher levels of motivation than droppers for all four motivation scales: overall motivation ( $U = 1480.00, p < .001$ ), learning situation ( $U = 1798.00, p < .001$ ), perception of value ( $U = 2432.50, p < .001$ ), and self-efficacy ( $U = 2109.50, p < .001$ ).

In order to explore whether there were any differences in motivation levels between the KS3 learners from the compulsory groups (S02 and S04) on the one hand, and those from the non-compulsory group (S05 and S06) on the other hand, a further series of Mann-Whitney U tests was conducted. Results indicated that overall, KS3 learners for whom at



least one language at GSCE level was compulsory, showed higher motivation levels for self-efficacy than learners for whom a language for GCSE was optional ( $U = 17615.50, p = .027$ ). Although not statistically significant, there was also a trend for KS3 learners from the compulsory group to show higher levels for overall motivation ( $U = 17954.00, p = .056$ ), and for learning situation ( $U = 18052.00, p = .079$ ), but not for value ( $U = 19169.00, p = .436$ ). KS3 droppers from the compulsory language group showed statistically significantly higher self-efficacy levels than droppers from the non-compulsory group ( $U = 6365.00, p = .014$ ), and there was also a trend for droppers from the compulsory settings to show higher levels for overall motivation ( $U = 6671.50, p = .057$ ), and for learning situation ( $U = 6653.50, p = .064$ ), but not for value ( $U = 7369.00, p = .576$ ).

There were no statistically significant differences between the continuers from compulsory and from non-compulsory groups for either of the four motivation scales (overall motivation:  $U = 2218.00, p = .786$ ; learning situation:  $U = 2089.00, p = .399$ ; value:  $U = 2223.00, p = .802$ ; self-efficacy:  $U = 2262.00, p = .937$ ). Since all the maybes ( $n = 13$ ) were in the compulsory group and none in the non-compulsory group, there was no non-compulsory maybe group with which the compulsory maybe group could be compared.

A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between the three motivation variables of learning situation, self-efficacy and perception of value of German. Scatterplots confirmed that the relationships between the three pairs of variables were linear and positive. A positive correlation was found for both key stages between learning situation and self-efficacy (KS3:  $r(403) = .63, p < 0.001$ ; KS4:  $r(95) = .52, p < .001$ ), learning situation and value (KS3:  $r(402) = .57, p < .001$ ; KS4:  $r(95) = .29, p = .004$ ), and between value and self-efficacy (KS3:  $r(403) = .50, p < .001$ ; KS4:  $r(95) = .32, p = .002$ ). Overall, there was a strong relationship between the three motivational scales. This means that for each of the relationships tested, increases in one

variable were correlated with increases in the other two variables. Field (2013) advises that following Cohen (1988, 1992), a Pearson's correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) of .50 denotes a large effect, explaining 25% of the total variance, and an  $r$ -value of .30 a medium affect, accounting for 9% of the variance. Based on this suggestion, all three effect sizes for KS3 as well as, for KS4, the relationship between learning situation and self-efficacy can be considered large, and the other two KS4 relationships (learning situation/value and self-efficacy/value), medium. These tests thus indicated that the three motivational variables are linked with each other, and that a learner who showed positive attitudes towards, for example, the learning situation, would be likely to also show higher self-efficacy levels and attribute more value to the study of German, and vice versa.

## **5.2. Socio-economic status (SES)**

Socio-economic background is currently still the strongest predictor of educational outcomes in England (Hartas, 2011), and has also been found to be related to the subjects taken by learners at GCSE (Jin, et al., 2010) and at A'level (Sammons, Toth, & Sylva, 2015). Therefore, some socio-economic data at learner level were collected. Drawing on the work of Marx and Weber, who frame social class within the economic system, influential sociologists such as Goldthorpe (1987), Wright (1980), and Dahrendorf (1959) make the case for linking class with occupation and employment status in a concrete and, for social research purposes, pragmatic way. The 'Goldthorpe class schema' contributes to the conceptual basis of the most recent UK socio-economic classification system, SOC2010 (2010), and was used in the coding of data as described below.

Several issues need to be borne in mind for this part of the current study. Firstly, asking teenagers about their parents' or carers' occupation is far from a perfect way to obtain SES information, as the data collected can be too vague or incomplete to be coded.

Secondly, some learners simply left this part of the questionnaire blank, or gave nonsense-type answers such as “manager of Man U” or similar. Interestingly, this question seemed to cause offence particularly amongst the learners of School S04, a fee-paying academically selective school, (with an intake of the highest levels of learners’ socio-economic backgrounds), several of whom included statements such as “none of your business” or “why do you want to know that???” Despite these caveats, the responses which were codeable were considered worth investigating, as they may shed light on an aspect of the study which relates to recent trends towards ‘elitification’ of language learning in the UK (Tinsley & Board, 2017a). The method chosen for socio-economic data gathering was to ask learners about their father/carer’s occupation, and their mother/carer’s occupation.

#### **5.2.1. SES classification system adopted in the study**

The National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC) is a measure of employment relations and conditions of occupations, which aims to illuminate the structure of socio-economic positions. After some revisions, it currently relates to the UK’s most recent official occupation classification, Standard Occupational Classification 2010 (SOC2010). The NS-SEC has been used widely since 2001, and replaced the previously used two socio-economic classifications (SECs): Social Class based on occupation (SC), and Socio-economic groups (SEG). The NS-SEC draws on the Goldthorpe schema (Goldthorpe, 1987) for its conceptual framework.

As shown in Table 5.5. below, the NS-SEC consists of eight analytic classes (together with 14 functional operational categories, which represent labour market position and employment status). There are also three residual categories: ‘full-time students’, ‘occupation not stated or inadequately described’, and ‘not classifiable’, which are excluded for the class classification.

Table 5.5. *NS-SEC analytic classes*

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1. Higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations
    - 1.1 Large employers and higher managerial and administrative occupations
    - 1.2 Higher professional occupations
  2. Lower managerial, administrative and professional occupations
  3. Intermediate occupations
  4. Small employers and own account workers
  5. Lower supervisory and technical occupations
  6. Semi-routine occupations
  7. Routine occupations
  8. Never worked and long-term unemployed
- 

*Note.* Adapted from SOC2010.

Notably, none of the category names in Table 5.5. above refer to the previously used manual/non-manual work divide, or to skill. Rose and Pevalin (2003) describe how these concepts do not play a part in the NS-SEC, in order to reflect changes in industry and occupations. Depending on the analytic purposes and nature of the data, the eight classes of the NS-SEC can be collapsed into a five, or a three-tier framework, as shown in Table 5.5. below.

Table 5.6. *Eight-, five, and three class versions of NS-SEC*

<u>eight classes</u>	<u>five classes</u>	<u>three classes</u>
1. Higher managerial, administrative and professional	1. Higher managerial, administrative and professional	1. Higher managerial, administrative and professional
2. Lower managerial, administrative and professional		
3. Intermediate	2. Intermediate	2. Intermediate
4. Small employers and own account workers	3. Small employers and own account workers	3. Routine and manual
5. Lower supervisory and technical	4. Lower supervisory and technical	
6. Semi-routine	5. Semi-routine and routine	
7. Routine		
8. Never worked or long-term unemployed	Never worked or long-term unemployed	Never worked or long-term unemployed

*Note.* Adapted from SOC10.

For the present study, it was decided that the three-class model would be the most helpful one to adopt. Firstly, it represents a hierarchical form of social status, whereas the eight - and the five-class version, according to the manual, should be regarded as ordinal scales. Secondly, owing to the specific quality of the study's data (possibly misrepresented and incomplete, with a high proportion of cases excluded because of missing or 'unclassifiable' data), the model with the fewest tiers arguably offers the best chances of coding parental occupations in the most appropriate category. In addition, unlike the eight and five-tier versions, the three-tier model does not include a 'self-employed' category, which is helpful as the data of the present study does not contain any information on self-employed versus employed status. Since the study's data does not provide any distinction

between 'never worked', 'long-term unemployed' or 'unemployed', these categories were collapsed into one single category of 'not working'. However, after coding for SES it was found that this category applied to only one out of 95 KS4 learners (1.1%), and to eight out of 411 KS3 learners (1.9%), and that the cases coded as 'not working' tended to imply 'unemployed' rather than 'disabled,' or 'not working by choice', so this category was renamed 'unemployed'.

According to Rose & Pevalin (2003), there are three methods of deriving the functional categories of the NS-SEC: full, reduced and simplified. The simplified method is regarded as a 'last resort' option because it has lower chances of the correct code allocation being made than the full or the reduced method. However, unlike the other two methods, which require wider information, the simplified method requires only the SOC2010 unit group code. For coding the data it was therefore attempted to allocate, as far as possible from the often scarce information, the SOC10 unit group code from learners' responses regarding their parents'/carers' occupations, and then code them to an adapted version of the three-tier model of Table 5.6. above. Table 5.7. below shows the resulting coding framework.

Table 5.7. *Coding structure for SES adopted in the thesis*

<u>SPSS Code</u>	<u>SPSS Label</u>	<u>Examples</u>
1	higher managerial, administrative, professional	global director, GP, professor, vicar, chartered accountant, national accounts manager
2	intermediate	teacher, accountant, company director, business owner, nurse, chemical engineer
3	routine and manual	hairdresser, teaching assistant, nursery nurse, mechanic
4	unemployed	unemployed, no occupation
99	unclassifiable	Tesco's, BT, don't know, none of your business, retired

The unit of analysis for social conditions has traditionally been the nuclear family, on the basis of an assumption of shared conditions within the family unit. For NS-SEC categories, one person, the household reference person (HRP), needs to be selected to represent the household's position. Here, Croll, Attwood, and Fuller (2010) were followed by employing the 'dominance approach', where the parent/carer with the highest class code was defined as an individual learner's HRP. For example, if a learner indicated one parent/carer in SES group 2 and one in group 3, the learner SES was coded as group 2.

Taking the above considerations into account, the resulting categorisation of learners' socio-economic background via the simplified derivation method for the study can only be an approximation at best, yet one considered worthwhile to explore how socio-economic factors at learner-level may affect students' relationship with German-learning. In addition, the proportion of codeable SES data was considered large enough to warrant

this approach (KS3 data: 80%, KS4 data: 91%). Categorising learner SES by school type and catchment area alone may be flawed, as there might be hidden influencing variables (e.g. school-related factors such as teacher influence or curriculum time), which could not be controlled for in this study. Nevertheless, as shown in Table 5.8. below, individual learners' SES was cross-referenced with school attended. A broad 'eyeballing' of the data shows that the individual learner SES and level of deprivation (as measured by the school's free school meals index, FSM) were related. No FSM data for School S04, an independent school, was available. However, an assumption of intake from a high SES population could be made, as School S04 was also fee-paying, and academically selective.



Table 5.8. *Learner SES by school (% , (n))*

<u>School</u>	<u>FSM</u>	<u>KS3</u>					<u>KS4</u>				
		<u>SES 1</u>	<u>SES 2</u>	<u>SES 3</u>	<u>Unemployed</u>	<u>Total SES*</u>	<u>SES 1</u>	<u>SES 2</u>	<u>SES 3</u>	<u>Unemployed</u>	<u>Total SES*</u>
1. S04	N/A	29 (11)	61 (23)	8 (3)	3 (1)	93 (72)	47 (7)	53 (8)	0 (0)	0 (0)	88 (13)
2. S05	10.1	12 (12)	54 (53)	33 (33)	1 (1)	83 (99)	16 (6)	53 (20)	32 (12)	0 (0)	88 (38)
3. S02	12.9	9 (11)	54 (65)	35 (42)	2 (3)	85 (121)	0 (0)	80 (16)	15 (3)	5 (1)	95 (20)
4. S06	41.5	1 (1)	32 (23)	63 (45)	4 (3)	66 (72)	0 (0)	23 (3)	77 (10)	0 (0)	93 (13)
Total	-	11 (35)	50 (164)	37 (123)	2 (8)	80 (330)	15 (13)	55 (47)	29 (25)	1 (1)	91 (86)

*Note.* Schools are listed in descending order of deprivation as measured by FSM (free school meals index), no FSM data available for School S04 (independent school) \* Total SES data available from learner questionnaire data.

Table 5.9. Descriptive statistics for each KS by SES and motivation scale

	<u>KS3</u>						<u>KS4</u>					
	<u>SES1<sup>a</sup></u>	<u>SES2</u>	<u>SES3</u>	<u>Unem- ployed</u>	<u>Uncl.<sup>b</sup></u>	<u>Total (n=401)</u>	<u>SES1</u>	<u>SES2</u>	<u>SES3</u>	<u>Unem- ployed</u>	<u>Uncl.<sup>b</sup></u>	<u>Total (n=95)</u>
%	8.5	39.9	29.9	1.9	19.7	100	13.7	49.5	26.3	1.1	9.5	100
<u>Scale</u>												
Overall motivation <i>M (SD)</i>	3.90 (1.11)	3.60 (0.99)	3.40 (0.83)	3.16 (1.31)	-	3.55 (0.96)	3.86 (0.51)	3.80 (0.70)	3.88 (0.84)	2.00 (-) <sup>c</sup>	-	3.81 (0.73)
Learning situation <i>M (SD)</i>	4.16 (1.30)	3.81 (1.26)	3.55 (1.04)	3.71 (1.42)	-	3.75 (1.20)	4.10 (1.00)	4.02 (0.89)	4.09 (1.03)	1.67 (-)	-	4.03 (0.97)
Value of German <i>M (SD)</i>	3.98 (1.20)	3.70 (1.08)	3.33 (1.01)	2.90 (1.34)	-	3.57 (1.09)	4.00 (1.14)	3.77 (0.96)	3.68 (1.05)	2.67 (-)	-	3.76 (1.01)
Self- efficacy <i>M (SD)</i>	3.55 (1.39)	3.29 (1.18)	3.31 (0.97)	2.86 (1.43)	-	3.31 (1.14)	3.49 (0.69)	3.61 (0.87)	3.87 (1.24)	1.67 (-)	-	3.64 (0.99)

Note. <sup>a</sup> SES (socio-economic status) in descending order where 1 is the highest and 3 is the lowest. <sup>b</sup> Unclassifiable or missing data. <sup>c</sup> for this group  $n = 1$ , therefore *SD* does not apply.

### 5.2.2. SES and motivation

Table 5.9. above shows descriptive statistics for learner SES groups in relation to motivation levels for KS3 and KS4 respectively, coded as outlined under 5.2.1. above.

To ascertain whether there was an effect of socio-economic group on motivation levels, one-way ANOVA tests were carried out. Assumptions for ANOVA were already tested and found to be met in the exploration of motivation in relation to learners' German-learning choices, as reported under 5.1.2. above. Descriptive statistics regarding motivation data can be found in Table 5.2. above.

For overall motivation at KS3, at first there appeared to be a significant effect of group ( $F(3,324) = 3.12, p = .026, \eta_p^2 = .03$ ). However, homogeneity of variance (as per Levene's test) was violated for this scale, and the alternative Welch's test showed a non-significant result, meaning there appeared to be no statistically significant effect of group after all ( $F(3,324) = 3.12, p = .072, \eta_p^2 = .03$ ). No effect of SES group for overall motivation was found for KS4 either ( $F(3,82) = 2.23, p = .091, \eta_p^2 = .08$ ).

Equally, no effect of group was found for learning situation or self-efficacy for either KS3 or 4, although the result for KS3 learning situation was very close to being significant (learning situation KS3: ( $F(3,323) = 2.62, p = .051, \eta_p^2 = 0.02$ , KS4: ( $F(3,82) = 2.14, p = .101, \eta_p^2 = .73$ ), self-efficacy KS3: ( $F(3,324) = 0.92, p = .432, \eta_p^2 = .01$ , KS4: ( $F(3,82) = 1.95, p = .128, \eta_p^2 = .07$ )). For perception of value of German, no statistically significant result was found for KS4 ( $F(3,92) = 0.68, p = .566, \eta_p^2 = .02$ ), however, a significant effect of SES group on motivation levels for this scale was found for KS3 data (( $F(3,323) = 5.33, p = .001, \eta_p^2 = .05$ ). For this scale, homogeneity of variance (as per Levene's test) could be assumed, and Bonferroni post-hoc tests showed statistically significant differences between group 1 (highest SES level) and group 3 (lowest SES) ( $p =$

.011,  $d = 0.58$ ), and between group 2 (intermediate SES) and group 3 (lowest SES) ( $p = .031$ ,  $d = 0.35$ ). No statistically significant differences were found for this scale between group 1 and group 2 ( $p = .928$ ,  $d = 0.25$ ), or between the (small) unemployed group (group 4) and any of the other three groups (group 4/group 1:  $p = .095$ ,  $d = 0.84$ ; group 4/group 2: ( $p = .339$ ,  $d = 0.65$ ; group 4/group 3:  $p = 1.000$ ,  $d = 0.36$ ). Following Cohen, who suggests that values of 0.2 should count as small, 0.5 as medium, and 0.8 and above as large (Robson & McCartan, 2016), effect size for the significant differences between group 1 and 3 (reported as Cohen's  $d$  above), can be said to be medium, and for the difference between groups 2 and 3, small.

### **5.2.3. SES and language uptake choices**

Chi-square tests were conducted in order to test whether there were any significant associations between learners' SES and their choices around German. In order to avoid small groups, the groups of maybes (choices) and unemployed (SES) were excluded from the analysis. In order to control the type I error rate, as discussed by Beasley and Schumacker (1995), and Garcia-Perez and Nunez-Anton (2003), the following method was used to calculate an adjusted  $p$ -value: First, a new, conservative alpha level with Bonferroni-correction was calculated by dividing the conventional  $p$ -value of .05 by the number of test conducted (here: 6). Then, the  $z$ -scores of the adjusted residuals were transformed into chi-square values by multiplying them by themselves, and from that an adjusted  $p$ -value was calculated and compared with the Bonferroni-corrected alpha level, which was  $p = .008$ .

For KS3 learners, Pearson's chi-square test showed a significant association between learners' socio-economic status, and the decision whether to continue and drop German ( $\chi^2 (2) = 14.01$ ). Post-hoc tests showed that for KS3, there was a significant association between learners from the highest socio-economic group (group 1/higher

managerial, administrative and professional) and continuing with German ( $\chi^2 (2) = 14.01$ ,  $p = .0051$ ). At the other end of the spectrum, there was also a significant association between learners from the lowest socio-economic group (group 3/routine and manual occupations) and dropping German ( $\chi^2 (2) = 14.01$ ,  $p = .0016$ ).

### **5.3. English as an additional language (EAL)**

In order to explore whether exposure to languages other than English in the home has an effect on learner motivation, an item eliciting learners' home language background was included in section E of the questionnaire: "At home, do you speak any languages(s) other than English? If so, please write down which one(s)."

The percentage of learners who indicated that they spoke a language other than English in the home was almost the same for the two key stages, with just under a fifth of learners naming at least one language other than English (KS3: 18.7%, KS4: 18.9%), and some learners naming several. Altogether 95 out of 506 learners named 33 individual languages. Languages named were, in alphabetical order, Afrikaans, Albanian, Arabic, Bengali/Bangla, Bulgarian, Czech, Farsi, Filipino, Flemish, French, Gujarati, Hindi, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Lithuanian, Mandarin, Chinese, Nepalese, Polish, Portuguese, Portuguese, Punjabi, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Sign language, Spanish, Swahili, Swedish, Tamil, Turkish, Urdu, and Vietnamese. The five most frequently named languages were 1. Urdu (14), 2. French (12), 3. German (10), 4. Spanish (9) and 5. Punjabi (8). Figure 5.1. below shows a graphical representation of languages mentioned by frequency, in 'word cloud' format.

Official government EAL figures for 2015/16 (accessed via <https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/>) for the four participating school were School S02 = 2.7%, School S04 = 0%, School S05 = 5.7%, and School S06 = 29.9% (national average = 15.7%).



Figure 5.1. EAL: Languages other than English spoken in the home KS3 and 4 ( $n = 95$ ),.

Table 5.10. below shows descriptive statistics for overall motivation by self-reported EAL/ non-EAL background.

Table 5.10. *Descriptive motivation statistics by EAL*

	<u>KS3</u>			<u>KS4</u>		
	<u>EAL</u>	<u>non-EAL</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>EAL</u>	<u>non-EAL</u>	<u>Total</u>
Overall motivation <i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )	3.53 (1.02)	3.46 (0.98)	3.47 (0.98)	3.93 (0.72)	3.81 (0.78)	3.83 (0.77)
% of learners	19.1	80.9	100	18.9	81.1	100
<i>n</i>	77	327	404	18	77	95

Eyeballing the data in Table 5.10. above shows that there is very little difference in mean motivation scores between EAL and non-EAL-learners, although scores are just very slightly higher for EAL learners than for non-EAL learners. An independent-samples t-test for both KS3 and KS4 indicated that motivation scores for EAL learners (KS3:  $M = 3.53$ ,  $SD = 1.02$ ; KS4:  $M = 3.93$ ,  $SD = 0.72$ ) were not significantly higher than those for non-EAL learners (KS3:  $M = 3.46$ ,  $SD = .98$ ,  $t(402) = .62$ ,  $p = .53$ ,  $d = 0.08$ ; KS4:  $M = 3.81$ ,  $SD = 0.78$ ,  $t(93) = .63$ ,  $p = .53$ ,  $d = 0.17$ ).

Compared with the national average of learners EAL background in England 2015/16 (15.7%, DfE 2015/16 data via <https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/>), the percentage of learners who self-reported speaking a language other than English in the home in the current study was considerably higher (KS3: 18.7%, KS4: 18.9%), suggesting that learners may have overstated the extent to which languages other than English were spoken in the home. French, German, and Spanish featured among the top five languages named by learners alongside with Urdu and Punjabi. The 2011 Census for England and Wales recorded, after English and Welsh and in order of descending frequency, Polish, Punjabi, Urdu, Bengali and Gujarati as the most frequent answers to the question ‘what is your main language’ in England and Wales (Booth, 2013). These statistics suggest that at least in the case of French, German, and Spanish, learners may have named languages they were studying or that they and/or their families had some knowledge of, rather than this language being used as a home language (unlike for Urdu or Punjabi). What the EAL data from the questionnaire does seem to show, however, and despite no correlation being observed between EAL and motivation, is that learners’ interpretation of what it means ‘to speak a language’ might require unpicking (from here onward, qualitative learner data will be quoted, where deemed helpful, by learner identifier. In a learner identifier, S0\_number denotes the school, the next number the individual identifier, KS3/4 the key stage, m/f the learner’s gender (male/female), and



c, d, or m stands for continuer, dropper, or maybe. For example, S06\_17\_KS3\_f\_d is a learner from School S06, KS3, female, and a German dropper. Questionnaire responses were transcribed verbatim including all mistakes. This was done in order to stay as faithful to the raw data as possible. For example, S04\_42\_KS4\_f\_c responded “**no, but I am good at accents**”. Learners frequently used qualifiers of limitation such as ‘a little’ or ‘sometimes’, for example S04\_54\_KS4\_f\_d wrote “**only a small amount of German and Punjabi**”, and S05\_12\_KS3\_f\_c “**I speak Jamaican sometimes**”. Some learners here seemed to interpret ‘speaking a language’ as akin to a dialect, an accent, or ‘linguistic snippets’ rather than a language other than English being used in the home for communication, as a heritage or minority language would be.

#### **5.4. Reasons for continuing or dropping German**

Whilst some indirect methods were used to explore learner attitudes towards German (as reported in chapter 6 below), learners were also asked directly for their reasons for continuing or dropping German. The purpose of this questionnaire item was to provide a general idea of reasons learners gave as rationales for their language uptake choices when asked directly. Coding and analysis for data elicited through this item were carried out with a ‘light touch’, using descriptive statistics only, as their function was supplementary to the main body of the data. In line with motivation scales, data were coded to the categories of learning situation, perception of value of German, and self-efficacy. Further categories which emerged from the data were policy and curriculum related reasons, such as statements pertaining to the restricted option choices, pathways, or limited subject availability, and, for KS3 only, “don’t know”. Answers which indicated that learners did not identify a rationale for their choice such as “don’t know”, or that they were still deciding, were grouped together with “other” responses in Table 5.11. below. “Other” responses were those which did not relate to

any particular theme. Examples are **“I am intrigued to learn how to speak it fluently”** (S02\_141\_KS3\_f\_c), **“My sisters do it as does my mum so if i am stuck I have my family to help”** (S06\_120\_KS3\_m\_c), and **“I could not be bothered”** (S05\_68\_KS3\_X\_d). Responses relating to ‘enjoyment’ were coded under learning situation, instrumental orientations under ‘value’. Where learners’ responses fell under more than one category, the most strongly expressed category was applied, for example **“I find it very difficult and i struggle a bit during lessons also i feel like I won't need it later in life as i'm not interested in it”** (S02\_113\_KS3\_f\_d) alludes to a value-theme with “I won’t need it later in life”, however as the self-efficacy theme is expressed first and with two reasons (finding it difficult, struggling) to support it, this response was coded under self-efficacy. Interestingly in the above quote the learner seems to imply that German is not personally relevant to her because (“as”) she is not interested in it, not that she is not interested in it because she does not perceive it as relevant to her future. On closer examination, all three motivational variables seem to feature in this learner’s statement, as she locates her struggle (“in lessons”) in the learning situation. Moreover, whilst she seems to denote a coordinated relationship between notions of self-efficacy and value using the conjunction “also”, one wonders about the exact nature of the relationship between the three motivational variables, which will be discussed in chapter 8 below.

Themes apply positively as well as negatively, for example ‘value’ can be used as a reason for continuing (e.g. perceived usefulness of German for future career), or as a reason for dropping (e.g. lack of relevance for the learner’s envisaged future life). Table 5.11. below shows descriptive statistics for reasons learners gave for their choices, and Table 5.12. shows KS3 data split by KS4 language policy.

Table 5.11. *Reasons for continuing/dropping German by uptake decision and key stage*

	<u>KS3</u>				<u>KS4</u>		
	<u>% Overall</u>	<u>% Continuers</u>	<u>% Droppers</u>	<u>% Maybes</u>	<u>% Overall</u>	<u>% Continuers</u>	<u>% Droppers</u>
Learning situation	29.7	38.2	26.7	15.4	21.1	35.7	18.5
Value	15.1	22.1	11.4	23.1	27.4	35.7	25.9
Self-efficacy	40.6	28.7	49.4	15.4	26.3	21.4	27.2
School language policy	5.4	2.9	6.7	7.7	20.0	0	23.5
Other/don't know	6.1	5.9	4.4	38.5	4.2	7.1	3.7
Invalid	3.2	2.2	1.6	0	1.1	0	1.2
<b>Total <i>n</i></b>	<b>411</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>80</b>

Table 5.12. KS3: Reasons for continuing/dropping German by compulsory/non-compulsory language group, uptake decision and key stage

	<u>KS3 compulsory group (S02, S04)</u>				<u>KS3 non-compulsory group (S05, S06)*</u>		
	<u>% Overall</u>	<u>% Continuers</u>	<u>% Droppers</u>	<u>% Maybes</u>	<u>% Overall</u>	<u>% Continuers</u>	<u>% Droppers</u>
Learning situation	28.6	46.7	20.4	15.4	30.6	31.6	31.3
Value	14.3	13.3	13.9	23.1	15.7	28.9	9.5
Self-efficacy	44.0	31.7	54.6	15.4	38.0	27.0	45.6
School language policy	6.6	3.3	8.3	7.7	4.4	2.7	5.4
Other/don't know	5.4	3.3	2.8	38.5	6.5	8.1	5.5
Invalid	1.1	1.7	0.9	0	4.8	2.6	2.7
<b>Total <i>n</i></b>	<b>182</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>147</b>

\* There were no maybes in the compulsory group.

The data from Table 5.11. above show that KS3 continuers chose German mainly for reasons relating to their learning situation (38.2%), e.g. enjoyment of the lesson, or the German learning process. KS3 droppers mainly cite lack of self-efficacy as a rationale for their choice (49.4%). Table 5.12. above shows that, regardless of KS4 language policy (compulsory/non-compulsory language study for GCSE), droppers name lack of self-efficacy and negative perceptions of the learning situation as the main reason for dropping. KS4 continuers name learning situation and perceptions of value in equal numbers (35.7%), for KS4 droppers the balance shifts towards similar percentages respectively for self-efficacy (27.2%), and perceptions of value (25.9%). Interestingly, eyeballing the data seems to show that both KS3 and KS4 continuers name the learning situation as a factor for continuing to a larger extent than droppers do as a factor for dropping, whereas statistical tests of KS4 learners' motivation in relation to their learning situation showed no statistically significant differences between continuers' and droppers' motivation levels (see 5.1.2 above). Continuers and droppers both use the value argument, with continuers positioning German as diffusely valuable in general, as an asset in their skill set, or as something that will be useful for them personally in the future:

**“I will as I feel like learning a language these days is essential”**

(S05\_11\_KS3\_f\_c)

**“because it is a good subject to have on your CV for university's”**

(S05\_103\_KS3\_f\_c)

**“If I go there one day I could learn how to communicate with other people”**

(S05\_12\_KS3\_f\_c)

**“i think it will help me in the future if I want to travel to Germany”**

(S05\_17\_KS3\_f\_c)

Droppers, on the other hand, tend to portray German as irrelevant in general, and for themselves personally:

**“the subjects I have chosen are more important in my opinion than German”**

(S05\_113\_KS3\_m\_d)

**“because French is more important”**

(S04\_12\_KS3\_f\_d)

**“It is irrelevant to my life, and my future”**

(S02\_106\_KS3\_m\_d)

Interestingly, some learners stipulated that they do not need or want the school to teach them German. These learners professed that they can, and sometimes do (or at least intend to) learn by themselves or through other means outside of school, as illustrated by the examples below:

**“I am rubbish, i will Fail, I don't need it in my job. If I want to learn it I will learn myself. it stresses me out, the way we are taught”**

(S05\_39\_KS3\_f\_d)

**“I will not continue at school as I have other more important subjects but I will continue at home as I would like to visit Germany in the future”**

(S02\_02\_KS4\_f\_d)

**“Because I am taking Spanish in the future however I would like to study**

**German of my own accord”** (S02\_18\_KS3\_f\_d)

**“I do not have enough options and I can get my family to teach me”**

(S02\_17\_KS4\_m\_d)

**“I like maths, and I have a German tutor anyway, so I won't need a German A'level if I can speak it fluently anyway”** (S05\_160\_KS4\_m\_d)

The above quotes appear to reveal a view that German proficiency can be acquired on a ‘need to know’ basis, and that school is not the only setting where German learning could take place. Yet, as a European Commission report of 11,600 young Europeans already claimed in 1987, “if languages are not learnt at school, they are not learnt at all” (Commission of the European Communities, 1987, p. 64; cited in Thornton & Cajkler, 1996).

### **5.5. Advice on German learning**

In order to explore learners’ perception of guidance they had received regarding their German subject choices, the questionnaire included the following question (section E): “Did anyone give you advice regarding continuing or dropping German? If so, please write who (e.g. parents, teacher, etc.)”. Responses were coded as ‘yes’ for advice received, and as ‘no’ if learners expressly stated ‘nobody’, and also if this item was left blank.

Altogether, over half of participants (52.8%) indicated that they had received no advice at all, from anyone, regarding continuing or dropping German. Only two out of 506 learners mentioned an official school event (option assembly, options evening). When the data were split by key stage, the percentage of learners who said they had received no advice increased for KS3 (56%), and decreased for KS4 (38.9 %).

Questionnaire responses on who had given advice, were coded into three categories: school, others, and school and others. Of the learners who indicated they had received advice, roughly half (49.4%) indicated they had received no advice from their school. When the data were analysed by key stage, there was a slight shift towards a higher percentage of KS3 learners indicating they received no advice at school level, whereas a slightly lower proportion of KS4 learners perceived they had not been given language subject choice guidance (KS3: 50.6%, KS4: 45.5%).

Explored across the whole sample rather than just the learners who indicated that they received advice, the figures look even more stark: only 23.5% of the 506 learners who completed the questionnaire indicated they had received advice on dropping or continuing German from their school (KS3: 21.7%, KS4: 31.5%).

The ‘advice’ item of the questionnaire also gave some indication how students felt about the notion of advice. Thirty-nine learners (7.7 % of the sample) gave responses that indicated that learners equated advice with being told what to do. Of those who felt like this, most (84.6%) were KS3 learners. Such responses expressed some depth of feeling through the use of capital letters and exclamation marks, and included statements such as

**“NO I am an independant person”** (S02\_106\_KS3\_m\_d)

**“I have made an independent choice”** (S02\_139\_KS3\_m\_c)

**“I gave myself advice to continue”** (S04\_39\_KS3\_f\_c)

**“No i can decide for myself!”** (S05\_39\_KS3\_f\_d)

**“no because it was my decision and I didn't want to get pushed into something I didn't enjoy and found hard”** (S05\_53\_KS3\_f\_d)

**“no one; I didn't need anyone to tell me anything”** (S05\_66\_KS3\_f\_d)

**“no im my own person I don't need advice (continuing)”**  
(S05\_89\_KS3\_f\_c)

**“I think for myself”** (S05\_99\_KS3\_99\_c)

**“no one except me!”** (S06\_25\_KS3\_f\_d)

**“no I make my decisions for myself. My parents don't influence my life like that!”** (S06\_18\_KS3\_f\_d)

Data for this ‘advice’ questionnaire item seem to show that roughly half of the sampled learners, who are all at the stage of making, or just having made a decision



regarding whether to continue or drop German, perceive that they received no advice on this matter. Of the learners who did state that they receive advice, again only roughly half stated that they received advice from school, with a higher proportion of KS4 learners than KS3 learners indicating that they received school advice on German learning choices. A little more than three quarters of all learners (76.5%) surveyed indicated that they received no advice from their school. Only around 20% of KS3 learners, and 30% of KS4 learners, stated that they had received advice from their school. Not only do KS3 learners seem to receive, or perceive to receive, less official advice than KS4 learners, but for the younger age group the notion of advice emerged as potentially problematic: some learners emphatically rejected the idea of advice and equated it with being told what to do. For example, S06\_18\_KS3\_f\_d's response above suggested that for her, 'to be given advice' equalled 'being controlled' by her parents, and S05\_53\_KS3\_f\_d's response shows that she equates advice with being forced to make a choice she did not agree with. Whilst some learners reacted almost angrily at the suggestion that they received advice, and appeared to strongly reject the suggestion that they 'needed' advice, others felt that they missed out on advice, and that their school or their teacher let them down by not giving them any guidance. For example, S02\_98\_KS3\_f\_d answered the question "who, if anyone, gave you advice" with "**everyone except the teacher**", and S02\_100\_KS3\_f\_d narrowed down 'everyone' to her classmates in her response "**everyone in the class except the teacher**".

When KS3 data were split by compulsory/non-compulsory KS4 language policy (Table 5.12. above), eyeballing the data shows the same patterns as for KS3 data when not split by setting: droppers list mainly self-efficacy related reasons for their decision, whereas continuers name mainly reasons related to the learning situation. Of course, maybes were all from School S02, the compulsory group, so the KS3 maybe group could not be compared across KS4 language policy settings. A difference, however, can be seen in terms of value-related reasons: based on descriptive statistics, a higher percentage of

KS3 continuers from non-compulsory settings list value-related reasons for their decision to continue with German (28.9%), than do learners from compulsory settings (13.3%). This, together with the high percentage of ‘compulsory continuers’ who name the learning situation as a deciding influencer (compulsory setting: 46.7%, non-compulsory setting: 31.6%) suggests, possibly, that learners for whom a language at GCSE is compulsory choose more on which of the languages on offer they enjoy most, whereas the concept of value becomes more important for learners whose school does not require them to study any language at KS4. Interestingly, the highest proportion of learners who name school language policy-related reasons for their uptake choices were droppers from compulsory settings. Here, learners named mainly the fact that they were taking another language (most commonly French or Spanish).

## **5.6. Chapter 5: Summary**

The current chapter presented results relating to RQ1, which explored adolescent learner motivation for German. Results are summarised below in relation to uptake decision, SES, EAL background, learners’ self-reported reasons for continuing or dropping German, and learners’ perceptions of language guidance they received on their uptake decisions.

### **5.6.1. Motivation**

Descriptive statistics showed that based on group means, both KS3 and KS4 participants were overall positively motivated for German. On average, KS4 motivation means were higher than KS3 overall, as well as for the three sub-scales of learning situation, self-efficacy, and perceptions of the value of German. When grouped by uptake decision (KS3: continuers, droppers, and maybes; KS4: continuers and droppers), all groups of learners bar one (KS3 droppers for self-efficacy) in both key stages were again found to be overall positively motivated towards German. The least motivated learners

were KS3 droppers, who showed the lowest levels of self-efficacy; the most motivated learners were KS3 continuers, who felt most positive about German lessons at classroom level. Parametric tests indicated that KS3 continuers showed statistically significant higher levels of motivation than droppers in terms of all four motivation scales (overall motivation, learning situation, perception of value and self-efficacy), with large effect sizes. KS3 maybes were more positive than droppers as regards overall motivation, perception of value and self-efficacy, but not as regards their feelings about the learning situation. No statistically significant differences were found between KS3 continuers and maybes for any of the four motivation scales. For KS4, for which there were only the two groups of droppers and continuers, continuers were significantly more highly motivated than droppers in terms of overall motivation, perception of value, and self-efficacy, but there was no significant difference between continuers and droppers with regard to their attitude to the learning situation.

When KS3 data were split by compulsory/non-compulsory language group, results showed very similar patterns as for the whole of the KS3 group (i.e. when the data were not split by compulsory/non-compulsory group).

When motivation for KS3 learners in compulsory and non-compulsory groups was compared, learners from schools with a compulsory language policy showed higher self-efficacy levels than those for whom a language for GCSE was optional, and there was a trend for higher motivation levels in overall and for learning situation, but not for value. Droppers showed exactly the same motivation patterns as the whole groups, with higher self-efficacy for droppers from the compulsory group, and a trend towards higher overall motivation and more positive attitudes to the learning situation. There were no statistically significant differences between continuers from compulsory and non-compulsory groups for any of the four motivation scales. Since all of the 13 maybes came from Schools 02 and

04, i.e. the compulsory setting, maybes could not be compared in terms of compulsory/non-compulsory groups.

### **5.6.2. SES**

Relating learners' SES to their motivation levels showed that for KS3, learner data appeared to be split along SES lines regarding the value learners attribute to learning German. Results from parametric tests suggested that learners from the highest socio-economic group attributed significantly more value to the study of German than learners from the lowest group, and learners from the intermediate group also attributed statistically more value to German than learners from the lowest group. For KS3, there was a significant association between learners from the highest socio-economic group and continuing with German, and between learners from the lowest socio-economic group and dropping German.

### **5.6.3. EAL**

Just under one fifth of both KS3 and KS4 learners indicated that they spoke a language other than English in the home, with altogether 33 different languages spoken. Parametric tests showed no association between learners' EAL background and their motivation levels.

### **5.6.4. Learners' reasons for continuing and for dropping German**

Continuers for both key stages named mainly factors relating to their German lessons as a reason for continuing German. Droppers seem to discontinue the subject mainly because of lack of self-efficacy.

### **5.6.5. Advice on German learning**

Only just over one fifth of KS3 and less than one third of KS4 learners indicated that they received advice on language uptake choices from their school. KS3 learners' responses hinted at a perception that receiving advice equalled being told what to do.

This chapter addressed RQ1 and explored 411 KS3 and 95 KS4 learners' motivation for German at the time learners had to make a decision whether to continue or drop the subject. The concept of motivation was operationalised drawing on existing theory using the three variable construct scales of learning situation, perception of value of German, and self-efficacy. Results were analysed in relation to learner uptake decision (continue or drop), socio-economic status, and EAL background. Furthermore, this chapter explored learners' self-reported reasons for continuing or dropping German, and their perception of advice received. The next chapter (6) forms the largest part of the results section and addresses RQ2. It analyses how German\* is represented in learners', teachers' and head teachers' discourses, and, where appropriate, relates this to learners' motivation for German.

## **Chapter 6: Representations of German in school discourses**

The previous chapter (5) dealt with results in relation to RQ1, which investigated how motivational dimensions in learning German relate to learners' choices whether to continue or discontinue with German. The current chapter will address RQ2, which explores how German is represented in the discourses of key players in school settings.

### **6.1. Metaphoric conceptualisation of German**

This section (6.1.) deals with learner discourses elicited via the metaphor section of the questionnaire. Details of the task can be found under 4.3.1.1. above (see also Appendix D for the main study questionnaire). The theoretical view of metaphor taken in this study which underpins the empirical process is described below.

In his seven-step practical validation model of elicited metaphor, Low (2015) stresses five key points, which serve as guiding principles for the metaphor part of this study:

1. Eliciting an explicit metaphor is not a method-free, unproblematic process
2. A metaphor identification procedure is still needed, even if you ask for an "A is B" structure
3. Higher-level metaphor/grouping labels need justifying
4. Matching metaphors to educational theories is not unproblematic
5. The fact that you say (metaphoric) "xxx", does not necessarily mean that you believe or practise what the metaphor implies. Any such attribution needs justifying

(p. 15).

Wan and Low (2015) report that not many empirical metaphor studies give details about data collection or classification details (see also Todd & Low, 2010), which may lead to the notion that the process is a straightforward and uncomplicated one, when in fact

the opposite is true. Details regarding data collection and the coding process are reported below.

The metaphor section of the questionnaire elicited metaphors from current KS3 and KS4 German learners through the following items:

1. For me, learning German is like..., because...
2. If German was a food it would be a..., because...
3. If German was an animal it would be a..., because...

A fourth item eliciting aspects of learners' affective response to learning German ("When I'm learning German I feel...") was also included, but for reasons of time and space is not reported in the thesis.

The handwritten data were transcribed into SPSS, and then imported into NVivo. Data for 1., "Learning German is like", (open metaphors) were analysed slightly differently from 2., "German as a food", and 3. "German as an animal", and the process is described under 6.1.1. below. For all three types of metaphor, however, the validation process for reliability (described under 4.7. above) was the same: 50 randomly selected metaphors items (ca. 10% of the data overall) from each group were shared with a second rater. The agreement percentage in all instances was above 90%, and rose to 100% in moderation meetings.

Fisher's (2013b) study has shown that metaphor elicitation can be a useful tool to use with children as young as 12 years of age, and that it can be useful tool to explore learner beliefs. Strictly speaking, the elicited data are similes rather than metaphors, as the formula 'A is like B' is employed. Famously, Lakoff and Johnson (2003) see metaphors as hedged similes, which would support the use of similes in this task, although other scholars disagree (e.g. Littlemore & Low, 2006). Fisher (2013b) weighs up the rationales for and against the use of simile as opposed to metaphor, and her findings vindicate her decision to

opt for similes with a group of young teenagers. Pragmatically, Low (2015) also suggests that the addition of 'like' tends to be a useful one in an educational context.

For the practical purposes of coding the data for this study, the working definition of what should count as metaphor was defined as an item where the target (i.e. the 'topic': the metaphor elicited from learners) and the source (i.e. the 'vehicle': "German", or "learning German") came from different domains. For example, "Learning German is like learning French" would not be classed as a metaphor, and neither would a clearly literal description such as "Learning German is like staring at the wall... because that's what I do", where no transfer of meaning or comparison is being made.

Non-completion rates can be a problem in elicited metaphor research, especially with small numbers of participants (Low, 2015). However, non-completion for the open metaphors were not an issue, at 2.4% for both KS3 and KS4 combined (KS3: 2.2%, KS4: 3.2%). The non-metaphoric statement rate was higher than the non-completion rate, with 8.7% overall, and a higher non-metaphoric rate for KS4 learners than KS3 learners (KS3: 7.4%, KS4: 14.7%). Most learners whose statements were non-metaphoric submitted answers such as "learning German is like... learning a language", or "like learning French", or "like a lesson at school", where no comparison across domains were made or a straight description of activities was given. This may hint at the fact that possibly a practice session with learners on producing metaphors would have been useful, however, due to time constraints (i.e. not taking too much curriculum time from the learners) this was not possible, and the useable metaphoric data still represent viable sample numbers (KS3:  $n = 382$ , KS4:  $n = 80$ ). As detailed below, non-metaphoric items were only excluded for some analyses, not for all.

Where statistical comparisons were made between groups, such as droppers/continuers, or SES categories, metaphor data were split between KS3 and KS4, as these are here seen as distinct populations, in terms of age as well as to take account of the fact that all learners



in KS4 had voluntarily chosen to study German. Schools (although in Schools S02 and S04 a language was compulsory, there was always more than one language for students to choose from). Where no such statistical tests were conducted, the metaphor data were coded as one large sample ( $N = 506$ ) containing both KS3 and KS4 responses. For reasons of time, space, and because the distinction between compulsory and non-compulsory KS4 language settings for KS3 might not be as definite a variable as it may seem (as explained under 5.1.1. above), coding for KS3 data was not done separately for Schools 02 and 04 on the one hand (compulsory settings), and Schools 05 and 06 on the other hand (non-compulsory settings). However, an anonymised learner identifier was tagged to the data so that each item could be traced to an individual learner, including their school, SES, KS, language policy etc., and where this was deemed useful, reference was made to it. The purpose of the metaphor data was to help identify learner discourses around German in order to address research question 1, and so where the sample was kept as a whole (KS3 and 4), the focus was on how German is represented in these discourses in general, not on any particular learner group.

#### **6.1.1. Open metaphors: Learning German is like...**

Through a process of close reading and intense familiarisation with the data, emerging codes were assigned. First, detailed finer-grained codes, with a minimum of two items per code to constitute a category, were assigned. Then, the data were revisited at regular intervals over several months, during which time codes were checked. In some instances, data were recoded, and then in a second cycle coding step (Saldaña, 2016), codes were grouped into over-arching themes, which in turn had emerged from the finer-grained codes, or sub-codes. This was a long and slow process, but it was felt that it was necessary and warranted, in order to do justice to the complexity of the metaphor data.

The 'because' phrase was of much help for the coding process, as it often shed light on learners' rationales for their choice of metaphor, and thus enabled codes to be assigned

with more confidence. For example, the item “**Learning German is like learning how to drive**”, could possibly be coded under ‘worthwhile pursuit’, but since the participant then continued “...**because it's a completely different experience, and I don't understand it!**” it can in this case be coded, on the basis of the evidence provided by the ‘because’ phrase, as ‘confusing/hard to understand’, which falls under the broad theme of ‘difficulty’. The ‘because’ phrase was also a useful measure to prevent assumption on the part of the researcher. For example, “**Learning German is like going on holiday**” could be assumed to be positive, metaphoric response, if the student had not continued: ...”**because you learn how to speak a different language**”. This phrase led to the statement being coded as non-metaphoric – learning German is, in fact, learning to speak a new language, with no comparison being made across linguistic domains.

When processing the data it became clear that it would be helpful to apply as many codes as necessary to one statement, rather than try and fit a multi-layered statement onto one single code. For example, the response “**Learning German is like cleaning a hamster cage, because it is hard but if you concentrate and put your mind to it, it is easy**” was coded under five codes: 1. ‘ambivalent’, 2. ‘hard’, 3. ‘can be done’, 4. ‘rewarding’, and 5. ‘easy’. Using this coding method, 770 codes were applied to the 494 metaphors elicited through this task. A code was assigned where there was more than one item per category. Codes were then categorised into broader themes, and the original codes were thus turned into sub-codes. Based on this method, the following six broad themes emerged (in order of frequency): 1. Learning German as difficulty, 2. Learning German as pleasure, 3. Learning German as drudgery, 4. Learning German as ambivalent experience, 5. Learning German as unpleasantness, and 6. Learning German as worthwhile pursuit (plus 7, other and non-metaphoric). Table 6.1. below shows the sub-codes and broad themes for the open metaphors, and Figure 6.1. below shows the broad themes by percentage.

Table 6.1. *Open metaphors: Broad themes and sub-codes, KS3 and 4 (n), by frequency*

<u>Broad theme</u>	<u>Sub-codes</u>
1. difficulty/struggle (179)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. hard, challenging, difficult (111)</li> <li>2. confusing, complex, complicated, doesn't make sense, changes all the time, complicated, don't understand, impossible (37)</li> <li>3. I'm bad at it (15)</li> <li>4. downward trajectory (10)</li> <li>5. frustrating (3)</li> <li>5. like learning to read and write again (3)</li> </ol>
2. pleasure (151)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. fun, enjoyable, I enjoy it, exciting (59)</li> <li>2. I like it (26)</li> <li>3. easy, quick (23)</li> <li>4. good, nice, cool, magical, relaxing, I feel happy doing it (14)</li> <li>5. interesting (12)</li> <li>6. I'm good at it, I understand it, I get it (8)</li> <li>7. positive social aspect - I like other people in class, I like teacher (6)</li> <li>8. satisfying (3)</li> </ol>
3. drudgery/waste of time/doing it against my will (109)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. boring (56)</li> <li>2. long process, takes time, slow, tedious (21)</li> <li>3. forced to do it against my will (10) (8 from KS3, 2 from KS4)</li> <li>4. pointless, useless (10)</li> <li>5. not enjoyable, not fun, I don't enjoy it, not interested (7)</li> <li>6. repetitive (5)</li> </ol>
4. ambivalence/dependent on other factors/neutral experience (107)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. ambivalent (76)</li> <li>2. alright, ok, meh, take it or leave it, neutral, fine (16)</li> <li>3. new – neutral (6)</li> <li>4. not for everyone (4)</li> <li>5. unpredictable – neutral (3)</li> <li>6. other – neutral (2)</li> </ol>
5. unpleasantness (88)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I don't like it (39)</li> <li>2. physical suffering (17)</li> <li>3. bad, not nice (8)</li> <li>4. annoying (7)</li> <li>5. makes me feel bad (4)</li> <li>5. scary, daunting (4)</li> <li>5. tiring, exhausting (4)</li> <li>6. I don't like the idea of it (3)</li> <li>7. sounds bad (2)</li> </ol>
6. worthwhile pursuit (80)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. upward trajectory (32)</li> <li>2. rewarding, rewarding challenge (22)</li> <li>3. good for you, improves you, you learn things, makes you smarter (18)</li> <li>4. it's possible to be successful at it (8)</li> </ol>
7. other and non-metaphoric (56)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. non-metaphoric (44)</li> <li>2. other negative (7)</li> <li>3. other positive (5)</li> </ol>

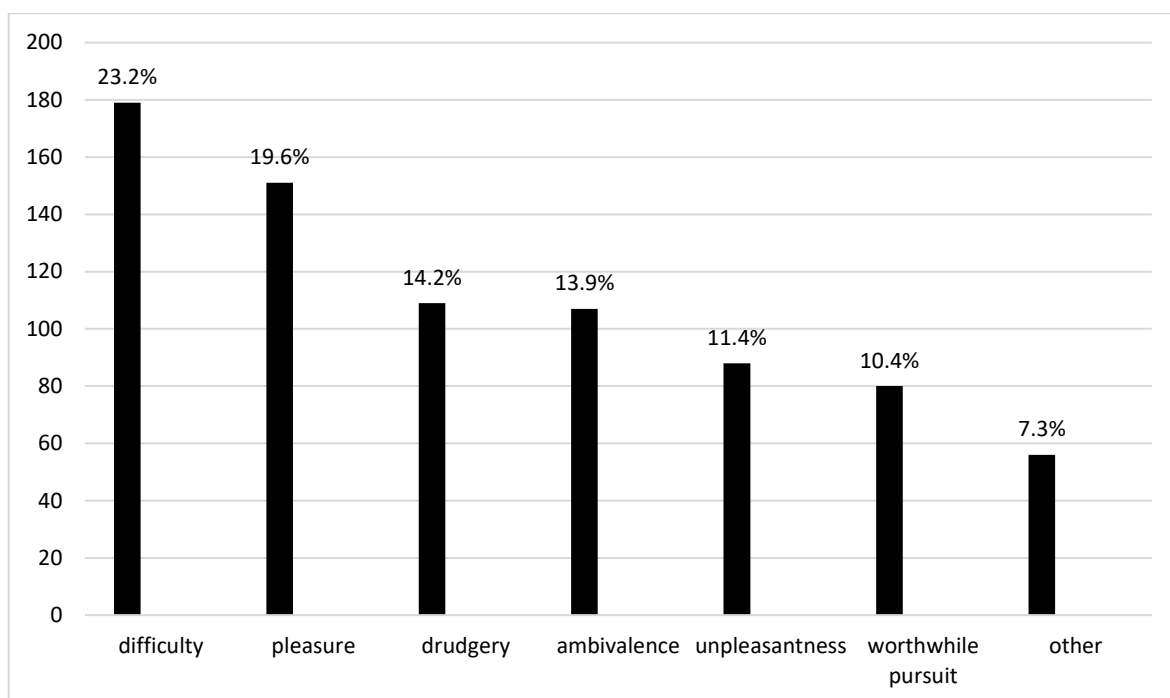


Figure 6.1. Open metaphors: Broad themes, KS3 and KS4.

Metaphors  $N = 494$ . Codes assigned  $N = 770$ .

#### 6.1.1.1. Learning German as difficulty

Just under a quarter of learners saw German learning as hard, confusing, impossible, and something they were not good at, for example:

Learning German is like...

**“running up a hill – it get harder and harder the further you go”**

(S04\_17\_KS3\_f\_d)

**“trying to swim through cement – they are hard to do”** (S02\_62\_KS3\_m\_d)

**“eating grit – its hard, but possible”** (S05\_147\_KS4\_m\_d)

### 6.1.1.2. Learning German as pleasure

In contrast, the next most common theme after ‘learning German as difficulty’ was ‘learning German as pleasure’. Here learners reported finding German fun, easy, interesting, and rewarding.

Learning German is like...

**“breaktime – we do nice things and the learning can be fun”** (S04\_19\_KS3\_f\_c)

**“going to a party – its very social and you have fun learning it”**

(S05\_15\_KS3\_f\_c)

**“cooking potatoes – it is satisfying”**

(S02\_16\_KS4\_m\_c).

### 6.1.1.3. Learning German as ambivalent experience

Many learners saw positive as well as negative aspects to learning German, or they did not have strong opinions either way. Here, they tended to see German as ‘not for everyone’.

Learning German is like...

**“learning science – somethings make sense, while other really don’t”**

(S04\_58\_KS4\_f\_d)

**“trying to read an old book – I understand some of it but not all”**

(S02\_02\_KS4\_f\_d)

**“cleaning my room – rarely I enjoy cleaning my room and learning german  
but it's okay sometimes”**

(S05\_115\_KS3\_f\_d)

#### *6.1.1.4. Learning German as drudgery*

Here, learners tended to see German as boring, or as an undesirable and pointless activity. The categories of ‘difficult’ and ‘boring’ seemed to overlap.

Learning German is like...

**“doing chores – its boring and I’m forced to do it”** (S02\_54\_KS3\_m\_d)

**“sitting in a room on my own doing nothing – I find it really boring”**

(S02\_158\_KS3\_f\_d)

**“Playing football – theres no point and Im not good at it”** (S02\_134\_KS3\_f\_d).

#### *6.1.1.5. Learning German as unpleasantness*

For this theme, the most common metaphors revolved around simply disliking German, with no particular reason given. There was considerable strength of feeling, especially in the ‘learning German as physical suffering’ category:

Learning German is like...

**“eating tomatoes – I hate tomatoes and hate German”** (S02\_90\_KS3\_f\_d)

**“torture – I don't really like either”** (S02\_140\_KS3\_m\_d)

**“giving birth to a Whale – because it is so painful”** (S02\_110\_KS3\_99\_c).

#### *6.1.1.6. Learning German as worthwhile pursuit*

Finally, some learners perceived learning German as an ultimately rewarding endeavour, that, after some time and with considerable investment of effort, yielded a payoff:

Learning German is like...

**“saying a tounge twister – at first it is confusing and muddling but then it**

**starts getting easier”** (S02\_77\_KS3\_f\_d)

**“running – it is good in the long term but exhausting at the time”**

(S02\_105\_KS3\_m\_99)

**“cleaning a hamster cage –it is hard but if you concentrate and but your mind**

**to it it is easy”** (S06\_54\_KS3\_f\_d).

#### *6.1.1.7. The social aspect of German learning*

The social aspect of learning was one that emerged as a mainly positive force from the data:

Learning German is like...

**“going out with my friends – my class is relaxed and funny”** (S05\_96\_KS3\_f\_c)

**“going to a party – its very social and you have fun learning it”**

(S05\_15\_KS3\_f\_c)

Occasionally though, the social aspect of German lessons in a school setting could have the opposite, negative effect:

Learning German is like...

**“being stuck in a cage of monkeys – the class never shuts the f up”**

(S02\_95\_KS3\_m\_c).

Some learners compared learning German with learning basic skills in their first language, which they experienced as a ‘step back’, and as an altogether negative experience:

Learning German is like...

**“learning to read and write again – it’s a language that is very different from English”** (S02\_03\_KS4\_f\_c)

**“learning to write again – it is a completely new language and sometimes confusing”** (S02\_14\_KS4\_f\_d)

**“learning communication again – it makes me feel stupid”** (S02\_06\_KS4\_m\_d).

#### *6.1.1.8. Conduciveness for German learning*

Following Fisher (2013b), ‘learning German’ metaphors were coded into a simple three-tier structure of conducive for language learning, non-conductive for language learning, and neutral. For this coding stage all responses were accepted, whether metaphoric or not, and then coded simply by the overall feeling expressed, relating directly to learners’ relationship with the German learning process, rather than their view of German. This method resulted in a high percentage of valid data (KS3: 97.8%, KS4: 96.8%), compared with the ‘themes around German learning’ coding reported on above, for which non-metaphoric data were excluded. For example, “it’s exhausting at the time but good in the long term” would be coded ‘conductive to language learning’, “it’s painful” ‘non-conductive, and “sometimes it is hard and sometimes it is fun” as ‘neutral’.

Figures 6.2. and 6.3. below show that, when grouped by German learning beliefs (conductive, non-conductive, or neutral), the largest group of KS3 learners (44.8%) expressed beliefs around German which are non-conductive for their German learning, whereas the largest group of KS4 learners (40%), expressed beliefs conducive for German



learning. Put the other way round, about one third of KS4 learners (30.5%) appear to hold views not conducive for their German learning, compared with just under half (44.8%) of KS3 learners. This is to say that, broadly speaking, KS4 learners take a more positive view of German learning.

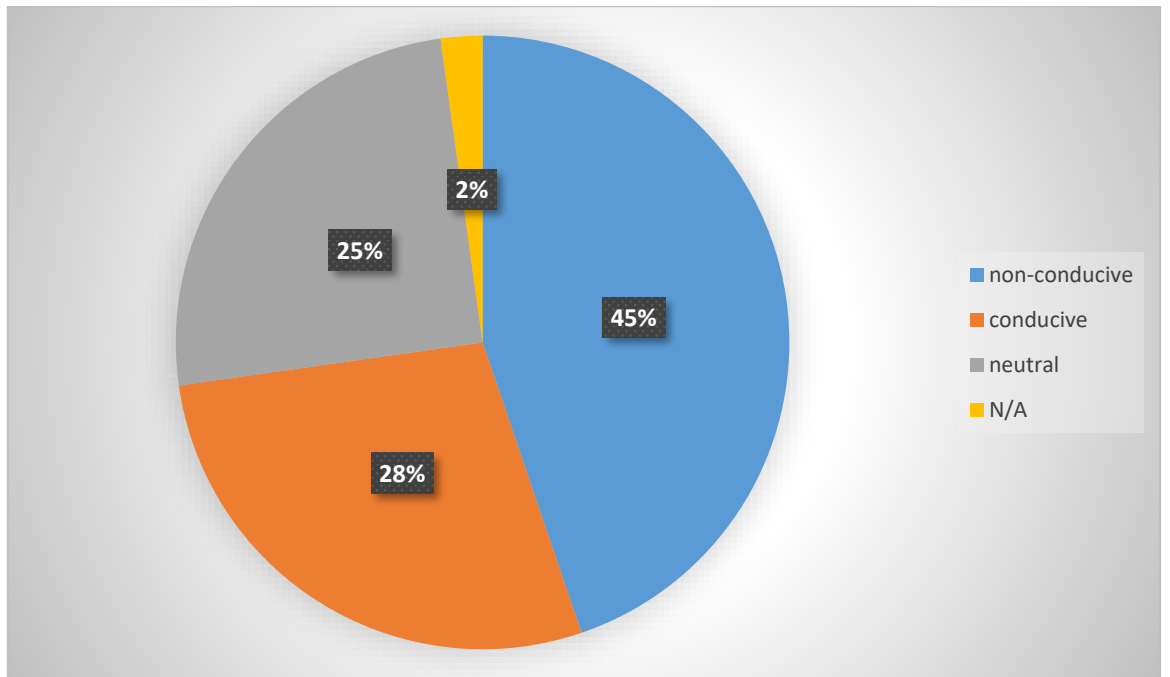


Figure 6.2. Open metaphors: Conduciveness for German learning, KS3,  $n = 411$ .

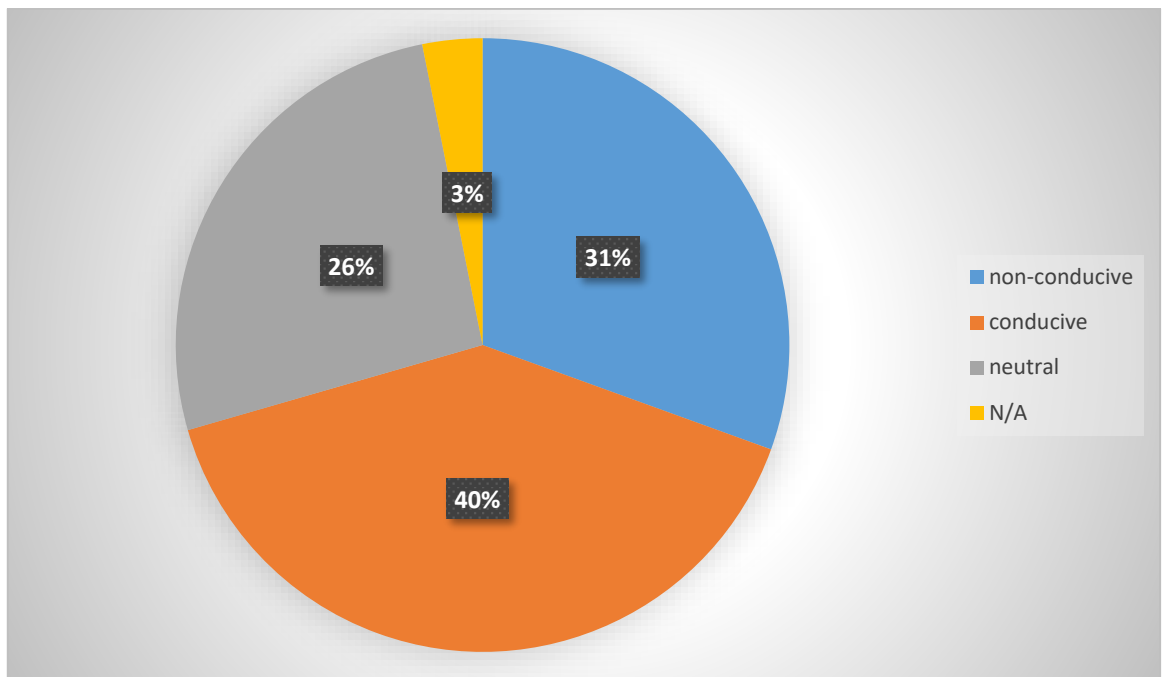


Figure 6.3. Open metaphors: Conduciveness for German learning, KS4,  $n = 95$ .

For the purposes of comparison with animal and food metaphor conduciveness data, where the data were not split by key stage, the open metaphor conduciveness data were also explored for the whole sample, including for both key stages. Figure 6.4. below shows conduciveness for German learning as per open metaphors for all learner participants from both KS3 and KS4. This chart demonstrates that, where the data is explored as a set which includes both key stages, the on the whole conducive views of KS4 learners become invisible if not separated from the higher percentage of non-conductive views of the larger sample of KS3 learners (KS3  $n = 411$ , KS4  $n = 95$ , KS3 sample 4.3 times the size of KS4 sample).

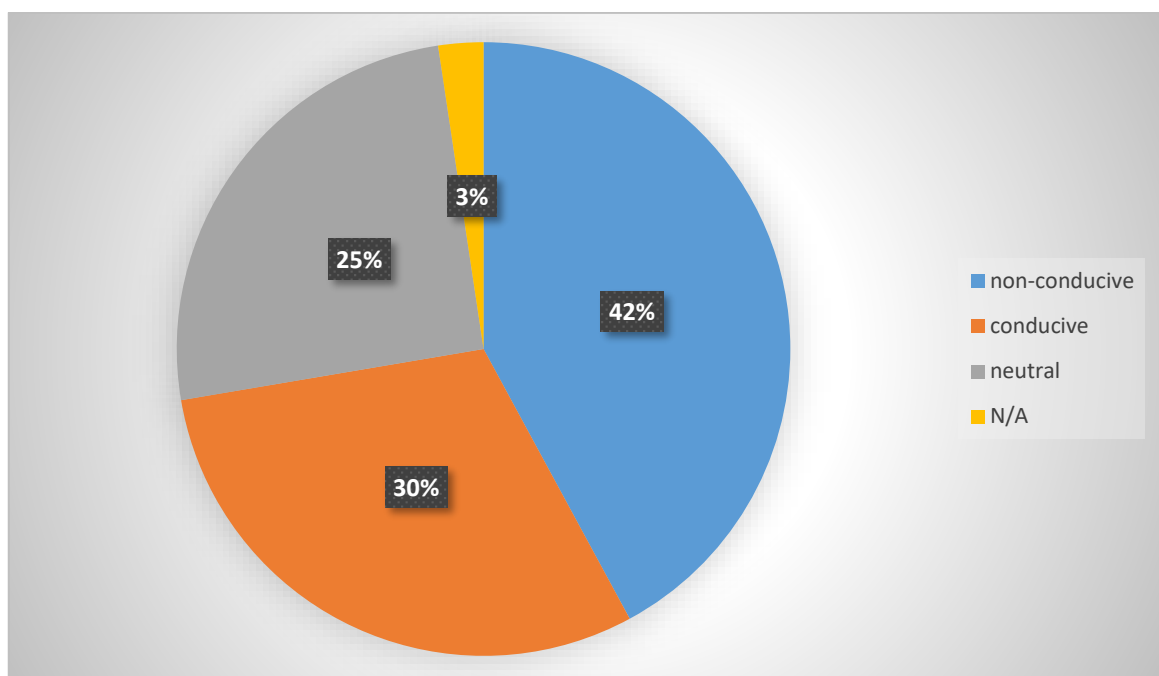


Figure 6.4. Open metaphors: Conduciveness for German learning, KS3 and 4,  $N = 506$ .

Open metaphor conduciveness data will be explored in relation to the animal and food metaphor data under 6.1.4. below.

#### 6.1.1.9. Ambivalent, dynamic, and static metaphors

In addition to the content-orientated codes elaborated on above, such as ‘German as difficulty’ or ‘German as pleasure’, a different, more general learner view of German also

emerged. This differed from the above-mentioned themes in that one learner response could be coded under more than one theme, for example “**it is really hard but at the same time I enjoy it**” could be coded under both difficulty (“it is hard”) and pleasure (“I enjoy it”). This response combines two different themes and would therefore count as ‘ambivalent’. “**German is hard**” on its own, on the other hand, expresses a categorical opinion and therefore such a statement was categorised as ‘static’. “**German starts hard but gets easier**” points to a view of German which changes over time, and therefore this view of German was called ‘dynamic’.

Ambivalent views of German applied where German learning was seen as conflicting, with both positive and negative aspects, for example “**Learning German is like reading a book, because sometimes it’s boring, and sometimes it’s exciting**”. Items were coded as dynamic where German was seen as a process over time, with an implied awareness of the future as in “**it’s rewarding in the end**”. Three main trajectories emerged for this theme: an undulating path of mixed experiences, a progression from negative to positive, but also, reversely, a downhill development from positive to negative. Examples to cover these three trajectories are “**it’s hard but rewarding**”, “**hard at first but then it gets easier**”, or “**it’s nice at first but loses taste quickly**”. Items were coded as static where categorical sentiments were expressed, e.g. “**everybody hates it**”, or “**I always have fun doing it**”. For this stage of the analysis only one code per metaphor was assigned, so that statistical tests for the analysis could be conducted more straightforwardly. This resulted in some non-classifiable items, however, descriptive statistics showed that there were also good numbers for the ‘content’ codes of ambivalent, dynamic, and static views of metaphor, and therefore it was decided that this coding technique and subsequent analysis were worth pursuing. Descriptive statistics are shown in Table 6.2. below.

Table 6.2. Descriptive statistics: View of German by uptake decision (n,%)

<u>View of German</u>	<u>KS3</u>				<u>KS4</u>		
	<u>Continuers</u>	<u>Droppers</u>	<u>Maybes</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Continuers</u>	<u>Droppers</u>	<u>Total</u>
Ambivalent	28 (45.9)	30 (49.2)	3 (4.9)	61 (15.1)	0 (0)	15 (100)	15 (15.8)
Dynamic	28 (40.0)	37 (52.9)	5 (7.1)	70 (17.3)	3 (17.6)	14 (82.4)	17 (17.9)
Static	50 (25.3)	145 (73.2)	3 (1.5)	198 (49.0)	7 (17.9)	32 (33.3)	39 (41.1)
Non-classifiable	30 (40.0)	43 (57.3)	2 (2.7)	75 (18.6)	4 (16.7)	20 (83.3)	24 (25.3)
Total	136 (33.7)	255 (63.1)	13 (3.2)	404 (100)	14 (14.7)	81 (85.3)	95 (100)

At a glance, Table 6.2. above shows that static views dominate in both the KS3 and KS4 samples. As a next step, statistical tests were conducted to ascertain whether there was any effect of group on students' beliefs around their German learning. Therefore, using a contingency table (chi-square) analysis, learners' view of German – as expressed through metaphor – was explored in relation to learners' German uptake choices. To avoid comparing groups of highly unequal sizes, the small group of KS3 maybes was excluded from this test. Again, as described under 5.2.3. above, the conventional  $\alpha$ -level of .05 was divided by the number of tests (here: 8), resulting in an adjusted  $\alpha$ -level (with Bonferroni correction) of .006. An adjusted  $p$ -value was calculated from chi-square values based on the  $z$ -scores of the adjusted residuals.

For KS3 learners, Pearson's chi-square test showed a significant association between type of metaphor used by students to describe German (ambivalent, dynamic, static, non-classifiable) and German uptake decision ( $\chi^2 (3) = 15.09$ ). A significant association between learners who used static metaphors and dropping German ( $\chi^2 (3) = 15.09, p = .00015$ ) was found. Although no other statistically significant associations were found, it is worth bearing in mind that without the conservative (Bonferroni) adjustment to the  $\alpha$ -level, results would also have shown a significant association between learners who used ambivalent metaphors, and continuing with German ( $p = .0128$ ). Therefore, in addition to the significant association between static metaphor use and dropping German, the data also hint at a trend that, for KS3, ambivalent metaphor use is associated with continuing German. For KS4, on the other hand, without exception all the learners who expressed an ambivalent view of German were droppers.

Whilst ambivalent views of German expressed learners' positive as well as negative feelings in the same metaphor, static metaphors could be either positive, negative, or neutral, and dynamic metaphors could be positive or negative. To keep the number of statistical tests manageable as well as to avoid small group sizes, no inferential statistical

tests were conducted based on the sub-groups for the dynamic and ambivalent metaphors. However, to explore with a light touch whether there was a pattern to how learners used static and dynamic metaphors, the data were further coded into positive, negative, or neutral for the static and dynamic metaphors. Descriptive statistics showed that for KS3, 83.1% of learners who had chosen dynamic metaphors expressed a positive view of German. For KS4, 100% expressed a positive view through their dynamic metaphors. For the static metaphors, nearly three quarters of KS3 learners (74.1%) expressed a negative view of German, one fifth a positive view (21.9%), and 3.5% a neutral view. Two thirds of KS4 learners also expressed mainly negative views through their static metaphors, albeit to a lesser extent than KS3 learners (KS4: 64.1% negative, 33.3% positive, 2.6% neutral).

#### **6.1.2. If German was an animal...**

This task asked learners to complete the item “If German was an animal it would be a..., because...”. Unlike for the open metaphors reported above, the category of the metaphor vehicle (animal) was prescribed, and so, first, the data were simply categorised by animal. Of the 411 participants for KS3, seven (1.7%) left this section blank, of the 95 learners for KS4, three (3.2%) did not chose an animal which, for them, represented German. Thirty-six items (7.2%) were excluded for being non-metaphoric. Answers such as “**German shepherd – it has German in it**” were excluded on the grounds of being non-metaphoric, whereas “**German shepherd – it’s an adorable breed of dog which makes me happy**” was included, as here the ‘because’ phrase provided evidence for metaphoric thinking.

Altogether 91 different animals were named. Table 6.3. below shows a list of the top ten animals learners linked with German:

Table 6.3. *If German was an animal... by animal, KS3 and 4*

<u>Animal</u>	<u>Frequency of mentions</u>
1. dog	49
2. cat	35
3. sloth	28
4. lion	25
5. tiger	20
6. tortoise	17
7. snake	16
8. spider	14
9. German shepherd; giraffe; pig; snail*	12
10. pigeon; rat*	10

\*Named in equal numbers.

Looking at the ‘because’ phrases, it soon became clear that while this list is quite intriguing (e.g. 28 sloths), it would be more helpful to categorise emergent content themes. For example, the reasons given for choosing the most commonly named animal, dog, are as diverse as

- “**I like dogs**” (S02\_26\_KS3\_m\_m)
- “**I hate dogs**” (S06\_115\_KS3\_f\_d)
- “**it is scary but tameable**” (S05\_04\_KS3\_m\_c)
- “**sometimes I like dogs, sometimes I don’t**”(S02\_77\_KS3\_f\_d)
- “**a three-legged dog – it’s not good to anyone, just gets in the way**”  
(S02\_140\_KS3\_m\_d)
- “**it always disturbs me in the night**” (S06\_14\_KS4\_m\_d), and
- “**it sounds angry all the time**” (S05\_132\_KS4\_f\_c).

The themes from this task mirrored the ones from the open metaphor task described under 6.1.1.above, but there were also some interesting differences, which will be explored below. Table 6.4. below gives a breakdown of the broad themes and sub-codes for the animal metaphors, and Figure 6.5. visualises the broad themes by frequency.



Table 6.4. *Animal metaphors: Broad themes and sub-codes, KS3 and 4 (n)*

<u>Broad theme</u>	<u>Sub-codes</u>
1. unpleasantness (164)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. annoying (35)</li> <li>2. aggressive, angry, can hurt you (30)</li> <li>3. sounds angry, aggressive, harsh, rough (26)</li> <li>4. scary (22)</li> <li>5. I don't like it (17)</li> <li>6. horrible, bad, evil, disgusting, stupid (11)</li> <li>7. categorically bad, everyone hates it (9)</li> <li>8. devious (8)</li> <li>9. makes me feel bad (3)</li> <li>9. tiring (3)</li> </ol>
2. ambivalent, neutral (138)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. ambivalent (67)</li> <li>2. other (neutral) (15)</li> <li>3. big (11)</li> <li>4. fast (8)</li> <li>5. not for everyone (7)</li> <li>5. interesting (7)</li> <li>6. strong (6)</li> <li>6. absent, leaving, rare (6)</li> <li>7. nothing special, ok, meh (5)</li> <li>8. different (3)</li> <li>8. unpredictable, not what it seems, surprising (3)</li> </ol>
3. drudgery (116)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. long process, takes time, slow, too long (62)</li> <li>2. boring (37)</li> <li>3. pointless, useless, irrelevant (17)</li> </ol>
4. pleasure (73)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. nice, sweet, cool, logical, makes me happy (27)</li> <li>2. fun, enjoyable, exciting (23)</li> <li>3. I like it (20)</li> <li>4. easy, simple (3)</li> </ol>
5. difficulty (55)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. hard, confusing, complex (41)</li> <li>2. hard to catch (10)</li> <li>3. downward trajectory (4)</li> </ol>
6. other and non-metaphoric (45)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. non-metaphoric 'German thing' (23)</li> <li>2. non-metaphoric (13)</li> <li>3. other – negative (6)</li> <li>4. other – positive (3)</li> </ol>
7. worthwhile pursuit (27)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. rewarding challenge (10)</li> <li>2. upward trajectory (9)</li> <li>3. better than it appears (8)</li> </ol>

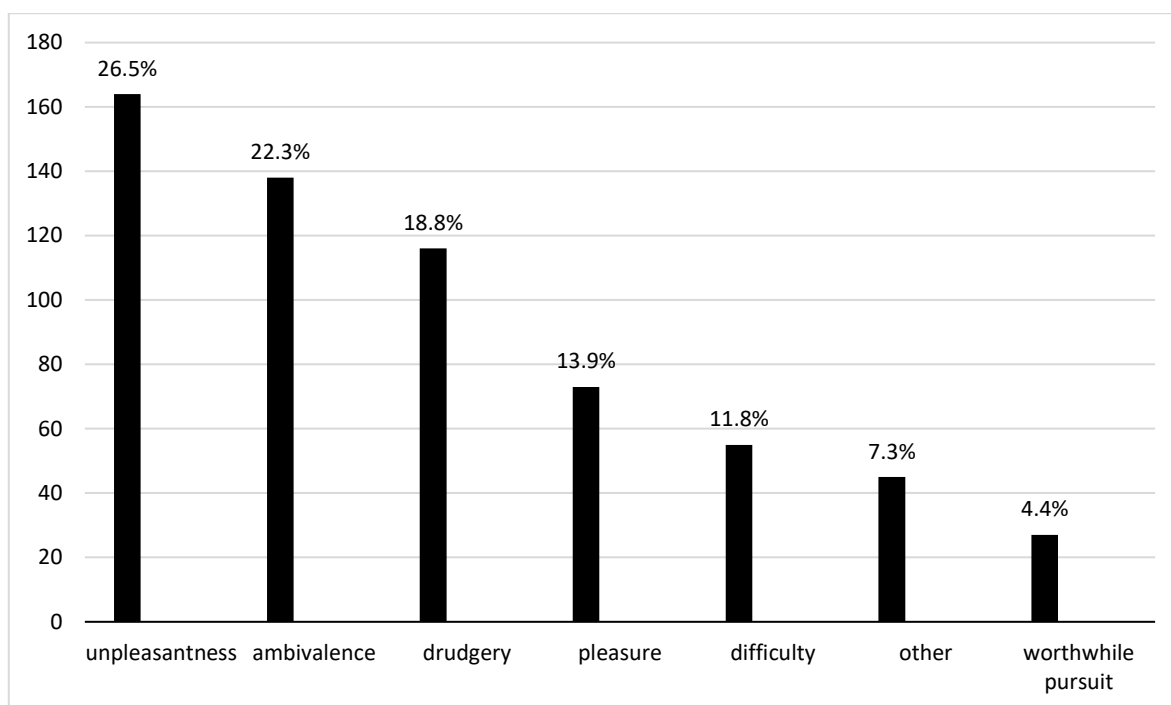


Figure 6.5. Animal metaphors: Broad themes, KS3 and 4.

Metaphors  $N = 496$ , codes assigned  $N = 618$ .

#### 6.1.2.1. Conduciveness for German learning

The animal metaphors were further categorised according to whether they appeared to be ‘conducive for German learning’, ‘non-conducive for German learning’, or ‘neutral’. The difference between the conduciveness analysis of the animal and food metaphors discussed here and below, and the open metaphors discussed above, is that the open metaphors were coded for overriding sentiment expressed, independent of content-code. This was done so that statistical analyses could be run, and groups such as by key stage, by German uptake decision, or by socio-economic status could be compared in terms of statistical significance. It was decided that the open metaphors would be better suited for those kinds of statistical analysis than the animal or food metaphors, as in the open metaphors learners’ responses would provide the highest level of creative freedom, and learners would not be restricted to a specific domain by the requirement to think of

German in terms of a food item, or as an animal. For the animal and food metaphors, because the domains of the vehicle or source were prescribed, a more qualitative method of analysis was applied, and the content codes themselves were coded in terms of conduciveness (as opposed to the individual questionnaire responses). It is important to bear in mind that for the content codes, at times multiple codes were applied to one individual learner response. For the conduciveness coding for the open metaphors, in contrast, only one code was applied per item. This ‘sentiment coding’ method was found to be useful, and thus also used for ‘learner awareness of public discourses around German’ reported on below. In short, conduciveness coding for the open metaphors was based on sentiment coding, with one code per item. Animal and food metaphor conduciveness coding, on the other hand, was based on content codes, more than one of which could, if necessary, be applied to one individual learner response.

The above is to say that caution needs to be applied when comparing, on the one hand, conduciveness results of the open metaphors and, on the other hand, the animal/food metaphors, as different coding methods were used to operationalise the concept of conduciveness. Nevertheless, even if arrived at by different methods, conduciveness data from all three types of metaphors (open, animal, and food) were regarded as helpful for answering RQ1. Table 6.5. below gives details of the content-to-conduciveness coding, and Figure 6.6. shows the distribution of conduciveness across the animal metaphor data.

Table 6.5. *Animal metaphors: Conduciveness, KS3 and 4 (n), by frequency*

<u>Conduciveness</u>	<u>Sub-codes</u>	<u>n</u>
conductive for German learning	nice, cool, logical, makes me happy	27
	fun, enjoyable, exciting	23
	I like it	20
	rewarding challenge	10
	upward trajectory	9
	better than it appears	8
	interesting	7
	other – positive	3
	easy, simple	3
	<b>Total conducive:</b>	<b>110</b>
non-conductive	long process, takes time, slow	62
	hard, confusing, complex	41
	boring	37
	annoying	36
	aggressive, angry, can hurt you	30
	sounds angry, aggressive, harsh, rough	26
	scary	22
	I don't like it	18
	pointless, useless, irrelevant	17
	horrible, bad, evil, disgusting, stupid	11
	hard to catch	10
	categorically bad, everyo. hates it	9
	devious	8
	other – negative	6
	downward trajectory	4
	makes me feel bad	3
	tiring	3
<b>Total non-conductive:</b>	<b>343</b>	
neutral	ambivalent	67
	other – neutral	15
	big	11
	fast – neutral	8
	not for everyone	7
	absent, leaving, rare – neutral	6
	strong – neutral	6
	nothing special, ok	5
	different – neutral	3
	unpredictable, not what it seems, surprising	3
	<b>Total neutral:</b>	<b>131</b>
<b>Total overall:</b>		<b>584</b>

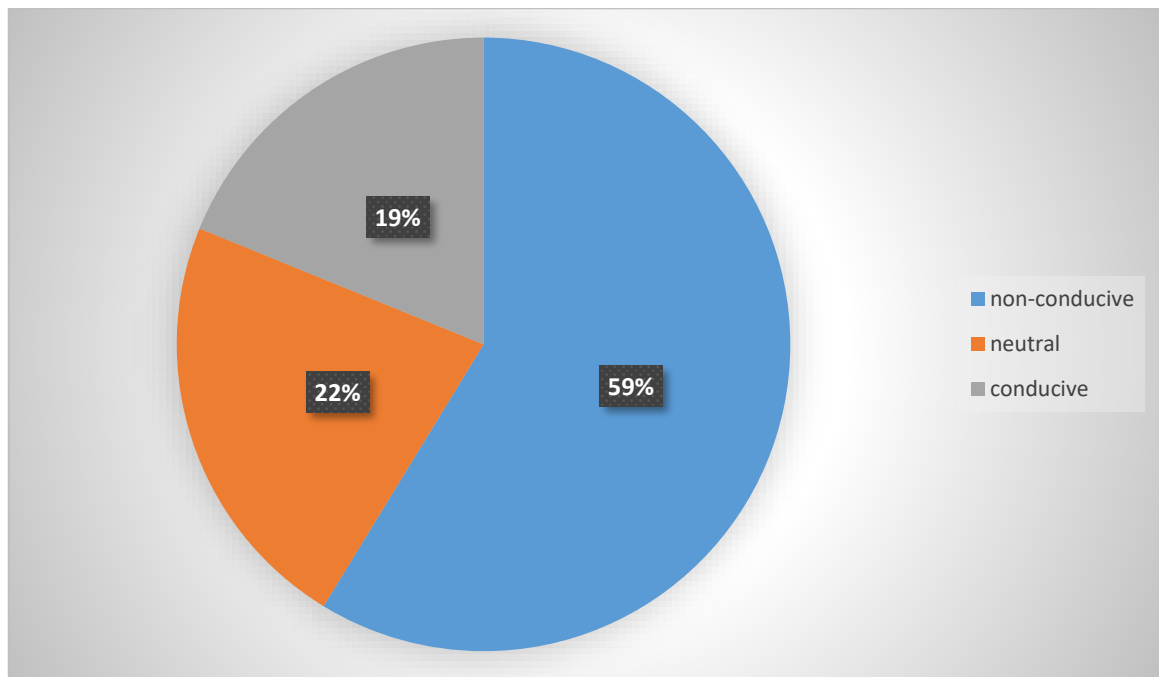


Figure 6.6. Animal Metaphors: Conduciveness for German learning, KS3 and 4

### 6.1.3. If German was a food...

The food metaphors were processed and coded according to the same principles as the animal metaphors. Seven KS3 (1.7%) learners, and three KS4 learners (3.2%) did not complete this task. Fifty-four responses (10.7%) were excluded from the analysis for being non-metaphoric. Similar to where stereotypically ‘German’ animals were named (e.g. German shepherd, sausage dog), traditional German food stuffs were considered non-metaphoric for items such as “**sausage – there are lots of sausages in Germany**”, but not for “**cremated sausage – it looks hard on the outside but once one bites it...It is STILL Hard**”. Altogether, 494 metaphors were coded into 558 codes, and 111 individual food stuffs were named.

Table 6.6. below shows the top ten food items mentioned:

Table 6.6. *If German was a food... by food, KS3 and 4*

<u>Food</u>	<u>Number of mentions</u>
1. sausage	47
2. brussel sprouts	36
3. marmite	25
4. bread	20
5. pizza; sweets *	15
6. chocolate; fast food*	14
7. mushroom	11
8. broccoli; cake; cheese *	10
9. apple; carrot; crisps *	9
10. banana; chicken; chocolate cake; orange; salad; steak*	8

\* Named in equal numbers.

Table 6.7. below shows the sub-themes for the food metaphors, and Figure 6.7.

below shows the broad themes.

Table 6.7. *Food metaphors: Broad themes and sub-codes, KS3 and 4 (n), by frequency*

<u>Broad theme</u>	<u>Sub-codes</u>
1. ambivalent, neutral (151)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. ambivalent (86)</li> <li>2. not for everyone (32)</li> <li>3. alright, ok but not great (23)</li> <li>4. other – neutral (7)</li> <li>5. big (3)</li> </ol>
2. unpleasantness (103)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. don't like it (58)</li> <li>2. unpleasant, not nice, disgusting, bad, annoying (33)</li> <li>3. categorically bad (10)</li> <li>4. sounds bad, sounds angry (2)</li> </ol>
3. pleasure (74)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I like it (30)</li> <li>2. delicious, tasty, sweet, good (16)</li> <li>3. good in small doses (11)</li> <li>4. easy (8)</li> <li>5. fun, enjoyable (5)</li> <li>6. interesting (4)</li> </ol>
4. worthwhile pursuit (65)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. rewarding challenge, good for you (39)</li> <li>2. upward trajectory (26)</li> </ol>
5. other and non-metaphoric (64)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. non-metaphoric 'German thing' (49)</li> <li>2. other – negative (8)</li> <li>3. non-metaphoric (5)</li> <li>4. other – positive (2)</li> </ol>
6. difficulty (56)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. complex, confusing (26)</li> <li>2. hard (21)</li> <li>3. downward trajectory (9)</li> </ol>
7. drudgery (45)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. boring (28)</li> <li>2. takes time (11)</li> <li>3. forced to do it (3)</li> <li>3. irrelevant (3)</li> </ol>

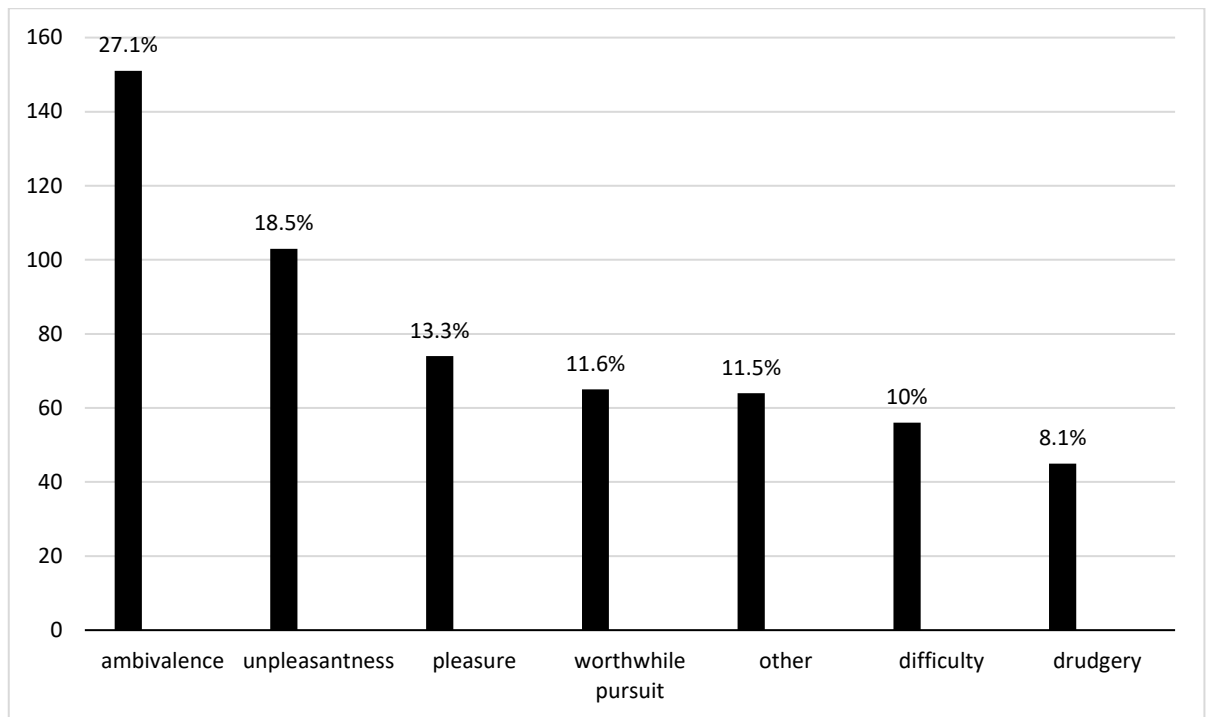


Figure 6.7. Food metaphors: Broad themes, KS3 and 4.

$N$  metaphors = 496,  $N$  codes assigned = 558.

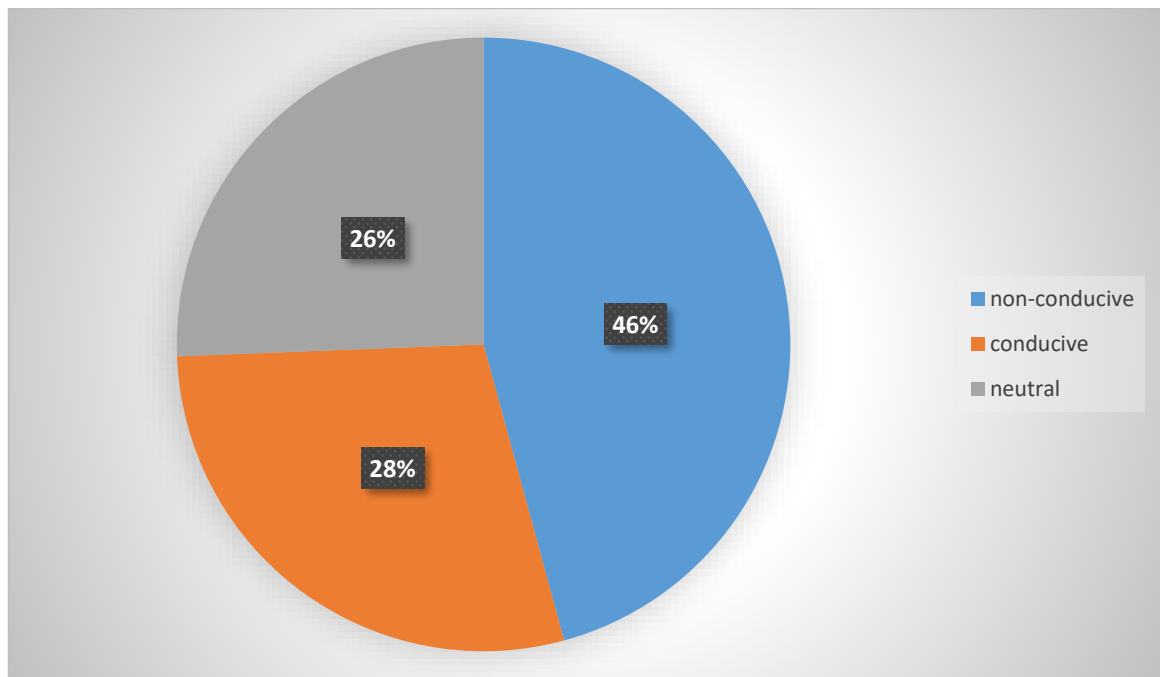
#### 6.1.3.1. Conduciveness for German learning

Like the animal metaphors, the food metaphors were also further categorised according to whether they were deemed to be ‘conductive for German learning’, ‘non-conductive for German learning’, or ‘neutral’. Table 6.8. below shows details of the content-to-conduciveness coding, and Figure 6.8. shows the distribution of conduciveness across the animal metaphor data.



Table 6.8. *Food metaphors: Conduciveness, KS3 and 4 (n), by frequency*

<u>conduciveness</u>	<u>Sub-codes</u>	<u>n</u>
conductive	rewarding challenge, good for you	39
	I like it	30
	upward trajectory	26
	delicious, tasty, sweet, good	16
	good in small doses	11
	easy	8
	fun, enjoyable	5
	interesting	4
	other – positive	2
	<b>Total conductive:</b>	<b>141</b>
non-conductive	don't like it	59
	unpleasant, disgusting, not nice, bad	33
	boring	28
	complex, confusing	26
	hard	21
	takes time	11
	categorically bad	10
	downward trajectory	9
	other – negative	8
	forced to do it	3
	irrelevant	3
	sounds bad, angry	2
<b>Total non-conductive:</b>	<b>213</b>	
neutral	ambivalent	86
	not for everyone	32
	alright, ok but not great	23
	other – neutral	7
	big	3
<b>Total neutral:</b>	<b>151</b>	
<b>Total overall:</b>		<b>505</b>



*Figure 6.8.* Food metaphors: Conduciveness for German learning, KS3 and 4

#### **6.1.4. Metaphors across types**

Comparing the open metaphor themes with the animal and food metaphor themes, it is striking is that the most frequent theme for the open metaphors, German as difficulty/struggle, is mentioned much less frequently for the animal metaphors (fifth place of seven) and food metaphors (sixth place of seven). Table 6.9. below lists the themes from the open, animal, and food metaphors by frequency.

Table 6.9. *Metaphor themes by frequency (%)*

<u>Open</u> <sup>a</sup>	<u>Animal</u> <sup>b</sup>	<u>Food</u> <sup>c</sup>
1. difficulty (23.2)	1. unpleasantness (26.5)	1. ambivalence (27.1)
2. pleasure (19.6)	2. ambivalence (22.3)	2. unpleasantness (18.5)
3. ambivalence (14.2)	3. drudgery (18.8)	3. pleasure (13.3)
4. drudgery (13.9)	4. pleasure (13.9)	4. worthwhile pursuit (11.6)
5. unpleasantness (11.4)	5. difficulty (11.8)	5. other (11.5)
6. worthwhile pursuit (10.4)	6. other (7.3)	6. difficulty (10.0)
7. other (7.3)	7. worthwhile pursuit (4.4)	7. drudgery (8.1)

<sup>a</sup> Metaphors  $N = 494$ , codes assigned  $N = 768$ . <sup>b</sup> Metaphors  $N = 496$ , codes assigned  $N = 618$ . <sup>c</sup> Metaphors  $N = 496$ , codes assigned 558.

Comparing themes across metaphor types brings to light that a range of response patterns emerged, dependent on the metaphor vehicle (e.g. none/open, animal, or food). Comparing learners' beliefs around conduciveness for German learning which emerged from the animal metaphors with those which emerged from the food metaphors, it seems that asking learners to conceptualise German as an animal results in a higher proportion of non-conductive responses (59%, versus 42% of non-conductive responses for the food metaphors). However, for the food metaphor data, non-conductive responses were the still most common ones, followed by neutral, and then conducive responses. For the open metaphors, where the data were split between KS3 and 4 for the analysis, the most common response from KS3 learners was non-conductive for German learning (45%), whereas beliefs of KS4 learners were dominated by on the whole conducive responses (40%). However, in order to be able to compare the conduciveness data more accurately across metaphor types, the open metaphor conduciveness data were also calculated both for the whole data set and separately for each key stage. As the conduciveness coding by key stage had to be done as a separate coding procedure in SPSS (so that statistical tests

could be conducted), for time reasons it was decided to perform this step for the open metaphors only. For comparative purposes, missing and invalid data (2%) for the open metaphors were excluded from the analysis for the combined KS3 and 4 group. Even though, as explained above, the conduciveness data for the open metaphors were based on sentiment coding and not on the content codes, Table 6.10. below shows that broadly similar result patterns for conduciveness for German learning emerged across all three metaphor types: non-conductive beliefs were expressed most frequently, followed by neutral and conducive views in similar numbers to each other (animal and food metaphors show a slightly higher frequency for conducive views, open metaphors for neutral views). Non-conductive views for animal metaphors (58.7%) are proportionally more frequent than for open (43.1%), and for food metaphors (42.2%). Conduciveness figures for the open metaphors split by key stage are included for reference (analysed under 6.1.1.8. above).

Table 6.10. *Conduciveness for German learning across metaphor types (%)*

Conduciveness	<u>Open</u>	<u>Open</u>		<u>Animal</u>	<u>Food</u>
	(KS3 and 4)	<u>KS3</u>	<u>KS4</u>	(KS3 and 4)	(KS3 and 4)
non-conductive	43.1	44.8	30.5	58.7	42.2
neutral	25.9	25.1	26.3	22.4	29.9
conductive	31.0	28.0	40.0	18.8	27.9
N/A	-*	2.2	3.2	-*	-*
<i>n</i> metaphors	494	411	95	496	496

\* Valid percentage reported, therefore no invalid or missing data figures.

### **6.1.5. Learner metaphors and SES**

The relationship between learners' SES and type of metaphor used (static, ambivalent, dynamic) was tested using chi-square analysis. Although no statistically significant associations were found, eyeballing the data allowed for a trend to emerge: For KS3, there was a tendency for learners from a lower socio-economic background to use static metaphors, whereas learners with a higher SES were more likely to choose metaphors which express dynamic and ambivalent views of German (Table 6.11. below).

Table 6.11. *Descriptive statistics: View of German (as per metaphor type) by SES (n,%)*

<u>View of German</u> <u>(metaphor type)</u>	<u>KS3</u>				<u>KS4</u>			
	<u>SES1</u>	<u>SES2</u>	<u>SES3</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>SES1</u>	<u>SES2</u>	<u>SES3</u>	<u>Total</u>
Ambivalent	7 (13.5)	26 (26.5)	19 (36.5)	52 (100)	1 (6.7)	8 (53.3)	6 (40.0)	15 (100)
Dynamic	8 (12.5)	36 (56.3)	20 (31.3)	64 (100)	3 (18.8)	10 (62.5)	3 (18.8)	16 (100)
Static	12 (8.3)	73 (50.7)	59 (41.0)	144 (100)	6 (17.6)	17 (18.8)	11 (32.4)	34 (100)
Non-classifiable	8 (12.9)	29 (46.8)	25 (40.3)	62 (100)	3 (15.0)	12 (60.0)	5 (25.0)	20 (100)
<u>Total</u>	<u>35 (10.9)</u>	<u>164 (50.9)</u>	<u>123 (38.2)</u>	<u>322 (100)</u>	<u>13 (15.3)</u>	<u>47 (55.3)</u>	<u>25 (29.4)</u>	<u>85 (100)</u>

*Note.* SES1 = highest, SES2 = intermediate, SES3 = lowest.

### **6.1.6. Summary: Metaphors**

Six broad themes were identified from the metaphor data: Learning German as difficulty, pleasure, ambivalent/neutral experience, drudgery, unpleasantness, and as an ultimately worthwhile pursuit. Conceptualising German as a food seemed to result in higher frequencies of conducive attitudes than conceptualising it as an animal. KS4 learners' views of German were overall more conducive for German-learning than KS3 learners' views. For KS3, there was a significant association between static metaphor use and dropping German, and a trend between ambivalent metaphor use and continuing German. The open metaphor data showed a trend for a lower SES to be associated with static metaphors, and a higher SES to be associated with dynamic and ambivalent metaphors.

## **6.2. Key player discourses in school settings**

Adolescent German learners' motivation lies at the heart of this study, and therefore learner discourses constitute the main data of this thesis. However, as this study considers the learning environment as a key factor for learner motivation, teachers' and head teachers' discourses as part of this learning environment were also explored. In addition to key players' (learners, teachers, and head teachers) discourses, some lessons were observed. In the spring and summer terms of the academic year 2015/16 (the same academic year in which questionnaire data collection took place), five lesson observations, seven learner focus groups, four interviews with teachers, and four interviews with head teachers were conducted. Focus groups were analysed by the three motivational constructs of learning situation, self-efficacy, and perceptions of the value of German. A more grounded approach was applied to teacher and head teacher interviews, which were examined for emergent key themes. Finally, learner data analysis was performed at idiographic level in five learner case studies. The purpose of the lesson observations and

recording of general school impressions was to provide background information for each school, and this will be outlined by school below (research instruments for the school setting were summarised under 4.6. (Table 4.9.) above).

### **6.2.1. School impressions and lesson observations**

As participating schools were chosen to represent a range, each school had a different general as well as MFL-related atmosphere. More details on school selection can be found in section 4.5.1. above. Impressions of each school collected on visits for lesson observations and interviews are reported briefly below, in order to help the reader form a better idea of the research field conditions. Although the aim was to observe at least one KS3 and one KS4 lesson in each school, School S04 was not able to accommodate this for either key stage, and School S05 could only offer a KS3 (and not a KS4) lesson observation. Two lessons were also observed in School S03, which, for reasons explained under 4.5.1. above, was later excluded from the study. Altogether, three KS3 and two KS4 lessons were observed across the four participating schools. For these, I sat as unobtrusively as possible at the back of the class, making hand-written field notes. It appeared that secondary school students seem to be very much accustomed to observers or other adults in the lessons, and my presence did not seem to be questioned by learners. Whilst making notes on the structure and content of the lessons and learner behaviour, observations focussed on content relating to ‘Germanness’, the Germans, or Germany. In the few lessons visited, little content relating to ‘Germanness’, the Germans, or Germany was observed (apart from some historic cultural content in a year 9 lesson in School S05, as described under 6.2.1.3. below). Nevertheless, these observations were considered useful as they also provided some insight into the atmosphere both of the school and of the German classrooms, as well as tangible artefacts of the ‘culture’ around German and MFL such as corridor or classroom displays, signs in foreign languages, or visibility and



audibility of the target language. School impressions and, where appropriate, lesson observations are reported by school below.

#### *6.2.1.1. School S02*

School S02 is a large, mixed, rural comprehensive school, where 73% of students achieved GCSE grade C or better in English and Maths in 2016, 12.9% of students are eligible for free school meals, and whose last Ofsted rating (2014) was ‘good’. School S02 is a former Language College, and was referred to as such by learners in the focus groups, and both teacher and head teacher interviewees. Language Colleges were part of the ‘Specialist Schools Programme’, a governmental initiative which started in 1994 until it was abolished when the Conservative/Liberal government took power in May 2010 (archived and accessible under <https://web.archive.org/web/20100615015506/http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk:80/specialistschools/>). Displays in the reception area emphasized the global outlook of the school through illustrations of maps and explanatory texts. Some doors were labelled in English as well as in a variety of other languages, including several languages not taught at the school. Signs were professionally made and permanently mounted onto doors. In the language department, wall displays featured ‘linguist of the month’ certificates for a learner from each year group, including 6th Form, and each language taught (French, German, and Spanish). Each month has a different theme, such as ‘use of accents and umlauts’, or ‘use of connectives’.

A top set of 29 year 9, as well as a class of 14 year 11 learners taught by the same teacher, Teacher\_S02, were observed. The year 9 class covered TV programmes. Teacher\_S02 used the target language from the moment students entered the classroom and mini-dialogues ensued, for example:

**Teacher\_S02: Guten Tag, wie geht's dir?**

**Learner: Nicht so gut, ich habe Kopfschmerzen.**

Teacher\_S02 continued the use of target language throughout the lesson, and learners responded in German, suggesting that this was not a 'put-on' effort but rather the practice which they were used to. For example, learners answered their name being called for the register with "**Hallo**", "**Guten Tag**", or "**Wie geht's**". The class worked on turning statements into questions, for example "**Es ist eine Musiksendung**" – "**Ist es eine Musiksendung?**". The lesson finished with a 'Guess who' type game where learners had to guess the name of a TV programme, which was written on a sticky note and stuck to their forehead, first modelled by Teacher\_S02, then as pairwork. The atmosphere in the lesson was friendly, relaxed, and focussed. Learners listened to, read as well as spoke, and wrote German language throughout the lesson. The year 11 lesson covered the topic of 'work'. Students concentrated on the tasks and devised questions about a text on 'Arbeitsplatz' from their AQA textbook. The lesson was characterised by a large amount of German spoken, a structured progress through activities, as well as a positive working atmosphere.

#### *6.2.1.2. School S04*

School S04 is a large urban independent girls' school. In 2016, 99% of girls achieved grade C or better in English and Maths GCSE. Since School S04 is not a state-run school, no FSM or Ofsted data were available. School S04 was not able to accommodate any lesson observations or a year 11 focus group. The year 9 focus group was held in a small meeting room near the reception area, not in the language department. The feel of the reception area in School S04 was business-like, smart, and quiet. School information was displayed on a wall-mounted digital screen, and school publications were available to

visitors for browsing through on a coffee table. On the day of the year 9 focus group interview, learner participants appeared in the reception area on their own and there was no contact with a teacher before or after the interview. On more than one occasion during the interview, there were disturbances as staff came in expecting the room to be free, suggesting that it had not been booked.

### *6.2.1.3. School S05*

School S05 is a large rural comprehensive school. In 2016, 77% of learners achieved GCSE grade C or better in English and Maths, and only 10.1% are eligible for free school meals. School S05 appears busy and bustling, with a friendly atmosphere. Classrooms in the language department are decorated with helpful grammar and pronunciation posters, some of them using figures from popular culture, such as Bastian Schweinsteiger and Justin Bieber, to illustrate the spelling of the “ei”/“ie” grapheme. School S05’s Head of Languages (Teacher\_S05) is supportive of MFL research, and she and her language colleagues (and their learners) regularly take part in university research projects.

A year 9 lesson of 28 learners (taught by a different teacher) on an unusual, historic-literary text about the medieval practical joker, ‘Till Eulenspiegel’, was observed. Despite the rather difficult subject matter, the teacher used the target language at most times during the lesson. The day of the observation coincided with a charity fundraising and non-uniform day on the theme of comedy. The lesson started with learners discussing with the teacher what they find funny, on a scale of “**super mega lustig**”, via “**sehr lustig**”, “**ziemlich lustig**”, to “**nicht so lustig**”:

**Teacher: Wenn eine Person in der Klasse laut pupst?**

**Learner: Super mega lustig!**

**Teacher: Aber ein Blondinenwitz ist... nicht so lustig.**

The lesson then moved to closer text work, concentrating on the ‘funny’ aspects of the story. Learners had to put the story in the right order and homework was to draw a Till Eulenspiegel cartoon. Learners seemed slightly puzzled by the unfamiliar topic at first, but seemed to appreciate a change from textbook topics. They appeared to appreciate the text’s use of the word ‘Arsch’ (The story goes that when Till Eulenspiegel was a child, he sat behind his father on a horse showing his bare bottom, and when he sat in front of his father, he was pulling faces at people. Either way his father could not see what Till was doing and believed him when he said the towns people were telling lies about his roguish behaviour). Learners discussed whether they found this funny or not:

**Learner 1: I like this! This is funny!**

**Learner 2: It’s not really though, is it.**

**Learner 1: Yes it is! It is! [laughing fit].**

**Everyone: [laughs]**

This lesson was the only lesson observed which could be said to cover some cultural information which caught learners’ interest, by introducing the class to a rather obscure fifteenth century German comic bestseller.

#### *6.2.1.4. School S06*

School S06 is a large urban mixed comprehensive school, where 56% of students achieved GCSE grade C or better in English and Maths in 2016. School S06’s FSM index of 41.4% makes it the most deprived school of the four participating schools. The reception area had a lively and modern feel. Receptionists engaged in good-natured chat with pupils

in the busy reception area. In the language department, corridors and classrooms were colourfully decorated with displays relating not just to the two languages taught, French and German, but also to other countries and languages, such as a banner of international flags. School S06, as the only participating school, starts the GCSE course in year 9 (as opposed to year 10). In School S06, a year 8 lesson of 25 learners taught by a teacher other than my contact person, and a year 11 lesson of 14 learners (representing the whole cohort) taught by Teacher\_S06 were observed. Before working on the topic of free time, the year 8 class started with some grammar activities where learners had to find verb endings in a text (e.g. first person endings, third person endings etc.). The teacher used some target language but did not use German to set up tasks. A slightly half-hearted game was played, where the class was divided into two halves and the half from which someone gave the right answer was awarded a point. Activities covered all four skills but consisted often of ‘finding’ language items, rather than producing them, for example the following exchange took place:

<b>[On whiteboard:]</b>	<b>Möchtest du ins Kino gehen?</b>
<b>Teacher:</b>	<b>Which part of the sentence means ‘would you like’? Which part means ‘to go’?</b>
<b>Learner:</b>	<b>Would you like to the cinema to go?</b>
<b>Teacher:</b>	<b>Yes! So the word order is different from English.</b>

On the whole learners worked well but not that much German was produced. The teacher was supportive and praised learners generously for specific achievements:

**[Teacher walks around to check learners working on filling in table. One learner has only completed one answer out of seven]**

**Learner:** It's because I'm not good at German.

**Teacher:** It's not about that! Look, what does this bit here mean... [gives scaffolded help on how to work out the answers].

Teacher\_S06 also appeared to have a good relationship with the small year 11 class, engaging in non-German-related banter-type conversation. Learners worked on GCSE exam preparation, going over past papers. This lesson was rather untypical as it was revision-focussed and no new content was taught, but as exam preparation took priority this was all that could be observed for KS4 German at the time of data collection.

### **6.2.2. Learner focus groups**

Four KS3 and three KS4 focus groups were conducted with the number of participants ranging from three to eleven per focus group. For transcription purposes, 'I' stands for interviewer, i.e. myself. Just like questionnaire responses were transcribed as seen, including all spelling/grammar mistakes, spoken focus group and interview data were transcribed verbatim.

Unfortunately, School S04 was not able to accommodate a KS4 focus group. Learners were chosen from a pool of self-selected volunteers, so as to achieve a balance of continuers and droppers, boys and girls, and a range of motivation scores and SES groups. Individual qualitative questionnaire responses which related to learner rationales for their uptake decisions were also considered. For example, S06\_17\_KS3\_f\_d had indicated on the questionnaire that she had already chosen to drop German, but that she was considering changing her options to continue with German after all. S06\_36\_KS3\_m\_d stated he did not want to continue German as he "**didn't want to be a business man**". Both were invited to the focus group so that their thinking could be explored further. At the beginning of each focus group students were asked in turn about their current language learning situation, their choices for next year, and reasons for their choices. The schedule then

centred around the motivation section of the questionnaire, and learners were invited to discuss each item (1-9). To finish, learners were asked what advice they would give someone of their age who was new to the school and was weighing up the advantages and disadvantages of opting for German (the complete focus group schedule can be inspected in Appendix E). A semi-structured interview format was adopted (e.g. Robson & McCartan, 2016), as this allowed for the exploration of learners' often complex and multi-dimensional thoughts by departing from the schedule, if necessary, and following up on what was said. KS3 and KS4 learners confirmed their views from the questionnaire in the focus groups, with no surprise revelations. Rather, the focus groups were an opportunity to explore learners' thinking more deeply than the questionnaire had allowed. The format of learner focus group encouraged a process of discursive meaning-making amongst participants as they referred to, agreed or disagreed with each other's contributions. S06\_17\_KS3\_f\_d illustrates this when she said, after several contributions which stated that 'German is easier than French': **"I might stick with French but I don't really know, coz after this I kind of feel that German is a bit easier than French..."**.

Learners' motivation for and thinking around German was analysed following the motivational constructs used in the questionnaire, namely learning situation, self-efficacy, and perception of value. Key themes from the focus groups are reported below. Results from both key stages are presented together as far as they relate to the motivational scales, however, where appropriate, reference was made to the difference between KS3 and KS4. In addition, one theme which emerged inductively from the data and which is considered important enough to be reported here, was the apparent misinformation or lack of clarity on the part of students regarding the language policy at their school, even if this directly affected them. For example, both KS3 and KS4 learners at School S06 thought that language study at GCSE was compulsory for the top language sets, when this was not the case. Table 6.12. below shows details of focus group participants.

Table 6.12. Focus group participants

<u>School/ KS</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>N FG</u> <u>volunteers</u> <u>(%)</u>	<u>Personal identifier</u>	<u>Uptake choice</u>	<u>Motivation</u> (M KS3: 3.47 M KS4: 3.83)	<u>gender</u>	<u>SES</u>
S02/ KS3	6	59 (41.5)	S02_26_KS3_m_c	continuer	3.56	m	2
			S02_35_KS3_f_d	dropper	5.00	f	3
			S02_49_KS3_f_d	dropper	3.67	f	2
			S02_69_KS3_m_c	continuer	5.22	m	3
			S02_70_KS3_m_d	dropper	2.89	m	3
			S02_97_KS3_f_d	dropper	2.78	f	N/A
S02/ KS4	5	11 (23.5)	S02_03_KS4_f_c	continuer	4.56	f	2
			S02_04_KS4_f_d	dropper	4.22	f	2
			S02_06_KS4_m_c	continuer	3.11	m	2
			S02_07_KS4_f_d	dropper	4.00	f	2
			S02_12_KS4_m_d	dropper	3.89	m	2
S04/ KS3	3	12 (29.3)	S04_02_KS3_f_d	dropper	4.89	f	1
			S04_21_KS3_f_c	continuer	3.89	f	2
			S04_41_KS3_f_d	continuer	4.22	f	3
S05/ KS3	11	36 (30.3)	S05_02_KS3_m_c	continuer	4.11	m	N/A
			S05_05_KS3_m_c	continuer	4.33	m	2
			S05_10_KS3_f_c	continuer	2.78	f	1
			S05_11_KS3_f_c	continuer	3.56	f	1
			S05_19_KS3_f_c	continuer	5.34	f	2
			S05_20_KS3_f_c	continuer	5.56	f	2
			S05_25_KS3_m_d	dropper	1.63	m	2
			S05_30_KS3_m_d	dropper	3.22	m	3
			S05_32_KS3_f_d	dropper	1.67	f	1
			S05_33_KS3_f_d	dropper	2.67	f	2
S05/ KS4	5	16 (37.2)	S05_36_KS3_f_d	dropper	3.22	f	2
			S05_123_KS4_m_d	dropper	4.79	m	3
			S05_125_KS4_m_d	dropper	4.11	m	3
			S05_127_KS4_f_d	dropper	2.11	f	3
			S05_130_KS4_f_d	dropper	3.78	f	2
S06/ KS3	7	32 (29.4)	S05_132_KS4_f_c	continuer	4.11	f	2
			S06_17_KS3_f_d	dropper	3.44	f	unem.
			S06_18_KS3_f_d	dropper	2.00	f	2
			S06_36_KS3_m_d	dropper	4.22	m	3
			S06_37_KS3_m_d	dropper	2.78	m	2
			S06_41_KS3_f_c	continuer	1.22	f	2
			S06_46_KS3_f_c	continuer	3.89	f	3
S06/ KS4	4	4 (36.8)	S06_47_KS3_m_c	continuer	4.33	m	3
			S06_01_KS4_m_c	continuer	3.11	m	3
			S06_02_KS4_m_d	dropper	3.89	m	3
			S06_03_KS4_m_d	dropper	3.22	m	2
			S06_04_KS4_f_c	continuer	4.67 (3.83)	f	3



### 6.2.2.1. The learning situation

***“If you don’t have fun you don’t learn”***

Both KS3 and KS4 learners felt that the teacher, and their relationship with the teacher, was of crucial importance for how they felt about German. S02\_04\_KS4\_f\_d directly linked her German teacher with her sense of progress.

Focus group S02\_KS4:

**S02\_04\_KS4\_f\_d:** [Earlier] we had Miss X, who’s a really, I really enjoyed learning from Miss X who’s a really good teacher, and then we had a supply like last year, and she came back again... didn’t really click with her learning, er, teaching.

**I:** And how did that affect your learning?

**S02\_04\_KS4\_f\_d:** I was still doing the same activities, I was still completing them, I just don’t like feel like I’m learning as much German.

Learners appeared to interpret a good relationship with the teacher as the teacher knowing them, and tailoring lesson content to them as individuals.

Focus group S02\_KS3:

**I:** Ok, and so what’s the difference, what’s so bad about what’s going on?

**S02\_03\_KS3\_f\_c:** I think she like interacts with us more, and [...] I guess coz she knows us better, she knows our ways of learning whereas our current teacher, she kind of just as, [...], like learning from kind of the standard thing,...

- Someone:** ...she doesn't really know US [emphasis added]
- S02\_03\_KS3\_f\_c:** ...way, she doesn't know like, us. [...]
- S02\_04\_KS4\_f\_d:** It was a bit of a changeup...
- S02\_06\_KS4\_m\_c:** it almost feels like abandonment. [...] I feel like it's almost like the atmosphere has changed recently in class and I think it's slightly less productive than it could be, because of that, and therefore I think that even if we're still doing similar exercises, I think there could be, a little bit more of a personal connection this close to GCSEs? because there needs to be a, 'this area is an area that you're not particularly good in at the moment and you need to improve it before your GCSEs so we're now gonna look at this personally', but it's more like 'we're gonna get the whole class to do this exercise and we've been doing it for weeks'.
- S02\_07\_KS4\_f\_d:** I think the more personal style of teaching is more helpful for a language.

S02\_06\_KS4\_m\_c's use of the word "abandonment" and S02\_07\_KS4\_f\_d's use of "personal" are interesting, as these are quite strong words to use in the context of a teacher-learner relationship. The words "abandonment" and "personal" point to learners' perceptions not just of the importance they attribute to their relationship with their teacher, but also of the close and almost emotional bond they describe in connection with their preferred teacher. The new teacher "does not know [them]" like their old teacher did, and they feel "abandoned" by the old teacher, like children abandoned by a parent, hinting at

the close, family-like quality of the ideal teacher-learner relationship envisaged by learners in the above exchange.

Using German, and particularly speaking German for real communication was perceived both as the purpose of learning the subject, and as the most desired activity. Especially KS3 learners wished for an interactive classroom environment which engaged them actively:

Focus group S05\_KS3:

**S05\_11\_KS3\_f\_c: I feel like I'm learning it so I can use it in real life situations and not just 'know' the language.**

Focus group S02\_KS3:

**I: How would you like to learn it, what kind of activities?**

**S02\_97\_KS3\_f\_d: If we had a lesson on just like speaking to each other about what we've been learning, and then like do the same, so like, for each time, so one lesson like every week or something we can just talk about what we've learnt.**

Focus group S06\_KS3:

**S06\_18\_KS3\_f\_d: I think I'd make it fun and interactive. Like, because I learn the best doing like, I'm kind of a kinetic learner, so I like getting up and doing things, rather than listening or watching something.**

Focus group S05\_KS4:

**S05\_132\_KS4\_f\_c: I think interactive speaking, so when the teacher's talking AT you, you don't learn as much, but when they're getting you involved with new things, kind of more exciting topics, I think imagery is good, showing people the places and the actual things that you're learning about, yeah just generally activities that are more 'joining in' for the students.**

Learners felt that that lesson content such as vocabulary and topics should be more directly 'useful' for them than they perceived them to be currently, as illustrated by S02\_49\_KS3\_f\_m:

Focus group S02\_KS3:

**S02\_49\_KS3\_f\_d: We did what you do to keep fit in German, which I think is kinda weird coz I'm not gonna go up to German person going hi, I like to run and sometimes I eat salad, so I'm quite healthy! – so it's not like any of it you're ever gonna need.**

Learners perceived enjoyment and fun as key factors not just for fostering positive attitudes towards German, but also for their learning. S06\_47\_KS3\_m\_c and S02\_97\_KS3\_f\_d put this succinctly:

Focus group S06\_KS3:

**S06\_47\_KS3\_m\_c: I think it's very, very important that you have fun!**  
**Because if you don't have fun you don't learn. It's a simple as that.**

Focus group S02\_KS3:

**S02\_97\_KS3\_f\_d: You don't want to, like, learn German if it's boring.**

Learners also felt that as well as being made to learn non-useful topics, they were also not given enough opportunities to use the language. Several learners from different schools 'invented' the concept of pen pals in the interviews. There was a strong sense that learners were very much attracted to the idea of communicating with native speaker teenagers, either through an exchange or via social media:

Focus group S06\_KS4:

**I: So if the school and the teachers said ok what can we do to make this better for our students in terms of using the language, what would you suggest?**

**S06\_04\_KS4\_f\_c: This would probably never happen, but, get German students, like, our age, and then... we could... talk?!**

Focus group S04\_KS3:

**S04\_02\_KS3\_f\_d: With skype you'd be forced to like actually speak to that person, and I think it'd probably be more - like it might be better because like, you could find out about their life, and not just them speaking, but like how their school works, and what their lifestyle's like as well...**

**S04\_21\_KS3\_f\_c: And I think if you speak on skype to them it would really help your speaking skills coz you have to speak more and more and more, and you have to go into more complex conversations with them not just like ‘hi, how are you’, it’s a bit... if you’re speaking like to a real person on skype then it would help you learn the language better.**

#### *6.2.2.2. Self-efficacy*

*“If I planned a lesson, it wouldn’t be shaming games”*

Learners highlighted confidence as a key factor for choosing German, and attributed it to a variety of factors ranging from the classroom situation to length of German study. For example, S02\_26\_KS3\_m\_c saw a link between self-efficacy and enjoyment, S02\_35\_KS3\_f\_d between self-efficacy and progress, and S05\_19\_KS3\_f\_c between self-efficacy and oral practice.

#### Focus group S02\_KS3:

**S02\_26\_KS3\_m\_c: I think with a language it’s a lot about confidence. If you feel you can speak certain things in the language, you just... and if you enjoy the language, then you feel lot more confident speaking it, and that helps a lot.**

(...)

**S02\_35\_KS3\_f\_d: Last year in French like I put my hand up a lot more coz I felt like I was making more progress, and getting better, but like this year I’m like a lot less confident coz I’m not making as much progress and I’m not doing as well, so**

**I'm not putting my hand up as much, coz I don't want to like get the answer wrong.**

Focus group S05 KS3:

**S05\_19\_KS3\_f\_c: We should have more like confidence coz it sounds like we're just reciting, coz you don't have a lot of confidence in what you're saying, and then like you kind of mess things up and you're like 'oh, did I get this right?', so I think we should focus more on like, we said, speaking it, like using it in practical situations.**

Depending on the learning environment, KS3 learners felt differently about taking risks and making mistakes. Whilst some learners, e.g. S04\_21\_KS3\_f\_c, felt that there was a supportive enough environment to encourage language experimentation and risk-taking, others (e.g. S06\_46\_KS3\_f\_c) felt less happy about making mistakes in front of the teacher and the rest of the class.

Focus group S04 KS3:

**S04\_21\_KS3\_f\_c: Everyone's, like, trying it, so even if you go wrong, no one's gonna be like 'ah you went wrong!' – coz everyone's doing it.**

Focus group S06 KS3:

**S06\_46\_KS3\_f\_c: I don't like it when we have to go to the front of the class and like make like a sentence and like if we get it wrong it's kind of like shaming. I feel like sometimes the**

teachers do do that, and I think that they may do it on purpose but like they, with the games that we were doing in French, like I didn't really like it because we were doing it on the whiteboard, and if we got it wrong, like, someone did correct it, but like say if you were to get it wrong, like all your friends would go 'haha!'. And, because you got it wrong, and something like that, so like it would like make you feel like embarrassed and ashamed of it, but if you were to do it like with people that you're comfortable with and like in little groups, I feel that it would be better, and like you become more confident and then when you're like ready, you can like do up to the board, instead of being like pressured into it.

S06\_17\_KS3\_f\_d picked up and elaborated on the 'shaming game':

Focus group S06\_KS3:

**S06\_17\_KS3\_f\_d:** If I like planned a German lesson, I'd probably do like quite a lot of games because for me I seem to learn better if we do games, like, it wouldn't be like shaming games like where you have to stand up and like make a sentence and...

**I:** Shaming games!! Is that an official phrase?!

**S06\_17\_KS3\_f\_d:** Yeah like, so like, it's more like in French they tend to do it. Because, the other day we was playing this game where you sit in a circle and you have to like swap seats, I forgot



**what it's called, and if you like didn't get a seat you have to say it either in French or English, and some people didn't know how to say it in English, they kind of just stood there for ages and no one would help them. Or no one was allowed to help them. And then after a while they just... [trails off, inaudible], it was kind of like embarrassing if you didn't know it, and at the same time it's not really your fault if you don't know it, because, sometimes they don't exactly teach us that word, and you have to kind of like figure it out yourself.**

KS3 learners' use of the words "embarrassing", but particularly "ashamed", "shaming", and "shaming games" is strong use of language and hints at the depth of feelings they can experience if games are not handled sensitively. When S06\_46\_KS3\_f\_c talked about feeling ashamed, and S06\_17\_KS3\_f\_d picked this up to elaborate on the "shaming games", the notion of "shame" seemed to resonate with learners, and they reused the phrase throughout the rest of the interview:

**I: Shaming games! Is that a term you use or did you just make that up?**

**S06\_17\_KS3\_f\_d: I just made it up.**

**I: [...] Ok, but it seemed, it seemed that people seemed to say 'oh yeah we know what you mean' when you said 'shaming game'?**

**Everyone: [nodding]**

This shows that the potential impact on learners' feelings around games which might make them feel ashamed, needs to be seriously considered by teachers when devising games which expose the individual. Interestingly, S06\_17\_KS3\_f\_d above makes the point that it was not the learner's fault if they did not the answer, as that word might not have been taught. Here she reveals the depth of negative feelings created by this game, as it can make the learner look incompetent if the answer had been taught but the learner did not know it. It can also make the learner look incompetent when they are not, as the word in question might not have been taught. Either way, S06\_17\_KS3\_f\_d explains how in that position the learner would feel ashamed, for justly or unjustly being exposed as incompetent. Furthermore, the emotive overtones of the term indicate the extent to which the learning situation seems to negatively impact on learners' sense of self-esteem. S06\_36\_KS3\_m\_d directly linked the shaming games with reduced learning:

**S06\_36\_KS3\_m\_d: In year 7 I think I learnt more French, because of the shaming games things, the teacher didn't do that in year 7.**

S06\_18\_KS3\_f\_d narrated her experiences of a game which was more successful and avoided the shaming effect:

**S06\_18\_KS3\_f\_d: Last year, we didn't play like any of the shaming games, it was just like fun games, but like, I feel like because Kahoot's [a digital quiz] like, coz it goes on the whiteboard and then you can go on your phone and do it, like when it shows the results it's not specific, so you can't, you can't laugh at anybody about who got it**

**wrong, because it just says that one person got it wrong ,  
or five people got it wrong, you can't go round the class  
and start picking on people.**

In her use of the phrase “go round the class and start picking on people”, S06\_18\_KS3\_f\_d here seemed to suggest that in the shaming games learners can feel like victims arbitrarily singled out by the teacher. Again, the language here reflects the depth of the negative emotions aroused.

Whilst learners expressed a desire to communicate with native speakers, preferably with other teenagers, whenever they did experience such an opportunity this could have a demotivating effect. Native speakers were perceived as “speaking too fast” and “having a [regional] accent”. Learners also felt negatively surprised when a gap between exchange students' foreign language proficiency and their own became apparent.

Focus group S02\_KS3:

**S02\_49\_KS3\_f\_d: At my old school they did an exchange trip between the  
Germ..., some Germans came to our school and then we  
went to their school, and all the Germans were fluent in  
English, and we went there, no one could speak it! And it  
was, I think, I think it's kind of embarrassing how no one  
speaks fluently any language like except for English.**

KS4 learners expressed a dislike for heavy exam-focussed practice:

Focus group S06\_KS4:

**I:** What would you say makes for an interesting German lesson?

**S06\_02\_KS4\_m\_d:** Anything that's not just focussed on the exams really, coz then it just makes me feel like I've got to revise.

### 6.2.2.3. *The value of German*

*“It's polite, but it's probably not important”*

Learners located the value of German mainly in the practical and personal domain, such as visiting or living in Germany. Purposes for visiting Germany tended to be primarily holiday-related:

Focus group S02\_KS3:

**I:** Do you think it's useful today in the UK, for people who have English as their first language, to know German?

**S02\_97\_KS3\_f\_d,** you're shaking your head, start us off?

**S02\_97\_KS3\_f\_d:** No, coz Germany isn't normally a holiday place, like, it's like not sunny, so nobody's gonna want to go there in the summer. Coz normally [people] want a tan, so they're gonna go to like Spain, or France, coz that's hot and sunny. So like, like erm, no one goes to Germany but like if you wanted to go to Germany, you could learn German at home! But most people go to Spain and France, so....

**S02\_70\_KS3\_m\_d:** I think people more, would like more to learn French than German because it's sort of closer, and it's more, and it's like a lot more English go there, like people going to, like S02\_97\_KS3\_f\_d said, it's hot there and

**Germany's a bit of a... it's a nice city [sic] but it's a bit of a like, lame destination for getting a tan and stuff.**

Focus group S04 KS3:

**S04\_41\_KS3\_f\_c: I don't know, because languages are always important, so... yeah,**

**I: Yeah? Why?**

**S04\_41\_KS3\_f\_c: Because it helps you, with everything, like, if you're, like, my friend has a nut allergy and she doesn't know German, so when we go to Germany I can read the label and just check!**

**I: Ah! It could save your life!**

**S04\_41\_KS3\_f\_c: [enthusiastic] Yeah!! [laughter]**

Some learners, however, did believe German was useful for wider purposes, and were, in a rather vague way, aware of a link between Germany and business. Where German was linked with work, learners still focussed on travelling to a German speaking country and communicating with native German speakers, rather than skills for using in an Anglophone setting:

Focus group S06 KS3:

**S06\_47\_KS3\_m\_c: I don't think it's that important [to speak German]. Because different people go into different fields of jobs, so if like, so if someone became a doctor you wouldn't really need German much, but if you went to be a doctor in like**

**Germany, then maybe you need German, but it's unlikely you're gonna go to a different country to be a doctor. [...]**

**S06\_36\_KS3\_m\_d: If you're in a business where you go on business trips, you're more likely to go to Germany I think than France, because... France are more sort of ... Arts, and Germany is more, sort of like... work.**

S06\_36\_KS3\_m\_d posits an interesting dichotomy when he said that “France is Art, and Germany is work”, implying that he conceptualises Art not as potentially an aspect of work, but in opposition to work. This confirms previous literature (e.g. Williams et al., 2002) which found that secondary school students tend to conceptualise French and German in different ways, with French considered more feminine, especially by boys. KS3 Learners in School S04 also spoke about their perception of the connection between German and work. S04\_21\_KS3\_f\_c thought German is helpful for a “**businessy job**”:

Focus group S04\_KS3:

**S04\_21\_KS3\_f\_c: I think German's quite important coz it's like one of the main countries in Europe and erm, if you're going to like a businessy job then that'd be very helpful, if you do German.**

**S04\_02\_KS3\_f\_d: Employers will be able to like send you off to like the country and they need somebody to be able to do that. Also I think like Germany, I mean I know they're good at, like, cars and stuff like that, and... I'm not sure, banking? I mean it's got a really big capital city, Berlin, so, I mean it's like a good place for like business and**

stuff, so if you know it, you'll, you know, do well, I don't know... yeah.

**S04\_21\_KS3\_f\_m:** If you're gonna be like, an entrepreneur, you're gonna be in the business industry, you can like communicate more with other people and you can like push your products or whatever you're doing there like trading or whatever, it will help if you know German because then you can communicate with the people there.

Some learners raised the effect of global English on language learning in the UK.

S05\_36\_KS3\_f\_d picked up on the point raised by her peers that learning a language is just good manners:

Focus group S05\_KS3:

**S05\_36\_KS3\_f\_d:** It's probably because so many people speak English that we don't always learn other languages, and we probably should, because, as the others have said, it's polite, but it's probably not important – unless you actually go there, which a lot of people don't.

Learners who talked about the benefits of German or languages as a skill with wider benefits other than the practical use of communicating with native speakers in Germany were in the minority. S04\_02\_KS3\_f\_d suggested that speaking a language “**makes you more aware of other countries**”:

Focus group S04\_KS3:

**S04\_02\_KS3\_f\_d:** Also it like makes you more aware of other countries, so, you're not just thinking about the UK, ... there are other places.

**I:** How would it make you aware of other countries do you think?

**S04\_02\_KS3\_f\_d:** Coz it makes you think like not everyone speaks the same language as you and has like the same culture...

Interestingly, learners viewed German as helpful for learning other languages:

Focus group S04\_KS3:

**S04\_02\_3\_f\_d:** For German, it kind of leads into other languages as well and so it can help with not only just learning English and German but like it can lead on to like, I don't know, like Danish? I don't know... [laughs]

**someone:** ...Dutch?

**S04\_02\_KS3\_f\_d:** Dutch, yeah, Dutch.

Consistent with the findings from the questionnaire, the majority of learners in the focus groups reported a lack of guidance on language study from their school. Where there was guidance from the school, learners felt that it was not specific enough regarding examples of future careers involving German or languages:

Focus group S02\_KS3:

**S02\_35\_KS3\_f\_d:** They gave us an assembly about taking languages and they showed us like what like the German is like the



language that's like most in demand at the moment coz not as many speak it compared to French and Spanish. And also they had students that did like double languages came into our classes and talked about the benefits of doing double languages.

**I:** Ok, did YOU go, did YOU have that assembly?

**some:** Yeah...

**S02\_49\_KS3\_f\_d:** I think I must have missed that

**S02\_26\_KS3\_m\_c:** I think I must have missed that as well

**S02\_70\_KS3\_m\_d:** They DID tell you like, but as already said, they didn't tell you like the pros and cons, like, but they told you the trips, the like, where you're gonna go, what you're gonna learn. They didn't tell you, what, how is it gonna help in future life. I think all the other assembly said what you could a job from it. But then like the languages didn't really tell you but obviously you have to pick a language at school coz it's a Language College, but then they didn't really tell, explain to you what sort of job you're gonna get.

Here S02\_35\_KS3\_f\_d explained how she sought out her language teachers' advice on whether to continue or drop German, who cast German as helpful for career purposes (S02\_35\_KS3\_f\_d decided to drop German in favour of Computer Science). She went on to reveal a deficiency view of German promoted by her school, where German was framed as a valuable skill for students, sought-after by employers, because of its increasing rarity.

Interestingly S02\_70\_KS3\_m\_d refers to his school's 'Language College' status, which he sees as the reason for a language being compulsory in GCSE, although the Language College initiative was abolished in 2010 (as explained under 6.2.1. above).

Although many learners could see some value to the study of German, this did not necessarily translate into continuing German. Apart from enjoyment as an important factor for uptake, learners would frequently stress that what mattered to them was whether they could envisage using German in their future, i.e., whether it was going to be helpful or relevant for their lives. S04\_21\_KS3\_f\_c illustrates this by linking not only personal importance and future careers, but also enjoyment and self-efficacy:

**S04\_21\_KS3\_f\_c: I think that if you enjoy the language it really helps coz it helps you to learn more, so if you're gonna choose a language I think that should be like the most important thing. But then, you should also think about like, if you wanted to do Italian or something, how is that gonna help you, or, if you're gonna do German, how is that gonna help you in like in the future? So, like, for example Latin, if you want to be a doctor or something then that'll help you like learn all the like medical words, so you need to think like, well what is gonna help you.**

Yet, few learners displayed signs of Dörnyei's (2005, 2009) ideal L2 self. As an exception to the rule, S06\_04\_KS4\_m\_d (who had grown up speaking German with her Austrian father) showed some evidence of the ideal L2 construct:

Focus group S06 KS4:

**S06\_02\_KS4\_m\_d:** I don't know why, but ever since I was a little kids I've always wanted to learn German for some reason, and then when I found out I could take it as a subject, and I really HATED French....

**S06\_04\_KS4\_f\_c:** Me too...

**S06\_02\_KS4\_m\_d:** So I decided I would do German

**I:** OK - where did that come from that you always wanted to study German?

**S06\_02\_KS4\_m\_d:** I don't know, I just had a fascination with it for some reason

**I:** Did you know any German speakers?

**S06\_02\_KS4\_m\_d:** No.

**I:** Or German people or anything...

**S06\_02\_KS4\_m\_d:** No. Nothing. I just wanted to learn the language.

Even if learners were highly motivated for German and could see its value, KS4 learners in particular often did not rate a language as useful for their future as a STEM subject (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics). S06\_3\_KS4\_m\_d explained:

**S06\_03\_KS4\_m\_d:** I feel like the other subjects I chose are more important in the future for me than German is gonna be. And that's pretty much it. [...] And then like for what I want to do, as in become a doctor of some sort, like the other subjects, the Sciences will be much more helpful. So that's it, really.

#### *6.2.2.4. Summary: Learner focus groups*

In the focus groups, learners felt strongly that enjoyment of lessons and personal relevance were key factors for continuing German, and lack of self-efficacy was the main rationale for dropping it. A good relationship with the teacher was seen as a key factor for enjoyment of lessons. Learners' goal for German learning appeared to be communicating with native speakers, and in lessons they favoured, above all, engaging speaking activities. Self-efficacy was closely connected to learners' perceptions of enjoyment. Learners spoke movingly about counter-productive language games which made them feel ashamed. Whilst most learners did see a certain general importance in learning German for British people, this did not appear relevant for their own, personal language uptake decisions.

#### **6.2.3. Teacher and head teacher interviews**

Interviews took place with a German teacher and with the head teacher from each of the four participating schools. The altogether eight interviews covered languages and German at the interviewee's school, perceptions of learners' relationships with German, as well as more general beliefs around of German as a school subject. The teacher and head teacher interview schedules can be found in Appendices F and G. Key themes which emerged from the teacher and head teacher interviews are reported by theme below. Although the interview data set is considerably smaller than the other data sets in this study, an attempt to offer some broad quantification of interview data codings has been made (Table 6.13. below). However, Table 6.13. needs to be interpreted with caution, as the number of references does not necessarily equate with importance of a theme. Each reference to a relevant theme was coded in the interview transcripts in NVivo, and a higher number of references might simply mean that the references were widely dispersed. For this reason, the themes are presented in the order in which they emerged from the interview data, not in order of frequency. Head teacher and teacher interviews are grouped by themes

rather than by interview group, but distinctions between groups are drawn, where appropriate. Quotations are chosen as examples, rather than a list of all the instances where a certain theme might occur. HT denotes head teacher, S0\_number refers to the participating school, e.g. HT\_S04 refers to the head teacher of School S04. I stands for interviewer (i.e. myself). The last sentence of each sub-section serves as a brief summary of the theme reported on.

Table 6.13. *Teacher and head teacher interview themes*

Theme	<i>N</i> Sources (T = teacher, HT = head teacher)	<i>N</i> References	Summary of respondent perceptions
6.2.3.1. Learner choices	8 (4 T, 4 HT)	31	learners make uptake decisions based on enjoyment and for 'stupid' reasons
6.2.3.2. Subject guidance, fostering motivation and supporting uptake	8 (4 T, 4 HT)	34	teachers: foster enjoyment head teachers: utilitarian rationales
6.2.3.3. Parents	5 (2 T, 3 HT)	6	parents are key influencers of learners, in mainly negative ways
6.2.3.4. The problem with German	8 (4 T, 4 HT)	48	The subject of German is problematic
6.2.3.5. Contact with German speakers	5 (4 T, 1 HT)	5	trips and exchanges are a positive experience for learners
6.2.3.6. Languages are the same as any other subject	4 (4 HT)	4	head teachers view German as any other language and languages as any other subject
6.2.3.7. Teachers' feelings	3 (3 T)	3	German specialists feel embattled
6.2.3.8. Educator perceptions of learner attitudes	5 (2 T, 3 HT)	6	the wider public associates German* with war but learners do not
6.2.3.9. Rationales for language policy	8 (4 T, 4 HT)	40	School language policy based on practical rationales such as staffing
6.2.3.10. Discrepancy of teacher and head teacher perceptions	N/A	N/A	researcher's interpretation: knowledge of their school's language department details varied among head teachers

### 6.2.3.1. Learner choices

*“If they enjoy the lessons, they choose it”*

Both teachers and head teachers highlighted enjoyment as a key factor for learners' choosing German. HT\_S04 linked enjoyment with success, HT\_S06 with the teacher, and Teacher\_S04 with lessons:

HT\_S04 interview:

**HT\_S04: I might try and come back to the point about enjoyment, that if they enjoy it they inevitably will do well at it. And that's definitely the key to, to, to these sorts of subjects.**

HT\_S06 interview:

**HT\_S06: I think it's down to their experience at key stage 3. Did they enjoy the lessons? And if they enjoy the lessons, they choose it. It's that straightforward. And that's down to a combination of factors, but mostly it's the skills of the teacher.**

Teacher\_S04 interview:

**Teacher\_S04: I think the main reasons are they like it, they like the teacher.**

HT\_S05 interview:

**HT\_S05: I think most of all for students it's about enjoyment.**

Teacher\_S04 distinguished between learners' rationales for continuing a language, and those of their parents:

Teacher\_S04 interview:

**Teacher\_S04: I think the parents look more at the job prospects, and more the academic side, whereas the girls would say, ‘oh, so and so, a footballer from Germany is fit, I wouldn’t mind being able to speak to him!’ [laughs]. [...] The parents say ‘do German because of German business connections with England’, and blah-di-blah. But the girls choose it, logic, they like the way it’s more logic, those are the main reasons, they like their teacher, they like the way it’s organised, yeah, the trips, very big part.**

Rationales for learners’ language or German choices were sometimes viewed with disapproval by interviewees:

Teacher\_S04 interview:

**I: Why would they chose German [over Spanish in KS3], or not?**

**Teacher\_S04: The reasons were stupid, to a large extent. ‘My friend does it’.**

**You know, ‘because my friend has chosen it’, ‘because my mum tells me to’. [...] There’s quite a disparity, is that the word, between teachers, certain teachers pull in more than others, which is quite significant. And, you know, again it’s, it’s, you think it shouldn’t make a difference, but for them it does.**

HT\_S04 interview:



**HT\_S04:**      **The other thing can sometimes be, and I hate to say this but it does happen, friendship groups. [...] It does happen, you'd like to say it didn't but it does.**

HT\_S02 interview:

**HT\_S02:**      **Some of their choices are quit odd, you know 'we go to Spain every year for our holiday, therefore we'd like to study Spanish', or 'we got a relative that lives in Spain and we like them to study the language', or 'we go on holiday every year and we've got someone who lives in Spain, but we don't want to do Spanish therefore because they have enough, they are to do French'! [laughs] So it works both ways [laughs].**

Regarding learner choices, teachers and head teachers and teachers seemed to agree that learners choose to continue a language for learning-situation reasons, such as enjoyment of lessons and positive attitudes towards the teacher. Some educators appeared to disapprove of such reasons, calling them “odd”, or even “stupid”.

#### *6.2.3.2. Subject guidance, fostering motivation and supporting uptake*

***“We just point out the importance”***

All interviewees stated that they themselves and/or their schools provided subject guidance on studying languages in lessons, assemblies, parents' and options evenings. Student views on subject guidance were explored under 5.5. above.

Consistent with both teachers' and head teachers' belief that enjoyment is the key factor for language uptake, teachers named internal factors such as enjoyable lessons,

rather than external factors such as ‘the importance of German in the world’ as their main strategy for fostering motivation and thus uptake.

Teacher\_S02 interview:

**Teacher\_S02:** So what I’ve been working in is to do with what they want to do and what they enjoy, so what I’ve been working on is not actually telling them about the importance of German but maybe trying to make sure that they enjoy it, and that they are successful in it, so that they choose it.

Similarly, Teacher\_S04 is aware of the importance of personal experience to learners’ language uptake decisions, and builds this into information events:

Teacher\_S04 interview:

**Teacher\_S04:** Again, it’s their personal experience they talk about, what they like about German, and they can relate to that better than figures.

In contrast, and despite head teachers also naming enjoyment of lessons as a crucial motivating factor, when asked about promoting German or languages, school leaders tended to focus on external factors such as the value of German:

HT\_S04 interview:

**HT\_S04:** The girls are told by the careers staff here, is that languages are an extremely important passport to careers and future opportunities and that by doing a language they’re giving

**themselves more choices and more scope into where they can travel and what they can do.**

HT\_S05 interview:

**HT\_S05: I really lay emphasis on those skills what you pick up when you're learning a language, how that is very useful, and how employers and universities see those skills.**

Languages teachers seemed to hold a more localised and personal interpretation of 'the importance of German' than head teachers, relating this back to potential personal relevance for their students:

Teacher\_S05 interview:

**Teacher\_S05: With German, we just point out the importance [...], and also local companies like BMW, we've got Siemens just down the road here at the [XXX], German companies ok they don't insist on you having German, but it's a good thing if you're going to work for a German company to know some German, and so that's generally appreciated.**

In short, whilst language teachers aimed to foster students' intrinsic interest in the subject, despite indicating that they thought learners continue a language for enjoyment-related reasons, head teachers tended to use utilitarian rationales in their promotional messages to learners.

### 6.2.3.3. Parents

***“I think they read trashy newspapers”***

Both teachers and head teachers believe that parents play an influential role in learners’ language-related decision-making.

HT\_S04 interview:

**HT\_S04: Parents have an influence inevitably. Good and bad. [...] there still some parents that have very fixed views on German.**

Mainly, parents were portrayed as having a negative impact on their children’s German learning, be it through being anti-German, uneducated, unreflective or through reading the ‘wrong’ newspapers:

Teacher\_S04 interview:

**Teacher\_S04: I still get, German and, you know, the history, and ‘I do not want my daughter to study German because of you know, the wars, the wars, etcetera’.**

Below, Teacher\_S02 explained the unhelpful parental view that because parents themselves found languages hard when they were studying them at school, they assume that their children will also find them hard, and thus aim to protect them from this perceived struggle or disappointment:

Teacher\_S02 interview:

**Teacher\_S02: I often, and I know this is the case with some of my colleagues as well, have parents’ evening appointments where parents say ‘oh**

**I was no good at languages at school’, or ‘I didn’t try’, or...  
[...]. And I think a lot of parents, [...] they don’t really realise  
that it could help their son or daughter with English, with  
literacy, but maybe that’s to do with the sort of, ability of the  
parents as well?**

Above, teacher\_S02 questions – as the only interviewee to do so – the fact that ‘low literacy’ learners are excluded from language study. Teacher \_S06 believed that, in contrast to lack of parental support for languages, undue pressure on learners by their parents to study language can have an equally demotivating effect:

Teacher\_S06 interview:

**Teacher\_S06: Going back to the reasons why they chose German, some  
students are quite heavily influenced by their parents. Their  
parents really want them to do a language, so they choose  
between French and German but it’s not that they really wanted  
to do German, but their parents wanted them to do German.**

HT\_S04 interview:

**HT\_S04: We do have, we do have some slight issues with how some of our  
parents see it.**

**I: How would they see it?**

**HT\_S04: I think they read trash newspapers, so I think the tabloids and  
by that I mean the sort of Daily Mail reader, have, and there has  
been some – even I think the Times and a number of papers,  
national papers, have run stories and the TES, on the decline in**

**German. I think some of them have very fixed views on their bad experiences at school.**

HT\_S06 chose the word “families” to talk about his perception of value of languages attributed along social class divisions. The term “families” here appears to imply that parents and learners from the same social class share the same values:

HT\_S06 interview:

**HT\_S06: It’s a cultural thing isn’t it, that for the families, there are families that will come to the school, that will value a language, any language, and then there’ll be families that come to the school that don’t value language teaching, so, culturally, that’s, that’s what most schools are faced with now.... And we’ve got a lot of families that don’t value language teaching, languages as a subject.**

Both teachers and head teachers perceived parents as key influencers of learners as regards their language uptake decisions. Parental influence was commonly framed as unhelpful by educators.

#### *6.2.3.4. The problem with German*

***“We have a battle on our hands”***

Interviewees painted a picture of German as problematic, both nationally and within their own school context. HT\_S06 appeared to be especially problem-focussed.

**HT\_S06: Er, what else about languages. Difficult to recruit language teachers at the moment, that's another issue.**

Harsh marking, especially in the 6th Form, and inherent difficulty of the subject was a recurrent theme:

HT\_S04 interview:

**HT\_S04: I do want to stress to you that I, I do worry about German as a language in the English curriculum, and I do think that it's worrying that the trends have been going on in A'level German, haven't been taken seriously enough. [...] Because the students are not taking them in the 6th Form, because the track records is, the results are dire! So there is, there is a worry.**

HT\_S05 interview:

**HT\_S05: I think for many students, they perceive it as a more difficult choice. [...] There is certainly a perception, which isn't promoted by the school, I think it's kind of institutional, or is out there, that German is a little bit harder than other subjects.**

Teacher\_S04 interview:

**Teacher\_S04: It is disheartening obviously, [...] you know if you talk about the uptake of German, if you have that nationally going, you will not get people to do German.**

HT\_S04 was the only interviewee who raised the concept of 'global English' as a background variable for MFL study in the UK today, interestingly relating it to the 'English speakers are bad at languages' fallacy:

HT\_S04 interview:

**HT\_S04: We have a battle on our hands with two national situations. One is: English is the most spoken language in the world, rightly or wrongly. And we in England are still not great at learning languages.**

Head teachers tended to distance themselves from any negative view of German by casting this 'societal' or attributing this view to parents:

**HT\_S04: The other thing is that some parents believe that German is becoming a dead language. [...] And they argue that for example if they take up a post in South America, Spanish is very very useful. If they take up a post in Germany, all Germans speak English.**

**I: That's what the parents think?**

**HT\_S04: That's what the parents think. Not what I think!**

Some teachers commented on behaviour issues in German lessons, linked to low motivation because of a rise in difficulty (Teacher\_S02) or being forced to study the subject (Teacher\_S06):

Teacher\_S02 interview:



**Teacher\_S02: And we do a German lesson and they feel quite quickly that they, they feel they can get a long way in a short time, and then obviously it gets a bit harder, which is why we're now obviously finding our year nines quite challenging at the moment**

Teacher\_S06 interview:

**Teacher\_S06: I know that there are students in year 9 especially and they are some in year 11, who maybe have been coerced into doing German by their parents, and you know, they know it's difficult, there is an issue with you know them giving up and not really trying their best coz then they haven't got the motivation, so it's always difficult to motivate them and get them going, and making sure that they're behaving, and, and doing everything they should. [...] But I think they know that it's a difficult subject, but I keep telling them that if they do well in it, it will look really good for their future prospects. Even if they don't want to have a career where they have to speak or know German, just having it on their CV will look good.**

Teacher\_S06 linked the study of German (as opposed to French) with type of school:

**Teacher\_S06: It's a shame that not many, not as many schools these days do German, at, you know, in other, in other state schools. I know that a lot of public and private schools still study German as a language, a lot of Language Colleges will still offer it, a lot of**

**grammar schools still offer and I've been to other schools in the area. It is a shame.**

The above quotes show how German was commonly framed as problematic by interviewees.

#### *6.2.3.5. Contact with German speakers*

##### ***“Taking them to Germany has a massive impact”***

Teachers and head teachers agreed on the motivating effect of trips and exchanges. Teachers spoke emphatically about their personal experience of the impact on their students. Teacher\_S05 described the positive attitudes of learners after a trip to Germany:

##### Teacher\_S05 interview:

**Teacher\_S05: Taking them to Germany has a massive impact. [...] When they go to Germany and we go to the Christmas markets and we do all our sightseeing and we see Cologne, some of my year 9 boys apparently told some of their other teachers here, they told me this, that they loved it! They loved Germany, they want to go back, they want to take their family.**

Whilst there was a consensus that trips and exchanges are beneficial, reasons cited against these were parental anxiety of terrorist attacks, and, in the case of exchanges, teacher concerns around safeguarding:

##### Teacher\_S06 interview:

**Teacher\_S06: Exchanges are brilliant, in principle, it's just with current safe guarding issues, the immense responsibility of doing a trip in the first place, to then send students off to lots of different homes which I haven't seen [...] I think taking students to a hotel where I can keep an eye on them is enough responsibility for me at the moment. I'd love to do an exchange, but, you know there's just too many risks to advantages.**

Teacher\_S06 also commented on learners' reactions to witnessing her using German for real communication with native speakers:

**Teacher\_S06: And when they hear me going over and speaking, you know, speaking in the hotel or speaking out and about, and they say "Miss! You can really speak German!" [laughs] and it's kind of like yeah I can say more than just 'put your hand up' [laughs], so they love that!**

In short, trips and exchanges were thought to be conducive for language learning, and language teachers related anecdotes of experiencing their motivating effect on students first-hand.

#### *6.2.3.6. Languages are the same as any other subject*

*"I talk about the importance of the Humanities, just as I talk about the importance of languages"*

A view of languages which emerged from the head teacher interviews was the view that languages are the same as any other subject:

HT\_S05 interview:

**HT\_S05: I talk about the importance of the Humanities, just as I talk about the importance of languages.**

HT\_S06 revealed a belief that languages are not seen as of the same importance as other subjects, but did not have a compelling argument for why they might be ‘just as important’:

HT\_S06 interview:

**HT\_S06: I believe it’s important to have Languages as an A’level.**

**I: Ok – why?**

**HT\_S06: Well because it is a skill we do well to serve our students with, provide them with that. I know it’s a cliché to say modern society and all the rest of it, but it’s just as important as skills – we offer Technology we offer Science we offer English we offer Maths – why don’t we offer languages? It’s just as important.**

HT\_S06 also offered a view of languages as ‘just like any other subject’, as boringly grammar-focussed, and likely to benefit from trips and exchanges to inject some relevance and interest:

**HT\_S06: [We should] not just focus on grammar but the wide picture, more trips to France more trips to Germany...language clubs,**

**visits from other, other students, you know, of the countries, anything that can open it up and make it more interesting and accessible. But that's the same for every subject. Not just languages. [...] The danger with languages is it can become really dull and focussed just on the GCSE, isn't it.**

Head teachers appeared to consider German as like any other language taught at the school, as well as like any other subject taught at the school. In this context, HT\_S06 spoke about the need to create intrinsic interest through widening the focus beyond the classroom, such as trips and extra-curricular language activities. Yet on the whole, head teachers focussed more on the utilitarian value in their promotional messages about languages.

#### *6.2.3.7. Teachers' feelings*

***"I find that really frustrating"***

There was a sense of German teachers' frustration as regards languages, and particularly German as a school subject in England within the overall curriculum. Teacher\_S04's comment below suggests that the focus on STEM subjects can have a negative impact on German uptake:

Teacher S04 interview:

**Teacher\_S04: It's rare now I think to find that the most academically able think 'ooh I must do languages', I think they feel the pressure on them to do Science and Maths.**

Teacher\_S02 explained her enthusiasm for German, and her lonely position as the only specialist at the school:

Teacher\_S02 interview:

**I: Am I hearing you feel a bit alone?**

**Teacher\_S02: A little bit, yeah... I feel German is not a fashionable language to learn, and I find that really frustrating. I find it really frustrating that the trend is schools are not teaching German anymore, because I think it contradicts what's going on in the world, in terms of jobs, and economics, and trade.**

German specialists tended to feel frustrated and embattled. They felt that their position was difficult due to declining uptake and consequently fewer colleagues with German specialism.

#### *6.2.3.8. Educator perceptions of learner attitudes*

***“I would think that that is a long time ago”***

Teachers as well as head teachers (bar HT\_S06) did not seem to think that their students would associate German with negative historical events such as war or Nazis, but instead aspects of contemporary culture such as Christmas Markets, or football, that they would experience as German for themselves:

HT\_S02 interview:

**HT\_S02: I would think – they would have a very positive view! Not just about the stereotypical hardworking industrious creative**

**football, but actually because of our cultural links that we've had, the visits of students here and us to German schools.**

Teacher\_S02 interview:

**Teacher\_S02: Maybe Christmas markets? They seem to have a lot more Christmas markets now in the UK.**

HT\_S04 interview:

**HT\_S04: You know my generation would have gone, well 'Ledenhosen' and, you know, Bavarians, and you might have got people mentioning Nazi Germany – the girls here, I don't think would make that necessarily a connection.**

HT\_S06 was the only interviewee who believed that amongst other things, learners would associate German with war:

HT\_S06 interview:

**HT\_S06: Football. Probably. Definitely. The war, of course [laughs]. Coz they do it in History, so... and they would associate it with that. Erm... but other than that, no... beer?**

Stereotypes around Germans and Germany tended to be viewed by participants as negative historically, but in the process of 'changing' towards positive associations. HT\_S05 assumed these 'old-fashioned', negative stereotypes to stem from students' home environment:

HT\_S05 interview:

**HT\_S05: I think there'll be some, and there might be some stereotypes from home about 'Germany' and 'the Germans'...But on the whole I think, I would hope increasingly with the majority of our cohort, that that is a long time ago and they wouldn't even know what I was talking about, you know! So I think things, things are changing.**

Similarly, Teacher\_S05 implied that stereotypes about Germany are negative, but that her students did not hold any such negative connotations:

Teacher\_S05 interview:

**Teacher\_S05: I don't think they have too many stereotypes these days, I don't hear it, I don't hear anything particularly negative about Germany. [...] I don't really hear students, ever, making any stereotypical comments, oh, what's Germany like, oh, negative connotations.**

Teachers and head teachers felt that a historic preoccupation in the UK existed around the association of Germans with war and the Nazi era, but that this was consigned to the past and did not apply to their students nowadays.

#### *6.2.3.9. Rationales for language policy*

***"It's partly historic, it's partly the staffing that we have"***

Head teachers did not appear to hold any strong opinions which particular language they wanted to be taught at the school for principle-oriented reasons (such as importance in



the world, relevance for students' lives, successful results). Rather than elaborating on the value of German or languages, HT\_S06 explained that he personally found German easy to learn, and would therefore have no objection to students at his school studying German. His use of the subjunctive ("would") jars a little, as it sounds as if students were not learning German currently (which of course they were):

HT\_S06 interview:

**HT\_S06: I think it [German] is a very easy language to speak, yeah, I found it very easier than French to learn, so I wouldn't have a problem with the students here learning German. I think it's a good thing.**

HT\_S02's rationale for the language policy at his school covered mainly practical issues such as staffing:

HT\_S02 interview:

**HT\_S02: The reason is, that we, I guess it's partly historic, it's partly the staffing that we have.**

There was a sense that head teachers felt that while it would be desirable to offer languages for all, languages do not suit everyone. Invariably this would mean that languages do not suit the lower achievers.

**HT\_S02: I say that there will be 10 percent of the year group who don't cover, don't actually sit an exam when they should in GCSE.**

**They are students who will struggle with a language, we give them additional support in English, ok?**

Head teachers commented that learners with learning disabilities are also routinely excluded from language study:

HT\_S04 interview:

**HT\_S04: There will be a few girls who do not take any languages at all, they will be girls for whom we have special dispensation through dyslexia, and where there are certain issues with regard to languages in particular. For example word blindness and confusion.**

Teacher\_S06 interview:

**Teacher\_S06: The ones who don't [do a second language] tend to be the ones with very low literacy levels or Special Educational Needs, they would either stick to just doing French, and there are, I think there's a very small minority of students who don't do any languages - they do extra English.**

Learners with low literacy and/or SEN were routinely excluded from language study. This was not questioned by interviewees apart from Teacher\_S02 (6.2.3.3. above). School language policy such as which languages were offered, to whom, and when, appeared to be made on the grounds of practical considerations such as existing staffing.

6.2.3.10. *Discrepancy of teacher and head teacher perceptions*

**“Is the language assistant a native speaker? I don’t think so, no”**

In three of the four participating schools (all but School S02), a discrepancy was noted between factual information about how languages work at that particular school as reported by head teachers and as reported by language teachers. Examples of this ranged from a head teacher attributing an incorrect role to a member of the language department, to conflicting information regarding uptake numbers, setting arrangements, language results, extra-curricular activities, trips and exchanges, language assistants, and history of languages at the school. HT\_S06 seemed unsure about the current number of language staff, and confused about the role of the language assistant, whose role sounds more like a teaching assistant:

HT\_S06 interview:

**HT\_S06:** We have a language assistant who works part time, who supports with the admin and in lessons, and displays and producing materials for the teachers, and then we have, er... two... three...? Three other language teachers... I think.

**I:** And so is the language assistant there for French or German?

**HT\_S06:** She helps in both, yeah, yeah.

**I:** Ok...?! Is she a native speaker of a language?

**HT\_S06:** I don’t think so... – no. No.

HT\_S06 also appeared to hold an unusual view of what level of proficiency can be achieved at school level:

**HT\_S06:** I quite enjoy German – I enjoy speaking German! So...

**I: You enjoy speaking German?**

**HT\_S06: Well, actually I don't speak German. I studied it at school, but only to year 9, but... I have German friends, and... bantered with them in German at various times, so yeah, no, I think German is a great language, I think it's an easy language, so...**

In sum, interview data showed that knowledge of language department specific details varied considerably among head teachers.

#### *6.2.3.11. Summary: Teacher and head teacher interviews*

Whilst both teachers and head teachers felt that enjoyment was a key factor for learners' choices, lobbying strategies for German and other languages seemed to centre around utilitarian rationales, especially by head teachers. Language teachers, but especially head teachers, appeared to feel confident that they dispensed helpful subject advice regarding languages, which does not, however, tend to be perceived in this way by learners (see 5.5. above). Some confusion could be observed in three of the four participating schools regarding details of the current language policy. School-specific language policies appeared to be based on practical, internal considerations such as staffing, rather than wider rationales such as status or value of individual languages. Head teachers tended to view all individual languages taught at their school as of the same importance, and they perceived languages as the same as any other subject. On the whole, head teachers tended to not consider the complexity of attitudes towards German as much as language teachers. Head teachers tended to blame parents, the press, and examinations for declining German uptake figures, rather than look inward and address factors which they themselves have control over, such as aspects of language policy, or school-specific curriculum pathways.

### **6.3. Five learner case studies**

Five cases were selected for an in-depth analysis of learners' thinking around German at idiographic level. This allowed a fuller picture of some learners' thinking to be presented, in that all the contributions made by an individual learner were taken account of and brought together for idiographic analysis. Since it links eclectic data with the learner participant who produced it, this section is intended to address the complexity and individuality of selected learners, bring the data alive, and act as reminder that participants are 'real people'. Learners were selected in order to cover both droppers/continuers, KS3/4, boys/girls, and a range of motivation scores. As a spread of motivation scores was considered more relevant for this investigation than gender balance, which was not the focus of this study, unfortunately only one boy was selected as a case study (there were more female focus group volunteers than male). Table 6.14. below shows details of the learner cases selected from the focus group participants for analysis (for details of focus group participants see Table 6.12. under 6.2.2. above). Given that the case study section focusses on learners as individuals, pseudonyms (rather than personal identifiers) are used for the case study analysis in the following section. All five case study learners also took part in a focus group. Learner statements are given verbatim, including spelling or grammar mistakes. The case studies section (6.3.) includes data from the Family Fortunes task, which will not be presented in full until section 6.4. This is because the Family Fortunes task elicits learner perceptions of public discourses, and was designed as the link between the schools settings domain (chapter 6) and the press discourse domain (chapter 7). Therefore, although section 6.3. presents selected Family Fortunes data in the context of learner case studies, the main Family Fortunes data pertaining to larger patterns in learner perceptions of public opinions around German were considered to be best placed as the last section of chapter 6, leading to the presentation of representations of German in public and private discourses in chapter 7.

Table 6.14. *Learner case studies*

<u>Personal identifier</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>KS</u>	<u>Continuer or dropper</u>	<u>Pseudonym</u>	<u>Overall motivation (KS mean)</u>	<u>Learning situation (KS mean)</u>	<u>Perception of value (KS mean)</u>	<u>Self- efficacy (KS mean)</u>	<u>SES<sup>a</sup></u>
S02_97_KS3_f_d	S02	3	dropper	Becky	2.78 (3.47)	4.00 (3.66)	2.33 (3.48)	2.00 (3.27)	N/A
S04_02_KS3_f_d	S04	3	dropper	Olivia	4.89 (3.47)	5.00 (3.66)	5.00 (3.48)	4.67 (3.27)	1
S06_47_KS3_m_c	S06	3	continuer	Mahdi	4.33 (3.47)	4.00 (3.66)	3.67 (3.48)	5.33 (3.27)	3
S05_127_KS4_f_d	S05	4	dropper	India	2.11 (3.83)	2.67 (3.04)	2.33 (3.77)	1.33 (3.70)	3
S06_04_KS4_f_c	S06	4	continuer	Amber	4.67 (3.83)	4.33 (3.04)	4.67 (3.77)	5.00 (3.70)	3

<sup>a</sup> as categorised under 5.2.1. above, with 1 = the highest and 3 = the lowest SES band.

### 6.3.1. Becky – a low motivation KS3 dropper

*“You don’t want to learn German if it’s boring”*

Becky is a year 9 (KS3) German dropper and French continuer from School S02, where a language for GCSE is compulsory. English is Becky’s only home language. Her SES was unclassifiable since she listed where her parents work but not their role (computer company/government Science facility respectively). Her motivation levels were below average for overall motivation (2.78), perception of value of German (2.33) and self-efficacy (2.0), but just above average for learning situation (4.0). This suggests that Becky likes lessons but dislikes other aspects of German learning.

As stated in her questionnaire response to the metaphor task, for Becky, learning German is like **“the most boring thing ever”**, because **“it’s useless”**. Whilst bordering on the non-metaphoric (Becky’s frequent use of the word “like” in her spoken data points to her interpreting the word ‘like’ not as an invitation for comparison, but as a filler used in informal speech), there was a clear message, and consequently Becky’s response was coded under the ‘drudgery’ theme, and categorised as a ‘static metaphor’. Becky thinks that if German was a food, it would be a **“Brussel sprout”**, because **“no-one likes it”**, if it was an animal, it would be a **“skunk”**, because **“no-one wants it”**. For both the food and the animal metaphors, Becky feels that German is ‘categorically bad’, and for all three metaphor types her contributions can be called non-conducive for German-learning. By not positioning herself as a learner/speaker within her statements (e.g. “it’s useless”, not “it’s not useful for me”), Becky makes clear that for her, it is German itself that is the problem, not herself as the learner. By asserting that “no one wants it” and “no one likes it”, she attributes her own negative opinions also to “all other people”, thus endowing her statements with a presumed authority of popular opinion. It also enables her to distance herself from her own opinion, possibly in a subconscious attempt to protect her self-worth (Covington, 1992).

When Becky is learning German, she feels “**confused as**”. If we asked 100 random British people what they thought when they heard the word ‘German’, according to Becky, they would think “**boring**”, and for Becky this is “**mostly correct**”. Becky believes that for the key word ‘Germans’, random Britons would think “**kind**”, and Becky feels this is “**totally correct**”. For ‘Germany’ Becky thinks public associations would be “**big**”, and she thinks this is “**a little more correct than incorrect**”. For all three key words, then, Becky agrees with her perception of public opinion, ranging from “a little” to “totally”. Whilst “boring” for ‘German’ and “big” for ‘Germany’ are relatively common answers, the association of “kind” with Germans stands out as untypical, especially as Becky thinks this opinion is “totally correct”. Becky seems to interpret ‘German’ in the context in which she encounters it personally, i.e., as a school subject, not, for example, in a wider, cultural, or national context, and this shows her attitude as negative, whereas her Family Fortunes answers for ‘Germans’ and ‘Germany’ were positive and neutral respectively.

According to Becky, people who learn German are “**probably really confused**”, because “**it’s really confusing**”. Here, as in her previous statements, Becky extends her own feelings and views to others, without a consideration that different people may have different views: clearly, some people do enjoy German, find it useful, and are not confused by it, but this way of thinking is not evidenced by Becky’s answers.

Becky reports that she did not receive any guidance regarding choosing a language, and that she intended to drop German but continue with French because “**I don’t like it [German] and French is easier**”. Reiterating sentiments from her previous answers, Becky adds that German “**is confusing and no one gets it**”. In the focus group, Becky explained that she is taking French because she has been “**doing it for longer than I’ve been doing German**”, linking proficiency and self-efficacy with length of study. She resents being forced to study a particular language, rather than choosing the language herself: “**I’d want to choose it rather than being given a set language**”. Her reason for



her ideal language choice is driven by the aim of communication with a native speaker (Spanish) friend: **“I’d rather do Spanish than French. So that I can like talk to my friend coz I can’t understand them and they can’t understand me”**. Becky feels strongly that the language curriculum is not relevant for her and her peers’ perceived language needs. This then, in her account, has a negative effect on class behaviour, which Becky links with learner interest levels:

**Becky:** When we do fun lessons and interesting, like when it’s on topics that we actually like want to learn about, but sometimes when we do just random stuff then it’s not that interesting so people don’t really listen, and then like sometimes...

**I:** You mean other people in the class?

**Becky:** Yeah, like, other people, and then like it just gets like, really noisy, and then it’s just not nice to be in that, like, classroom, and then you don’t want to like, learn German if it’s boring.

To improve language lessons, Becky suggests “a speaking lesson once a week”, illustrating her frustration with “textbook work”:

**Becky:** If we had a lesson on just like speaking to each other about what we’ve been learning, and then like do the same, so like, for each time, so one lesson like every week or something we can just talk about what we’ve learnt,

**I:** What, in English or in the language?

**Becky:** In the language, coz then like you learn how to talk about it and stuff.

**I:** When you say ‘talk about it’, do you mean...

**Becky: Like the subject we've been learning.**

**I: So, do practice in that language?**

**Becky: Yeah!**

**I: Ok, so once a week have a speaking lesson.**

**Becky: Yeah, and like, no text book work!**

Becky believes that for UK learners, German is not an important language to study, because **“Germany isn't normally a holiday place, like, it's like not sunny, so nobody's gonna want to go there in the summer”**. When questioned whether there might be any reasons for studying a language apart from holidays, Becky reasserts that holidays would be the most common reason:

**Becky: I guess that most people, most people wouldn't got to Spain or France just normally, like you wouldn't just pop over to France quickly, like you'd have to go there for a reason, and mostly the reason is holidays. Like, you can't miss school, just because you want to go to France.**

Here Becky's use of the word “people” in connection with her reasoning that “you can't miss school just because you want to go to France” suggests that she interprets “people” as her peers, i.e., school students. For this age group, holidays might indeed be the most common reason for travel, unlike for adults, who might also travel for work. However, it looks like Becky is focussing on her immediate situation even when using the general term “people”, in her assumption that the reason for learning a language is travel, and the reason for travel is holidays.

So far, Becky's views around German link perceived lack of usefulness, boredom, class behaviour, personally irrelevant topics, and lack of language choice. Her views of

German do not transcend the personal domain, e.g. German as a school subject, or holidays as the only conceivable reason for using a foreign language. Whilst Becky's contributions in the questionnaire as well as in the focus group point to a categorically negative view of German as a language and a school subject, a slightly different slant to her views emerged during the last stages of the focus group interview. Here, Becky seems to attribute her low self-efficacy not to German per se, but to unhelpful teaching and tasks:

**I: How do you feel you're doing in German?**

**Becky: Rubbish. Coz like they don't explain it to us enough, like they say what we do in our assessment that we have to write down about this, but they don't like help us so like it would help if they gave us like starts to sentences and then we can like finish it off with what we know? Because like some people don't really understand it, like I don't get German, so I've got a really low level in it. So like it's not really easy to do it and so it's just like, you get a bad grade and it's really hard.**

**I: So are you saying if the activities were different you might learn more and be better at it?**

**Becky: Yeah!**

This shift in Becky's stance towards German is interesting, and shows the importance of analysing the data ideographically and at a deeper level. Looking at Becky's contributions as part of quantitative, statistical analysis alone would give the impression of an unmotivated German dropper who holds an unshakeable belief of the categorical 'badness' of German. Examining Becky's data in more detail, however, shows that there seems to be room for a shift in attitudes and thinking, as demonstrated above, especially under consideration of Becky's above average learning situation motivation score.

### 6.3.2. Olivia – a high motivation KS3 dropper

*“The teachers try really hard in our lessons”*

Olivia is year 9 (KS3) German dropper and French continuer from School S04, a private girls’ school, where at least one language at GCSE level is compulsory. English is Olivia’s first language, but she has a French mother and used to speak French with her mother when she was younger. Her parents’ respective occupations are university lecturer with links to Modern Languages, and Business Director, which places Olivia in SES category 1 (top band, as categorised under 5.2.1. above). Olivia’s motivation levels were above average for all four motivation scales of overall motivation (4.89), perception of value of German (5.0), self-efficacy (4.67), and learning situation (5.0).

Olivia feels that learning German is like **“swimming in a pool”**, because it is **“enjoyable but hard at times”**. Here Olivia employs an ambivalent metaphor: learning German can be a struggle because it is hard, but at the same time it can be a pleasure as it can also be enjoyable. Olivia writes that if German was an animal, it would be a **“dead piece of pig warmed up with seasoning”**, because **‘sausages are from Germany’**, which is a non-metaphoric statement and was therefore not analysed further. Olivia thinks that if German was a food, it would be a **“roast chicken”**, because **“it takes a while to understand (e.g. cook) but once you do it it is fun (yummy) and interesting”**. Olivia frames German learning as a worthwhile pursuit. It may take time and include periods of drudgery while you master the basics, but it is an ultimately rewarding challenge and ends up **“fun”**, **“yummy”**, and **“interesting”**, denoting a dynamic use of metaphor which describes an upward trajectory. Olivia here makes a connection between persistence and success. Her attitude to learning German is neutral at worst, and conducive at best. When learning German, Olivia feels **“interested and enthusiastic”**. For the Family Fortunes task, Olivia thinks that 100 random British people, when they heard the word ‘German’,

would think “**country**”, and for Olivia this is “**totally correct**”. Olivia believes that for the key word ‘Germans’, her fellow-Britons would think “**Guten Tag!**”, and she feels this is “**mostly correct**”. Here Olivia possibly reveals a belief that some knowledge of German is commonplace, or it might be that her thinking is influenced by the school setting domain she is familiar with, “Guten Tag” would probably feature frequently in lessons. For ‘Germany’ Olivia thinks public associations would be “**boiled cabbage**”, adding “**I ate it on holiday**”, and she thinks this is “**a little more correct than incorrect**”. Her ‘aside’ of “I ate it [boiled cabbage] on holiday” is interesting, in that it points more towards a personal experience, rather than an adoption of a stereotype. Olivia seems to agree, to varying extents, with her perception of public opinion. Her ‘Family Fortunes’ answers were categorised as neutral towards German, the Germans, and Germany.

Olivia indicates that her parents gave her advice about studying a language, and that her school did not. Olivia says she dropped German because “**I am not as good at German and I have chosen French and Latin instead**”. She adds that German is “**well taught and I understand the language and culture well**”, and explains her reasons for choosing French over German in a side note on the questionnaire: “**I personally feel that I am better at French and I have no German in my family (but I DO have French and Italian) so partly my family helped. However, they did want me to continue but I think I’m better at French**”. There is a consistent motif of ‘the personal’ in Olivia’s answers, from the cabbage she ate on holiday to going against her mother’s highly qualified advice because of her own ‘personal feelings’. She also demonstrates an attunement with the personal when she adds to her mother’s occupation “**you might know her?!**” making the connection between the current research and her mother’s work.

Olivia thinks that people who learn German are “**interested in languages and logical**”, because of “**the grammar as it needs to be logical and you should be passionate with the language**”. A ‘logical’ view of German is relatively common, but in

the above statement Olivia also displays an interesting belief how you should “be with the language”, i.e. “passionate”, linking language learning and (positive) emotions. Olivia continues this theme in the focus group, when she states usefulness for personal use in the near and more distant future as her rationales for choosing French and Latin over German:

**Olivia:** I’ve chosen French instead of German because I have French family and so I think it will be better if I go to my relatives. And then I’ve also chosen Latin because I’ll probably be doing History when I’m older, so I think it might come in handy.

As well as the criterion of perceived personal usefulness as a rationale for choosing a particular language, Olivia demonstrates an awareness of the general benefits of languages in terms of broadening horizons. German, she believes, can help with learning other languages:

**Olivia:** I think it kind of depends on what, like how you’re doing in school and what you want to do when you’re older? But I think it’s really handy at least doing, at least another language, because, like, there’s like all these other countries and so we need to speak more than like one, and also for German, it kind of leads into other languages as well and so it can help with not only just learning English and German but like it can lead on to like, I don’t know, like Danish? I don’t know [laughs]

**someone:** Dutch?

**Olivia:** Dutch, yeah, Dutch. And then also like makes you more aware of other countries, so, you're not just thinking about the UK, ... there are other places

**I:** How would make you aware of other countries do you think?

**Olivia:** Coz it makes you think like not everyone speaks the same language as you and has like the same culture and so you can understand that when you go to another country you need to like be able to speak their language as well and be able to understand what to do when you're there.

Here Olivia links language and culture, and in that she contrasts with Becky above, in that she seems to have a sense how language can function in the wider sphere, quite possibly due to her different social background. Whilst Olivia is able to conceptualise a language as a cultural asset, her main perspective on languages for her personal use still seems to be oriented by how relevant they are for her specific future plans. She shows an awareness that languages can be an advantage in the job market, however, this relates back to travelling to the country and using the language there, rather than more overarching skills:

**Olivia:** It would look better like on your CV or something if you've got more languages, then employers will be able to like send you off to like the country and they need somebody to be able to do that. Also I think like Germany, I mean I know they're good at, like, cars and stuff like that, and... I'm not sure, banking? I mean it's got a really big capital city, Berlin, so, I mean it's like a good place for like business and stuff, so if you know it, you'll, you know, do well, I don't know... yeah.

She describes what she has heard about Germany via UK media. Her interpretation of Germany's refugee policy leads her to conclude that Germany can afford to support refugees more than other countries, and that "the country isn't corrupt" (possibly here she means bankrupt):

**Olivia:** I think also, on the news, you never hear about Germany, like, I mean I, they might have some money problems at the moment but you never really hear them about being really poor, kind of thing, and I think like, with like the refugees as well they can afford to like bring in quite a lot as well, so it shows that like the country isn't corrupt or anything, so, that, and also like Audis and Vaux- no, Volkswagen, and other cars like that, you know... and engineering? I don't know but I heard that kind of German engineering is like, good.

Olivia believes that learners make decisions as to which language to study based on enjoyment and perceived usefulness to them personally, and she specifically links German with the car industry:

**Olivia:** I think most people go for the like language that they enjoy the most or just that they find most interesting, but also they can have a... like if they wanted to be working in the car industry then they might go for German more than... Spanish.

This shows that if it had not been for Olivia's even stronger connection with and higher success in French, she might well have chosen German:



**Olivia:** Well for me it was about how it would help me when I'm older with like my family and stuff but also, whether I enjoyed it or not, I found it easy, because I'm, like I used to speak more French, so, I like am a bit more fluent in that. But erm German, I would have chosen it but erm I'm not AS good at it and I don't know if I'd be able to like balance doing French AND German, and being able to be like good at both of them.

Like many other learners, Olivia is keen to communicate with other teenagers in the target language, and is enthusiastic about the idea of pen pals or skype connections. This demonstrates a certain curiosity and willingness to learn about others as well as learn the language, which ties in with the personal theme encountered throughout Olivia's contributions:

**Olivia:** With skype you'd be forced to like actually speak to that person, and I think it'd probably be more – like it might be better because like, you could find out about their life, and not just them speaking, but like how their school works, and what their lifestyle's like as well.

Unusually, Olivia talks in an appreciative way about her teachers' efforts, echoing phrases likely to be used by teachers towards their students, not vice versa (e.g. "try hard"). Possibly, this might be an instance where Oliva has appropriated or internalised ideas of positive learning and teaching concepts, such as effort:

**Olivia:** Yeah I'd probably say that the teachers, they all try really hard in our lessons, like every term when there's Easter and Christmas they'll organise like a German activity, so, and it'll be something to do with Germany as well, so once there was like a celebration happening, I can't remember what it was called now...[...] And also we find out all about Christmas, so the teachers always try really hard in our lessons to make it fun and exciting – that works!

Finally, Olivia's view of German as a worthwhile challenge which emerged from her questionnaire responses also features in her focus group contribution regarding advice on German she would give to others:

**Olivia:** I'd tell them that, again, German, although the grammar can be quite challenging, that once you've learnt it, it does make sense, and it's like, it's like satisfying when you've got it and stuff like that, yeah.

Olivia is a type of learner for whom examination of data at idiographic level shows that although she has decided to drop German, she is nevertheless very highly motivated towards it. She shows extremely high levels of self-efficacy, towards her learning situation, and perceives a high value in studying German. Her attitudes towards German are overall conducive, and she shows an energetic willingness to invest considerable and at times uncomfortable effort in order to achieve success. From all angles, Olivia seems like 'the ideal German learner'. The reason she has dropped German is simply, that she probably shows the same, if not more, positive motivation and attitudes towards French. The

personal dimension is of particular importance in Olivia's case, as she has a strong family connection with French. Interestingly, she went against her parents' advice to continue with German. Whilst she can see the bigger picture for others, for herself, Olivia follows the principle of perceived personal usefulness and enjoyment, closely linked with expectations of success. It follows that learners such as Olivia would benefit from different support mechanisms in terms of German learning than would, say, learners like Becky.

### **6.3.3. Mahdi – a high motivation KS3 continuer**

*“I've always had this thought of ‘hide the books’”*

Mahdi is year 8 (KS3) German continuer from School S06, the school with the highest deprivation level (School S06 was the only school which started KS4 in year 9, meaning that S06 KS3 learners are one year younger (year 8) than other KS3 learners (year 9) in the study)). Mahdi's family is originally from Pakistan, and they speak Urdu at home. His parents' respective occupations are wholesale employee and nursery teacher, which places Mahdi in SES category 3. Mahdi's motivation levels were above average for all four motivation scales, and particularly high for self-efficacy (overall motivation: 4.33, perception of value of German: 3.67, learning situation: 4.0, self-efficacy: 5.33).

Mahdi feels that learning German is like **“doing a poo”**, because it is **“complicated”**. Here Mahdi seemed to suggest that German is a natural and necessary, possibly unpleasant and at times difficult part of life. According to Mahdi, if German was a food, it would be a **“lamb curry”**, because **“it's interesting”**, if it was an animal, it would be a **“cow”**, because **“it's easy to kill”**. Mahdi's metaphors were coded as conducive for language learning for food, and non-conducive for the other two metaphors, but some of his answers were ambiguous and hard to code. For example, “easy to kill” might refer to the extinction of the language, the conquering of the difficulties of the language, or possibly to something else outside of the language context.

When Mahdi learns German, he feels “**wunderbar** 😊”, showing an instance of sense of humour, as well as a playful use of the German language. For the Family Fortunes task, Mahdi thinks that 100 random British people, when they heard the word ‘German’, would think “**The WWs**”, and for Mahdi this is “**more correct than incorrect**”. Mahdi believes that for the key word ‘Germans’, his fellow-Britons would think “**Adolf Hitler**”, and he feels this is “**totally correct**”. For ‘Germany’ Mahdi thinks public associations would be “**sausages**”, but he has left the personal agreement section blank. However, a ‘war’ theme emerges from his existing two answers, and Mahdi tends to agree to at least some extent with his perceived public opinions. Mahdi reports that no one gave him advice regarding continuing or dropping a language. His reason for continuing German is “**because it is fun**”. Mahdi thinks that people who learn German are “**amazing**”, because “**I say so**”. From Mahdi’s questionnaire answers, a picture emerges of an energetic, confident learner who is oriented by the ‘fun’ principle, and might possibly make contributions based on the perceived entertainment value to impress his peers (such as referring to the culturally taboo domain of defecation). This impression was reinforced during a lesson observation, where Mahdi appeared a chatty but potentially engaged learner, who at the same time seemed easily distracted by opportunities for (good-natured) silliness (such as pronunciations perceived as funny, throwing paper and missing the bin). Mahdi’s perceived public and personal associations between German, the Germans, and the war theme does not seem to have a negative effect on his motivation for or attitude towards German as a school subject.

In the focus group, Mahdi explains that he chose German because he prefers it to French (in Mahdi’s school, School S06, there seemed to be some confusion among learners as to whether a language is compulsory for GCSE: whereas Teacher\_S06 confirmed that a language in KS4 is not compulsory, learners seem to be under the impression that, for the two top sets, it is):

**Mahdi:** I chose German next year because I like German better than French, and even though I can speak both of them properly, I like German better. Just the way it sounds.

Mahdi here refers to the sound of German as something that attracts him to the language.

When pressed on this topic, he continues:

**Mahdi:** Well, it sounds closer to English than French does, and sounds interesting when you say words.... yeah

**I:** Ok... what do you mean “it sounds interesting when you say words”?

**Mahdi:** Like, because they way that, the way you sound when you’re in German is interesting, like, because it’s like similar to English, but it isn’t, at the same time. Because the words, like, the words are similar, to some English words, but you don’t sound English at all.

**I:** Ah – ok – so are you saying it’s similar but different at the same time? So just different enough to make it interesting?

**Mahdi:** Yes!

Here Mahdi seems to view German as similar enough to English to not appear too alien or difficult (possibly unlike French), but at the same time as an intriguingly different language, which he is interested in learning. This points to a view of German as a ‘manageable’ language, which would also be supported by Mahdi’s high self-efficacy levels. He seemingly does not subscribe to the stereotype that German is a hard language to

learn. At times a simplistic view of language becomes apparent, such as Mahdi's slightly puzzling advice for the rather unlikely scenario that you could not distinguish between French and German:

**Mahdi:** **I think that there's a massive difference between French and German, coz you can tell what word is French, as - I can't remember who it was said, that French words, er, German words are longer, French words aren't that long, so if you're in a French lesson and you write a long word – then you know it's German!**

Mahdi's envisaged benefits of German appear to be highly practical for communication with native speakers abroad:

**Mahdi:** **If you learn German [as well], then, if you go to Germany to do your tour or whatever, when you become a famous musician, then German will help you as well, if you need to ask where something is, or if you want to, like... yeah it's good to like know the language before you go...**

Consistent with this view, Mahdi does not attach much general importance to German for UK learners, unless there is direct contact with native speakers. This contact is envisaged exclusively in a German-speaking country, and for career purposes:

**Mahdi:** **I don't think it's that important [for British people to speak German]. Because different people go into different fields of**

**jobs, so if like, so if someone became a doctor you wouldn't really need German much, but if you went to be a doctor in like Germany, then maybe you need German, but it's unlikely you're gonna go to a different country to be a doctor. So it's more likely for you to be a doctor in your country you're already in, coz that's where you get your training and everything like that, that's where you're likely to get a job instead of going to a different country.**

**I: Ok, so are you saying it's only really important if you plan to go to the country where that language is spoken?**

**Mahdi: Yeah!**

When questioned about what it might say about you as a person to have knowledge of German, Mahdi also relates this to the world of work:

**Mahdi: It says that you're a well- like, -studied person. So that you've learnt more than one thing, so it looks better, for an employer, so if you had, if you didn't know the language and you only like know English, for example, then it'd be better if you learnt another language and that would help you to get more um, to get like a better job position in the industry that you want to go...**

When the link between German and the world of work was explored, Mahdi was the only participant who could think of a career choice involving German: “**German teacher**”. Yet, he narrates a personal anecdote involving a relative who learnt German as a businessman in Germany:

**Mahdi:** I think definitely it's more business opportunities in Germany, because I heard... well, my uncle came round once and he was telling me a story, that he went to France, and then he went to, he went to loads of European countries to find a job, coz he's a businessman as well you know, and he said that he went, like his last option was Germany. The he went there, then he found a job, and he worked there for over 20 years.

**I:** Wow!

**Mahdi:** And he's retired now.

**I:** And could he speak German before?

**Mahdi:** No. He learnt it there.

Mahdi talks about his language self-efficacy, and despite indicating in the questionnaire that no one gave him any advice, explains that his teacher guided him towards German, based on his language confidence (this may well, of course, have taken place after questionnaire data collection):

**Mahdi:** I think that I'm doing well in both [French and German], but I think I'm doing better in German, than French. When I went to... open, no, parents evening, Miss [X] said that I'm doing very well, and I'm confident in speaking German, and then I found I wasn't that confident in... like I am confident in speaking in French, but I just don't, I don't interact much in French... because they said that I look like I like German better, so...



**I:**                **Yeah... do you know why you feel more confident speaking German?...**

**Mahdi:**        **[pause] Er, well,... I think just because... just because... it's similar sounding to English, but... the meaning is a bit different, but... it's just, the sound...**

Here Mahdi seems to struggle to explain why he feels more confident in German than French, and relates this back to the reason he stated at the beginning of the focus group for choosing German, namely that it is somehow related to the sound of it. However, whereas at the beginning he says that German looks similar to English but sounds different, in the above quote he seems to be saying the opposite. Relating Mahdi's focus group responses to his questionnaire data, where he reported 'fun' as his rationale for continuing German together with high self-efficacy levels, shows that Mahdi perceives German as a language and a subject where it is not just possible, but more likely for him to be successful in than French. This seems to point to the interrelatedness of what learners perceive as fun, and self-efficacy. Mahdi goes as far stating, emphatically:

**I think it's very important to have fun! If you don't have fun, you don't learn!  
Because if you don't have fun you don't learn. It's a simple as that.**

Mahdi's answer to what makes a good German lesson illustrates that what learners mean by 'fun' appears to be a mixture of engaging, interactive oral activities and a sense of making progress or achieving a goal:

**Mahdi:**        **If I planned a lesson in German, then I would like, I've always had this thought of like making, like I don't like writing, because**

- I'm not that type of person. So I'd rather be like 'hide the books' or like 'put them in the bin' or something like that
- I:** [laughs] Burn them!
- Mahdi:** [enthusiastic] Yeah, burn them!! [laughter] and then... put gasoline on and... burn them! [laughter]
- I:** [laughs] easy now...
- Mahdi:** But then, I'd rather do something more interactive, you have an interactive whiteboard, I'd rather use that, when we did [inaudible] tables or book out the computer, computer room, so it'd be better coz it's like, it's not good if we're just always in a classroom, it'd be like better if you go round the school and like learn stuff like if you learn more stuff, so there's like, so if there was like different German words around the school, to try and get them to make a sentence, so, yeah...

Mahdi has clearly thought about what activities he perceives as helpful for learning (“I’ve always had this thought of making...”). He did, however, feel that he cannot share this with his teacher:

- I:** And do you feel that you can talk to your teachers, to share with them that, you know, there are helpful and unhelpful ways of doing it?
- Mahdi:** To be honest, I don't think I can with my French teacher. Coz she doesn't like me.

Mahdi's case is that of a German learner from a fairly typical comprehensive school. Mahdi started learning German in year 8, not by choice, but by compulsory language policy. He has no personal connection with German or any contact with Germans, German speakers, or Germany. Yet, almost against the odds, he displays unusually high motivation, and, even more unusual, extremely high self-efficacy levels. He has studied German for a shorter time than French, and yet, unlike the majority of his year group, he opted to continue with German. Learners such as Mahdi are invaluable for research on UK learners' motivation levels, as this can point to the target areas where simple measures could easily be directed as a starting point to support German learners: firstly, fostering enjoyment of lessons by enabling learners to make progress, and secondly, providing opportunities to use the language for interactive oral communication.

#### **6.3.4. India – a low motivation KS4 dropper**

*“If I wanted to move to Germany then German would be useful to communicate with strangers”*

India is a KS4 dropper from School S05, who shows low motivation levels for all four scales (overall: 2.11, learning situation: 2.67, value of German: 2.33, self-efficacy: 1.33). India's self-efficacy is particularly low, and her predicted GCSE grade for German is 'E' (on the scale of A\*, A, B C, D, E, F, and G). Her SES is band 3, with her parents' **“working with computers”** and as **“administrator”**. India's first language is English, and she speaks no other languages at home. She has dropped German because she finds it **“difficult to learn and remember”**. No one gave her advice, and India adds: **“I decided myself”**, indicating that she equates the notion of 'advice' with 'being influenced', and distancing herself from the idea that she might need or even just consider advice (the theme of 'rejecting advice' is reported on under 5.5. above).

India offers a non-metaphoric response to the question what learning German is like, namely “**quite difficult**”, because “**its kind of hard to learn**”. Although a perception of difficulty does not always equate to non-conducive views, in this instance Becky’s answer was coded as non-conducive for German-learning, as well as static – like for Becky above, for India German is hard with no redeeming features. India submits another non-metaphoric response when she states that if German was a food it would be “**sausages**”, because “**that’s a popular food in Germany**”, but leaves the third metaphor item (if German was an animal) uncompleted. When she learns German she feels “**confused**”, again showing uncondusive attitudes towards German. She feels that people who learn German are “**determined and strong-willed**”, because “**it’s quite a difficult language to learn and remember**”. These statements show that India believes German is experienced as hard to learn not just by herself, but by her peers as well. She attributes some positive personal qualities relating to perseverance (determined, strong-willed) of German learners. Whilst some of India’s answers suggest a view of German as static and categorically bad, her answer to this question points to the possibility that, given a certain personal effort, it is in fact possible to learn German.

India’s answers for the Family Fortunes task further hint at the complexity of her thinking. She believes that random British people would associate the word ‘German’ with “**difficult**”, seemingly referring to her own experience and assuming that other people feel the same. However, she indicates that she thinks this is “**mostly incorrect**”. She writes that popular opinion holds that Germans are “**loud in the way they pronounce words**”, and that this is “**a little more correct than incorrect**”. Germany, according to India, would be associated with “**busy**”, and she feels this is “**mostly incorrect**”. Interestingly then, in the Family Fortunes task India attributes similar opinions about German which she seems to hold personally to other people also, but then indicates that she does not agree with these opinions.

In the focus group India says that she chose German for GCSE because “**I thought it was interesting**”, but that “**I’m not gonna do it next year coz I’m going to College to do Animal Care**”. Here India does not pick up on the questionnaire theme that she finds German difficult, but rather implies that she does not continue because it is not available at her next education destination. As a possible reason for learning German, India offers relocating to Germany and interacting with locals in Germany:

**India:            If I wanted to move to Germany then it would be useful to communicate with like the strangers and stuff like if you’re buying something and then it would be good to know how to speak German.**

Although India had been on a trip to Germany, she states that she has never communicated with native speakers. She expresses an interest in using German for real, two-way communication, again locating such an opportunity in Germany:

**India:            If I went to Germany I think it would be quite interesting, and it wouldn’t just be like German people trying to understand us, so if we tried to speak German then things would just be easier to understand.**

Here India seems to present the view that the described language interaction would help her with understanding German better. When asked what advice she would give someone who was undecided whether to choose German for GCSE or not, she says:

**India:** I don't think it would be a bad idea, like I think if they were thinking of doing it then they probably should just go with what they first thought and try it, because it can be helpful for a lot of things, so if you like decided not to, then, yes, it would be up to you but like I think that they should try it, if they had thought about it, and they'd probably enjoy it.

When examining India's data at idiographic level, a more complex picture emerges than would have been apparent from her motivation data alone. India's motivation levels are noticeably low, suggesting, on the surface, that she does not enjoy lessons, sees little value in learning German, and feels she is not successful at learning. However, taking her more elaborate questionnaire answers and focus group contributions into account, it becomes clear that India is not as disenchanted with German as her low motivation levels might lead one to believe. She shows an interest in the language, can think of at least one possible way of improving her learning (linguistic exchanges with native speakers), disagrees with perceived public negative opinions about German, believes that German learners possess positive personal qualities conducive for language learning, and even goes as far as suggesting that learning German can be enjoyable. Examining India's data more closely thus shows that learners such as India are far from a 'lost cause' for continuing German, and this points to the areas for targeted support. For example, India would benefit highly from increased self-efficacy levels, and an understanding of how German could be useful for her even if she does not intend to live in Germany.

#### **6.3.5. Amber – a high motivation KS4 continuer**

*“Languages – it makes you more open to stuff”*

Amber, a year 11 student at School S06, is one of the very few KS4 continuers in the study. She is highly motivated and shows especially high levels of self-efficacy (overall: 4.67, learning situation: 4.33, value of German: 4.67, self-efficacy: 5.00). Amber, like everyone in her class, started German ab initio in year 10, having never studied it at school before. According to the questionnaire, English is Amber's first language and she states that she speaks no other languages at home, although in the focus groups she says that she was born in Austria and spoke only German for the first five years of her life. Amber indicated in the questionnaire that her father gave her advice regarding studying German. Her reasons for continuing German in 6th Form are practical and enjoyment-related: **“because I am Austrian and if i wanted to visit or live there again it would be practical to know German even if most of the population understand English. Also I like learning another language”**. Her parents' occupations are driving instructor and hairdresser (SES band 3).

For Amber, learning German is like **“discovering a new planet”**, because **“a new planet is unknown and interesting”**. This was coded as conducive for German learning, and, since 'discovery' denotes a process, the metaphor was categorised as dynamic. Amber thinks that if German was a food, it would be a **“pizza”**, because **“I like pizza”**, if it was an animal, it would be a **“lion”**, because **“it is a very strong language”**. The first two of Amber's metaphors were categorised under pleasure, the third under neutral. Amber shows some indication that this is her personal opinion and might differ from those of others (**“I like pizza”** as opposed to **“pizza is nice”**, or **“everyone likes pizza”**).

When learning German, Amber feels **“happy”**, which is, of course, highly conducive for German learning. For the Family Fortunes task, Amber assumes that her own opinion that German is perceived as **“strong”**, is held by others as well, when she says that this is **“mostly correct”**. Here, 'German' appears to relate to the language, as opposed to the attribute. She believes the British public thinks Germans are **“forward”**, which she thinks

is mostly correct. Finally, she feels that ‘Germany’ would be associated with “**big**”, which she feels is “**totally correct**”. Overall Amber holds neutral to positive opinions about German, the Germans, and Germany, which she believes are shared, to some degree, by the British public.

Amber feels that people who learn German are “**prepared**”, because “**they are learning a new language**”. In the focus group Amber reiterates her mainly practical reasons for continuing German, as with her Austrian heritage, she perceives it to be useful for her personally. However, here as in the questionnaire, she also frames knowledge of German as a bonus, rather than a necessity, against the backdrop of English being widely spoken in Austria:

**Amber: I picked it coz I’m Austrian and if I ever want to go back to Austria I should know German. Not necessarily, coz they do speak English, but... yeah. And also I think it’s interesting to know a language, and like when I go to Uni, like I want to study Science but there are courses where you can study it with a language like if you’d want to work abroad, so I think that would be best for me because it’d make me more prepared. And it’d be like interesting to see how different A’level German is to GCSE German, and A’level German, you’re more like independent. Coz there’s a key aspect of the subject where you get to pick what you want to write about and stuff like that.**

Amber speaks of an expectation that she should know German if she travels to Austria, though it is not clear whose expectation this is, her own, others’, or both. Unusually, for learners in this study, Amber’s motivation here chimes with Dörnyei’s



(2005, 2009) ought-to L2 self dimension. Her statement, however, is undercut by her assertion that in a world of global English, it is not strictly necessary to know German, even in a German-speaking country such as Austria. Her stance towards learning a language in general can be described as open, as she thinks “**it’s interesting to know a language**”. Amber’s double use of the word ‘prepared’ is unique among participants in the study: Amber believes people who study German, including herself, are “prepared”. Although Amber speaks about wider benefits of language learning, her use of the word prepared links the study of German with a careers-focussed practical agenda, such as studying or working in a non-Anglophone country. There is a sense that Amber likes to be self-determined when she explains that she is attracted by the prospect of having choice in what aspect of German she will focus on for parts of her A’level course. This also emerges when she talks about her plans to travel, and how languages (including languages other than German) can help her with that. Interestingly, she rejects the idea that her father being able to speak German had influenced her. Here, Amber possibly underestimates the modelling effect which her father’s knowledge and use of German has had on her. Amber’s description below of imagining herself as a successful foreign language speaker of “lots of languages” is one of the few instances of an ideal L2 self emerging from the data.

**Amber:** My dad speaks German, but I don’t think that’s influenced me a lot but like, I’m interested myself because when I was little, I imagined myself learning lots of languages, coz I want to travel, so I want to learn more languages than just German, so I want to learn like Dutch, and everything, because it’s interesting, coz languages, it makes you more like open to stuff.

**I:** Ok, in what way? Can you tell me more about that?

**Amber:** Like you're more sociable I think, coz like...

**S06\_02\_4:** ...you can communicate with a lot of people

**Amber:** Yeah, and it shows that you could like, you could respect cultures and different countries if you're willing to learn like their languages, and, yeah.

Whilst first appearing to stress the importance of the practical aspects of German for her personally, i.e. communicate with native speakers, detailed analysis of Amber's statements shows that there are other, wider benefits or rationales, given that she believes people in Austria will speak English, and that therefore knowing German is not essential for communication. These rationales would be that she feels she should know German, and that knowledge of languages in general makes you more "open" and more "sociable". Amber shows herself as being able to make connections between language and culture when she says that knowing another language shows that "you could respect cultures". While she acknowledges the more conceptual benefits of knowing another language, utilitarian rationales for learning German, such as personal relevance for future plans, seem to be of key importance for Amber's decision-making.

Amber believes trips to the target language country are beneficial, although she accepts that they can also be a missed opportunity for using the language.

**Amber:** I think the trip should have been somewhere else. Coz it's a Christmas Market so... we ended up speaking more English than we did German, coz they speak English....

**I:** Ah ok, like where? What sort of trip do you think would have been more helpful?

**Amber:** I don't know, like, Northern Germany or something? Where they speak less English? So we actually use the language?

She would prefer an exchange (which her school does not offer):

**...coz you're living the daily life in the country instead of like a school trip, where you're basically doing activities like [so?] we don't get bored for four days, but an exchange trip would be longer than four days, hopefully.**

She feels that in lessons, “**we don't go out and use [the language] coz there's nothing to use it**”, hinting at a wish for a real purpose for communication. Amber ‘invents’ the concept of pen pals:

**I:** So if the school and the teachers said ok what can we do to make this better for our students in terms of using the language, what would you suggest?

**Amber:** This would probably never happen, but, get German students, like, our age, and then... we could... talk?!

Sadly, Amber thinks that the chances of her suggestion being put into action are slim, and, realistically, she may be right. Amber's case shows that even highly motivated learners with strong personal as well as wider ambitions for learning German can have a less robust connection with German than may be assumed from the quantitative data alone. Amber, for example, already concedes that for her, knowing German is not necessary, and that other languages might serve her overarching language goals just as well. It also shows

that in order to offer the best targeted support to learners, not just lack of learner motivation, but also the more fragile components of highly motivated learners' incentives for continuing language study need to be examined.

### **6.3.6. Summary: Learner case studies**

Closer analysis of five individual learners showed the complexity of motivational forces underlying learner attitudes towards German, and the benefit of using a mixed methods approach. 'Low motivation' learners emerged as open to targeted language support to increase motivation for learning German, and as less disaffected with German study than the quantitative data may suggest. Similarly, 'high motivation' learners' motivation can be less robust than it may appear on the surface, and equally in need of support.

### **6.4. Family Fortunes: Learner perceptions of public discourse**

This task (described in detail under 4.3.1.2. above; also see Appendix D for the questionnaire) was designed to firstly probe learners' perception of public discourses around German, the Germans and Germany (addressing RQ3, results reported under 6.4.2. below), and secondly, to investigate learners' stance towards these discourses (addressing RQ4, results reported under 7.2.1 below). Learners were asked to fill in a word or phrase that the British public might associate with a) German, b) the Germans, and c) Germany. Learners were then asked to indicate, by circling a number on a six-point Likert scale, to what extent they agreed or disagreed with this 'opinion'. However, in line with the research questions of this study, the term public discourse (rather than opinion) is used, since the focus of the investigation is on the language used around German, the Germans, and Germany, rather than on public 'opinion', which is difficult to access directly. Therefore, attention is given to linguistic constructions around German\*, while it is taken

into account that the language used around German\* may be reflective of attitudes towards, and opinions about, German, the Germans, and Germany.

#### **6.4.1. Data processing**

Four hundred and eleven useable questionnaire responses were collected from KS3, and 95 from KS4 learners across four schools. Data from the hard-copy questionnaires were transcribed into SPSS, and the qualitative data transferred into NVivo. Similarly to the metaphor data, the Family Fortunes data were coded into themes, which were then organised under favourable, unfavourable, and neutral attitudes towards German, the Germans, and Germany. For the same reasons as explained for the metaphor coding (6.1. above), KS3 data were not separated into compulsory/non-compulsory KS4 language policy settings, but instead coded as for the whole of the KS3 sample. Table 6.15. below gives an example of the detailed themes which were arrived at through a several-stage coding process of learner data in NVivo for the trigger term 'German'.

Table 6.15. *First stage NVivo codes for KS3 and 4 perceptions of public discourses around 'German'*

<u>Detailed theme</u>	<u>Includes</u>	<u>Detailed theme - number of references</u>	<u>Attitudes – number of references</u>
positive attributes	relating to language, lessons, characteristics	KS3: <i>n</i> = 25 KS4: <i>n</i> = 4	favourable: KS3: <i>n</i> = 25 KS4: <i>n</i> = 4
culture	food, drink, festivals, music, sports/football, cars, flag, clothes, fictional German characters	KS3: <i>n</i> = 57 KS4: <i>n</i> = 15	
German, foreign	different, foreign 'other, locations, German people	KS3: <i>n</i> = 16 KS4: <i>n</i> = 3	
language	language-related, foreign language, specific German terms, fluency, accent, what it sounds like, e.g. hard to understand, angry accent	KS3: <i>n</i> = 95 KS4: <i>n</i> = 18	neutral: KS3: <i>n</i> = 206 KS4: <i>n</i> = 50
neutral attributes	ambivalent, (just) people, e.g. ok, efficient, logical, anything else	KS3: <i>n</i> = 23 KS4: <i>n</i> = 8	
school	anything school or learning-related (e.g. long lessons, GCSEs)	KS3: <i>n</i> = 15 KS4: <i>n</i> = 4	
negative attributes	relating to language, lessons, characteristics	KS3: <i>n</i> = 152 KS4: <i>n</i> = 29	unfavourable: KS3: <i>n</i> = 152 KS4: <i>n</i> = 29
war	3 <sup>rd</sup> Reich, Hitler, Holocaust	KS3: <i>n</i> = 15 KS4: <i>n</i> = 5	war: KS3: <i>n</i> = 15 KS4: <i>n</i> = 5

*Note.* *n* = number of references coded. Total references coded: KS3: *n* = 398, KS4: *n* = 88.

Table 6.15. above shows how the categories of culture, German/foreign, language, general neutral and school were grouped under the ‘neutral’ attitudes heading, with unspecified positive attributes and negative attributes making up the favourable/unfavourable headings respectively. However, this coding system proved problematic, as the evaluation of statements is a subjective process, and in an attempt to be as unbiased as possible a highly conservative, if not counter-intuitive coding principle was followed. It had originally been decided that descriptive comments would fall under neutral, and only obviously evaluative comments should be coded as either positive or negative. However, it became clear that the dividing line between descriptive and evaluative is a grey area. For example, ‘angry-sounding’ could be seen either as merely a detached descriptive comment, or as a value judgement. For the first stage NVivo coding system (Table 6.15. above) ‘angry-sounding’ would have been coded as neutral, as it could be argued that this comment refers purely to the sound of the language, and is not a value judgement. However, ‘a most wonderful language’ would be coded under positive attributes, and the detail that it refers to the language and not, for example, to a perceived characteristic of the German people or the language lesson, is lost, as in the above system only the ‘neutral attitudes’ category could be subdivided into content-based themes. The same issue would apply to other categories in the ‘neutral attitudes’ section: themes would only be identifiable if they were coded as neutral, not if there were coded as ‘positive’ or negative’, which was not helpful for a nuanced analysis. Since the aim was to investigate the relationship between themes which emerged from the public discourse data and the school settings data in order to answer RQ4, the nature of the detailed themes for the positive and negative attitude codings (not just for the neutral ones), needed to be known. Therefore, this method did not yield enough detail to answer the research question.

After coding and recoding the qualitative data in NVivo and not arriving at a workable system, it was therefore decided to start again and reverse the coding process. This time, the starting point was the sentiment of the learner statement which was coded simply into positive,

negative, and neutral. This pragmatic approach allowed coding for the overall attitudinal feeling expressed through the statement. In this new system, named ‘sentiment coding’, ‘sounds angry’, for example, was coded as negative, and ‘efficient’ as positive, whereas previously both would have been coded as neutral. If in doubt the side of caution was erred on, and in such cases responses were coded unclear, ambivalent, or neutral, but overall the overriding positive or negative sentiment expressed in the learner response was used as a guiding principle. Table 6.16. below shows the SPSS coding framework for the broad-category sentiment coding, including of some difficult/potentially controversial coding decisions. The same framework was used for all three data batches of ‘German’, ‘The Germans’, and ‘Germany’.



Table 6.16. *Sentiment coding framework for learner perceptions of public discourses*

<u>SPSS code</u>	<u>Sentiment</u>	<u>Includes</u>
1	positive	industry, holiday destination, festivals, Christmas markets, good at football, rich
2	neutral	big, cold, camping, football, working
3	negative	don't want to go there, immigrants
4	war	Holocaust, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Reich, history, Fatherland, Vaterland, Nazis
99	invalid	don't know, never been there

Having coded all 506 cases for the sentiments in one section (i.e. 'German'), the same batch of data was then coded for detailed themes. These were based on thorough knowledge of the data from the long transcription process, previous coding and recoding in NVivo, and the sentiment coding. As this section was a light-touch analysis, reliability was checked by returning to the coded data some months later and checking that the initial coding held good, which it did. The themes which emerged from the press corpus data on 'German', 'The Germans', and 'Germany' respectively, were also used as part of the coding framework. Tables 6.17. and 6.18. below show the resulting coding frameworks. The same frameworks were used for 'German' and 'The Germans' (Table 6.17.), with some slight variations for 'Germany' (Table 6.18.), for which there was no 'language' theme, but instead a newly emerged Euro-related theme, as well as a politics/economics theme.

Table 6.17. 'German' and 'the Germans': Learner perceptions of public discourse

<u>SPSS code</u>	<u>Theme</u>	<u>Includes</u>
1	uncategorisable	other, no theme, other theme
2	culture	food, drink, festivals, way of life, appearance, clothes, flag, colours of flag, cars
3	sports	football
4	language	studying (the language), includes anything school-related
5	people and places	specific people, German people, general people, German characters
6	war	Holocaust, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Reich, history, Fatherland, Vaterland, Nazis
99	invalid	don't know, never been there

Table 6.18. 'Germany': Themes in learner perceptions of public discourse

<u>SPSS code</u>	<u>Theme</u>	<u>Includes</u>
1	uncategorisable	other, no theme, other theme
2	culture	food, drink, festivals, way of life, appearance, clothes, flag, colours of flag, cars
3	sports	football
4	geography, climate	country on its own, other countries, specific places
5	Euro-related	specific people, German people, general people, German characters
6	politics, economics	interior social/political situation, economy (but <i>not</i> specific products, e.g. cars: code 2/culture)
7	war	Holocaust, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Reich, history, Fatherland, Vaterland, Nazis
99	invalid	don't know, never been there

Football/other sports are thematic categories which also emerged from the ‘German’ and ‘Germany’ corpus data, and therefore, for categorising the questionnaire data, the category of sports (to include football and other sports) was maintained, even though for KS4 data only 1% of responses fell into this category. This was done for purposes of comparing the thematic categories across data sets in relation to RQ4. Based on similar rationales as well as on a feeling of unease in trying to categorise the uncategorisable, it was decided to code data which relates to National Socialism and the world wars into a separate category simply named ‘war’.

### **6.4.2. Results**

Applying the principles of sentiment coding followed by thematic coding, results on learner perceptions of public discourses around German, the Germans, and Germany were arrived at, and are described in turn and by key stage below.

#### *6.4.2.1. German*

Most KS3 learners in the sample believe that the British display neutral (46.7%) or negative (37.7%) attitudes towards the term ‘German’. Only 8.5% thought that positive views dominate, and 3.4% think ‘German’ is associated with war. Whilst KS4 learners in the sample had similar perceptions to their slightly younger peers of negative attitudes (35.8%) and associations with war (5.3%) held by the British public, there is a shift away from the neutral (37.9%) to the positive category (15.8%) in the older learners’ perceptions. Figures 6.9. and 6.10. below illustrate the distribution of perceived public attitudes by key stage (for better readability percentages have been rounded to whole numbers).

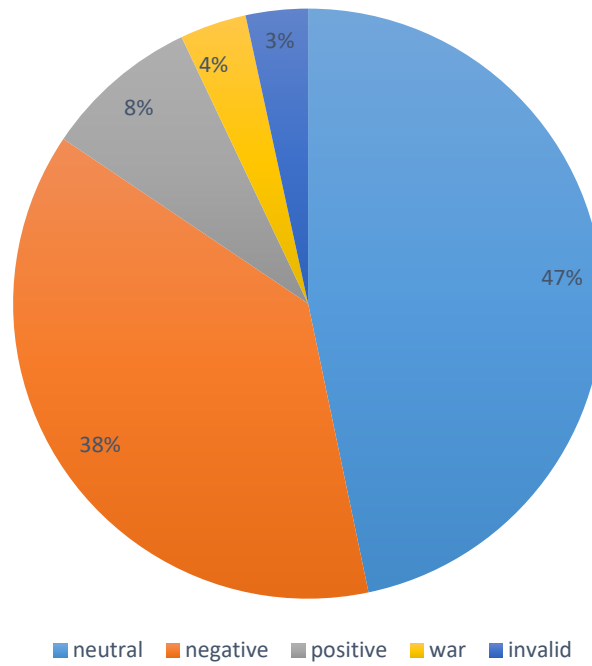


Figure 6.9. 'German': KS3 perceptions of public discourses ( $n = 411$ )

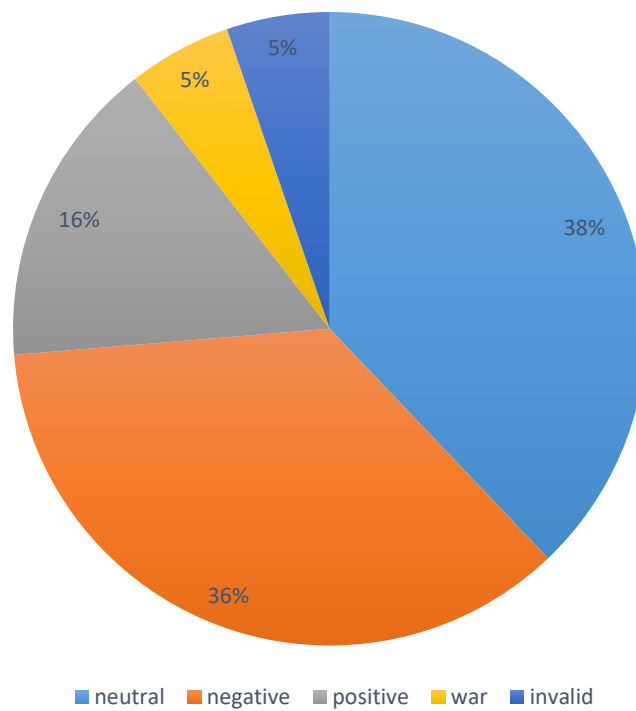


Figure 6.10. 'German': KS4 perceptions of public discourses ( $n = 95$ )

Figures 6.11. and 6.12. below show detailed themes which emerged from the KS3 and KS4 Family Fortunes data respectively, by frequency.

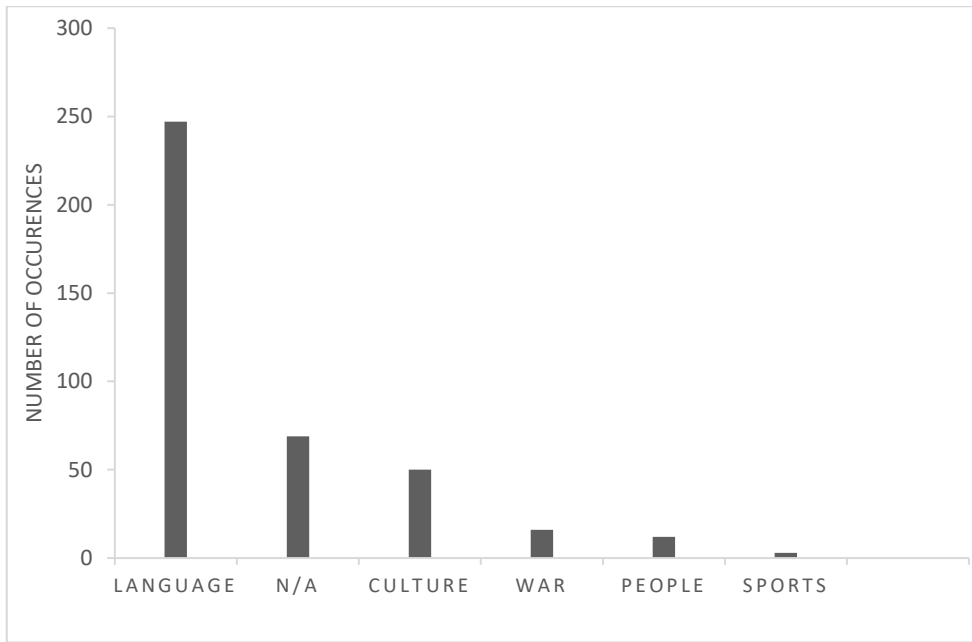


Figure 6.11. ‘German’: KS3 themes from Family Fortunes task

Note. People theme includes places. Total  $N = 411$ , valid  $n = 397$ , invalid  $n = 14$  (3.4%).

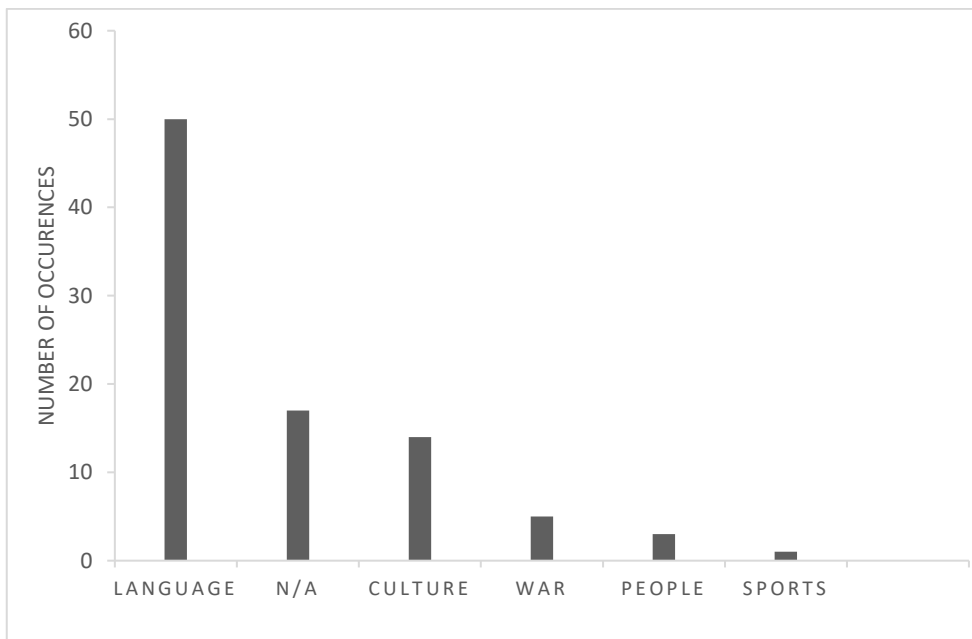


Figure 6.12. ‘German’: KS4 themes from Family Fortunes task

Note. People theme includes places. Total  $N = 95$ , valid  $n = 90$ , invalid  $n = 5$  (5.3%).

Figure 6.11. above shows that for KS3, statements related to language/learning the language are by far the most frequent detailed theme named by KS3 learners (60.1%), followed by uncategorisable statements (16.8%), culture (12.2%), war, (3.9%), people and places (2.9%), and sports (0.7%). KS4 data show a similar pattern with language/learning the language in top place (52.6%), followed by ‘other’ (uncategorisable) statements (17.9%), culture (14.7%), war (5.3%), people and places (3.2%) and sports (1.1%) (Figure 6.12. above).

#### *6.4.2.2. Germans*

‘Germans’ shows a stark increase in KS3 perceived public opinion in the war category: 23.4% percent of participants age 13 and 14 believe that this is what ‘Germans’ are associated with by the British (as opposed to 3.8% for ‘German’). Still, most believe the British public holds neutral (31.4%) or positive (20.2%) views, with negative views mentioned least (15.8%, Figure 6.13 below). Figure 6.14. below shows that twice the percentage of KS4 learners (compared with KS3) learners believe that the British are positively inclined towards the Germans (40%), and far fewer of them believe in the association with war (KS4: 14.7%, KS3: 23.4%).

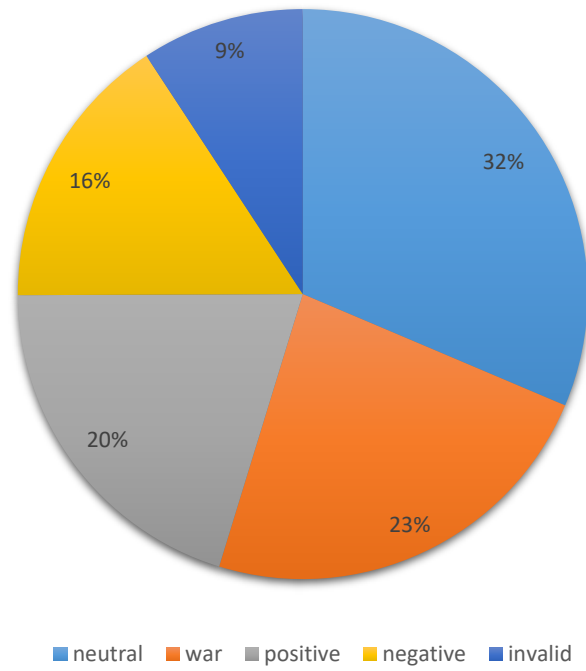


Figure 6.13. 'Germans': KS3 perceptions of public discourses (n = 411)

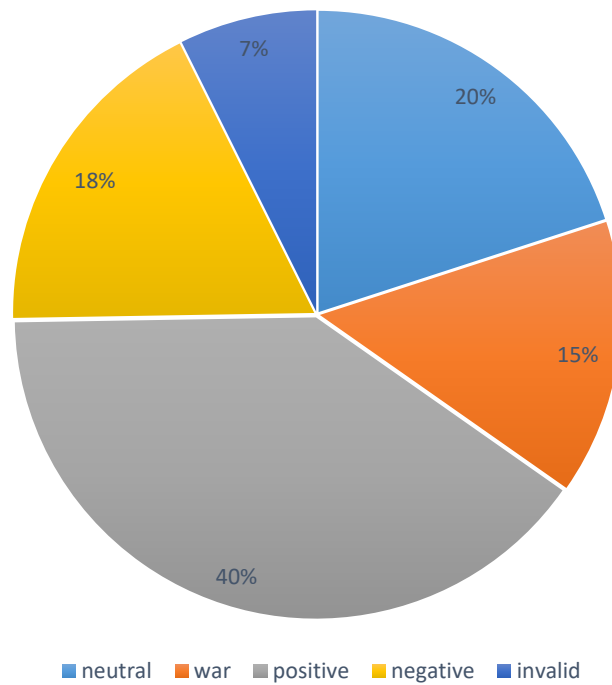


Figure 6.14. 'Germans': KS4 perceptions of public discourses (n = 95)

As ‘Germans’ showed such strong learner perceptions of public associations with war, this category was followed up by relating it to the demographic variable investigated in this study, learner SES. Descriptive statistics (Table 6.19. below) show that for KS3, the highest proportion of learners who believe the British public associate ‘Germans’ with war belongs to the medium SES, followed by the lowest, and lastly the highest. For KS4, most learners who felt that the public would associate ‘Germans’ with war were from the lowest SES, followed by medium SES. Only one KS4 learner from the highest SES subscribed to this view.

Table 6.19. *Perceptions of public associations of ‘Germans’ with war by SES*

<u>SES group</u>	<u>KS3</u>		<u>KS4</u>	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
SES1	7	8.9	1	8.3
SES2	46	58.2	3	25
SES3	25	31.6	8	66.7
Total	78	100	12	100

*Note.* SES1 = highest, SES2 = medium, SES3 = lowest.

Figures 6.15. and 6.16. below show detailed themes for ‘Germans’ per key stage and by frequency. Both KS3 and KS4 data shows a marked increase in the proportion of uncategorisable responses (KS3: 35%; KS4:53.7%), compared with German (KS3: 16.8%; KS4: 17.9%) and Germany (KS3: 26.5%; KS4: 25.3%). The ‘uncategorisable’ category included mainly diverse perceptions of attributes relating to German people, such as “boring”, “organised”, “clever”, “evil”, “lovely”, or “mechanical”. Such data were coded using the sentiment coding method as explained under 6.4.1. above, but were excluded from the thematic category coding, due to the miscellaneous nature of the responses.



For KS3, the next most frequently named category after uncategorisable (35%) was war (23.6%), followed by people and places (11.9%), culture (9.7%), language/learning the language (5.4%), and sports (5.1%). Similarly, KS4 learners named uncategorisable associations most frequently (53.7%), followed by war (12.6%), but next most frequently named culture (10.5%), followed by language/studying the language as well as people and places (both 7.4%), and sports (1.1%).

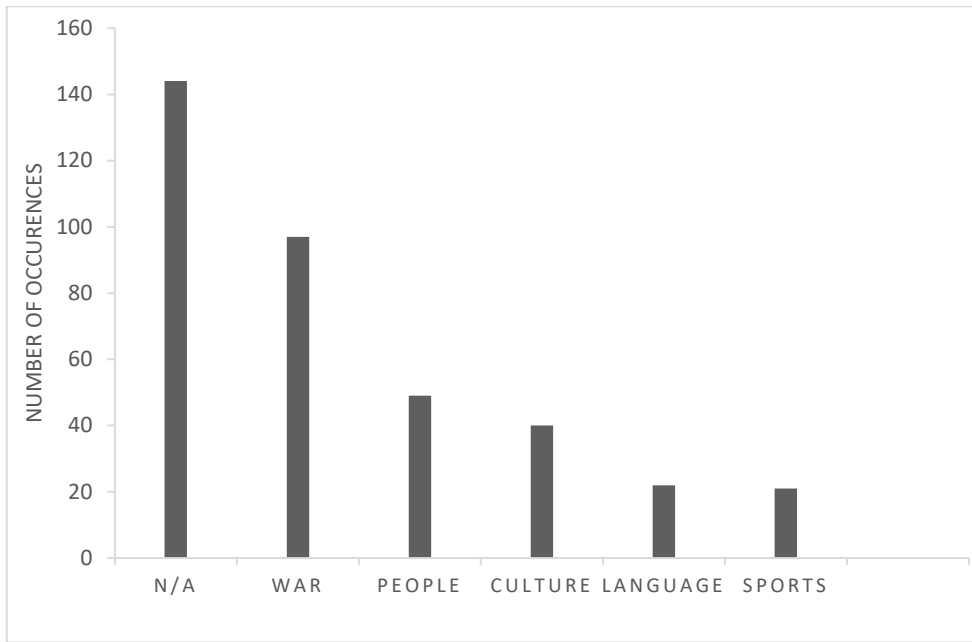


Figure 6.15. ‘Germans’: KS3 themes from Family Fortunes task

Note. People theme includes places. Total  $N = 411$ , valid  $n = 373$ , invalid  $n = 38$  (9.2%).

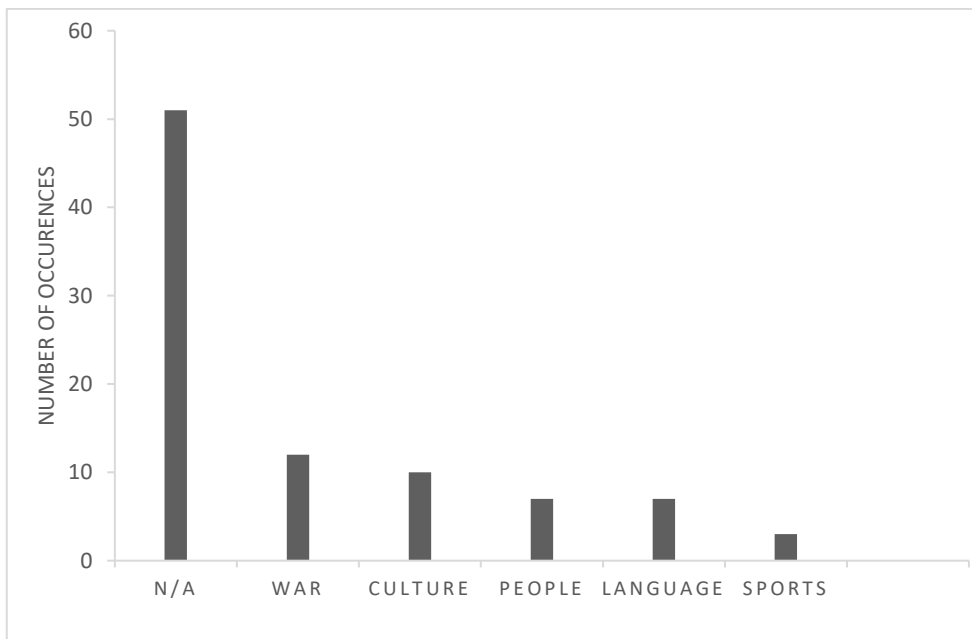


Figure 6.16. ‘Germans’: KS4 themes from Family Fortunes task

Note. People theme includes places. Total  $N = 95$ , valid  $n = 88$ , invalid  $n = 7$  (7.4%).

### 6.4.2.3. *Germany*

KS3 learners' perceptions of public discourse around Germany are largely neutral (57.7%), or positive (24.3%). The association with war (6.8%) appears stronger than the one with general negative attitudes (4.4%, Figure 6.17 below). KS4 figures (Figure 6.18 below) show a similar perception of public attitudes with a majority of learners locating these in the neutral (43.2%) or positive (30.5%) domain. However, unlike for 'German' and 'Germans', where KS4 perceptions of public associations with war, respectively, were the same or lower than KS3 perceptions, for 'Germany' KS4 learners report a stronger public association with war than their younger school mates (KS4: 13.6%, KS3: 6.8%, Figures 6.17. and 6.18. below).

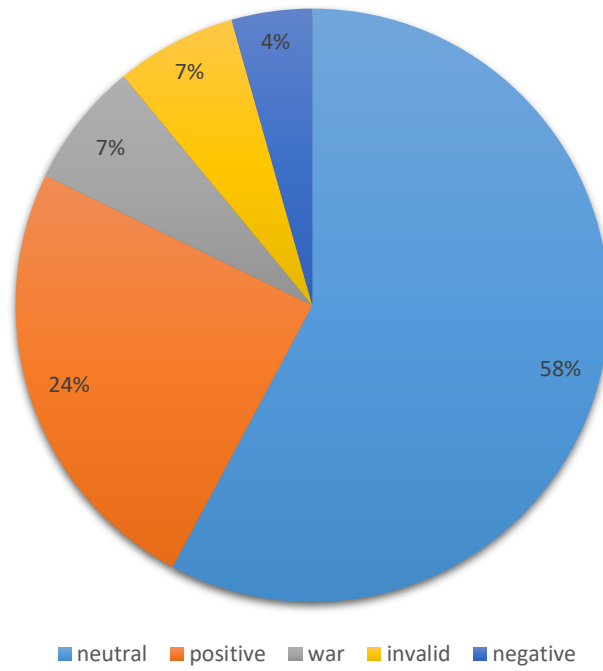


Figure 6.17. 'Germany': KS3 perceptions of public discourses ( $n = 411$ )

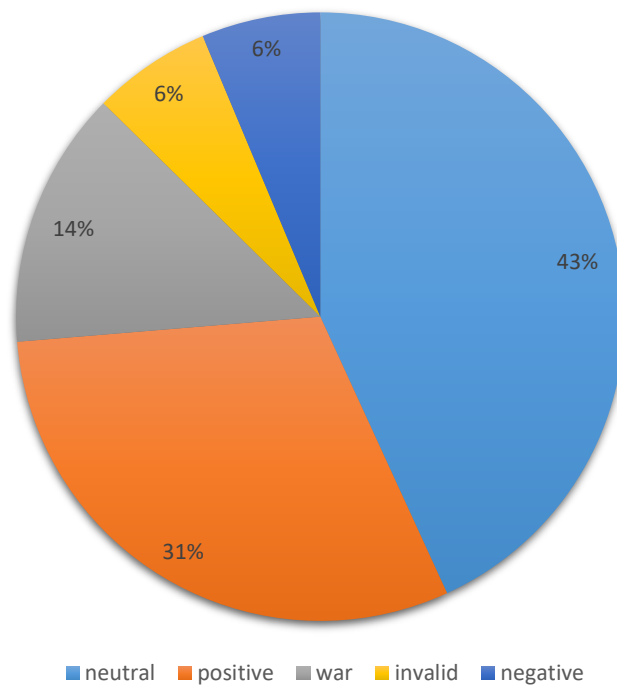


Figure 6.18. 'Germany': KS4 perception of public discourses ( $n = 95$ )

As can be seen in Figures 6.19. and 6.20. below, detailed themes for ‘Germany’ differ slightly from themes for ‘German’ and ‘Germans’. A new theme which emerged – the most frequent one for KS3 (27.7%) – was geography-related. For KS3, themes which had previously emerged (uncategorisable (26.5%), culture (17.8%), and war (6.8%)) followed, but another new theme specific to ‘Germany’ emerged with Euro-related associations (6.3%). Politics and economics (3.2%) was also a new theme for the learner data.

Geography also plays a role in KS4 perceptions of public discourses around ‘Germany’ (21.1%), but in third place after uncategorisable (25.3%) and culture (24.2%). As outlined under general attitudes above, a higher proportion of KS4 learners than KS3 learners (KS4: 14.7%, KS3: 6.8%) believe that the British public associates ‘Germany’ with war, followed by the new theme of politics/economics (5.3%). Sports only appears to a minimal amount in learner perceptions of public discourses, although it is mentioned slightly more frequently in KS3 perceptions (5.1%) than KS4 perceptions (1.1%).

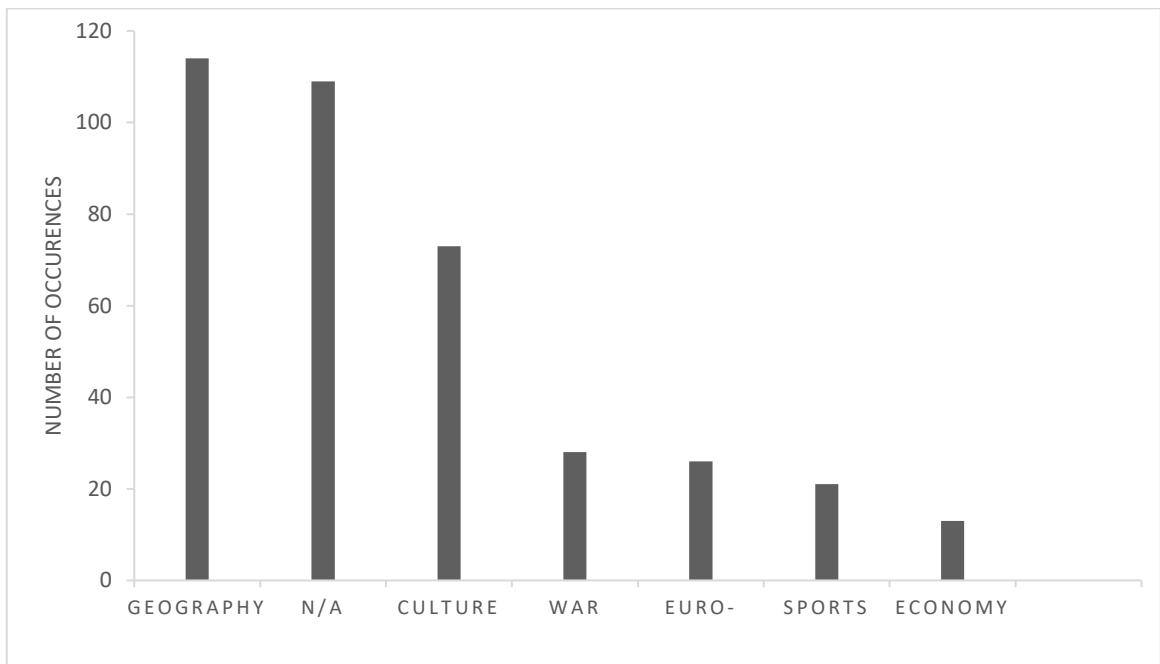


Figure 6.19. ‘Germany’: KS3 themes from Family Fortunes task

Note. Economy theme includes politics. Total  $N = 411$ , valid  $n = 384$ , invalid  $n = 27$  (6.6%).

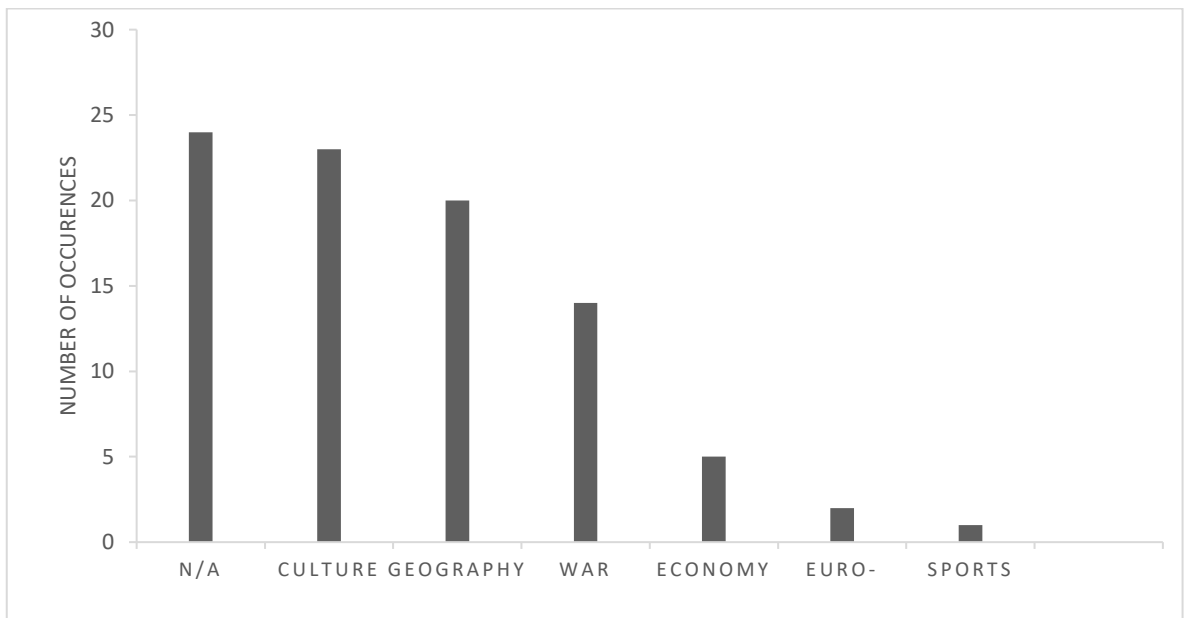


Figure 6.20. ‘Germany’: KS4 themes from Family Fortunes task

Note. Economy theme includes politics. Total  $N = 95$ , valid  $n = 89$ , invalid  $n = 6$  (6.3%).

### **6.4.3. Summary: Family Fortunes**

Sampled KS3 and KS4 learners believed the British public hold mainly neutral or negative attitudes around the term 'German'. Nearly a quarter of KS3 learners believed that 'The Germans' are associated with war, and half the percentage of KS3 learners compared with KS4 learners believed the British public are positively inclined towards the Germans. Participants believed that the British perceive 'Germany' in a neutral, or a positive light. For 'Germany', KS4 learners reported stronger associations with war than KS3 learners.

## **6.5. Chapter 6: Summary**

This chapter addressed RQ2 and reported results from the data generated by the more qualitative questionnaire sections, namely the metaphor tasks, lesson observations, focus groups, teacher and head teacher interviews, five case studies, and the Family Fortunes tasks. Summaries were included at the end of the relevant sections above (6.1.6, 6.2.2.4, 6.2.3.11, 6.3.6, and 6.4.3), but since this chapter contains a range of eclectic data and results, a summary for results from each research instrument relating to RQ2 is also provided below.

Across the three elicited metaphor tasks, learners were asked to conceive of German as firstly something else (open metaphor), secondly as an animal, and thirdly as food. A picture of conflicted conceptualisations of German ranging from difficulty and unpleasantness, over ambivalence and neutral attitudes, to notions of German (learning) as a pleasurable and positive experience emerged. The metaphor vehicle (animal or food) appeared to have an effect on how learners conceptualised German, with more positive metaphors being produced for German as a food, compared with German as an animal. When the open metaphors were categorised into static, ambivalent, and dynamic views of

German, for KS3, a statistically significant association was found between static metaphor use and dropping German.

Three KS3 and two KS4 lessons were observed between the four participating schools. Very little lesson content pertaining to ‘German’, ‘Germans’, or ‘Germany’ was observed. Schools showed varying degrees of visibility of German or Languages, ranging from none in School S04 (although it needs to be noted that my visit there was restricted to the reception area) to colourful classroom (and in the case of School S05, reception area) displays.

Across four KS3 and three KS4 focus groups, learners identified learning situation factors as well as a sense of personal relevance (as opposed to a general importance of languages) as key factors for continuing German, and lack of self-efficacy for dropping it. Learners placed great importance on a positive relationship with the teacher, and preferred oral, interactive lesson content. Their goal for German learning appeared to be communication with native speakers, often envisaged to take place in a German speaking country.

Teacher and head teacher interviews revealed that whilst educators felt that learners choose to continue German for learning situation-related factors such as enjoyment of lessons, promotional messages often focussed on utilitarian, career-orientated benefits of languages. German teachers appeared to have a better understanding of the complexities around motivation for German learning than head teachers did. The latter group tended to place the blame for the problematics around German onto external factors such as unhelpful parental influence, media discourses, or the nature of examinations.

Analysis of five learners at idiographic level illustrated the complexity and fragility of motivation for German learning, and identified areas for support which may need to vary on an individual basis. Positive attitudes and high self-efficacy emerged as possible in students and schools where this was less expected.



In the Family Fortunes task, both KS3 and KS4 learners believed the British hold mainly neutral and negative views of ‘German’. Emerging themes were, in descending order, language, culture, war, people, and sport. For Germans, KS3 learners showed a stark increase in perceptions of associations with war. Themes for ‘Germans’ were war, people, culture (KS4: culture, people), language, and sports. For ‘Germany’, both KS3 and KS4 perceptions of public perceptions were mainly neutral and positive. Whereas for ‘Germans’, KS3 showed a stronger belief in a public association with war than KS4, for ‘Germany’, double the percentage of KS4 learners believed in this association, compared with KS3. A new highly frequent theme, geography, emerged for ‘Germany’, in first place for KS3, and second place for KS4. Subsequent themes were culture, war, euro-related (also a new theme), sports, and economy.

The next chapter (7) is organised in two parts. 7.1. addresses RQ3 and explores the representation of German\* in UK public discourses, 7.2. relates to RQ4 and investigates the relationship between discourses from the private (schools) and public (press) domains.

## **Chapter 7: Representations of German in public and private discourses**

As outlined in the background chapters, the theoretical framework of the study is grounded in the field of discourse studies. Discourse theory holds that discourses are reflective as well as constitutive of social reality (Fairclough, Mulderrig, & Wodak, 2011). Whilst key player discourses around German in a school setting, as analysed in chapter 6 above, are by the very nature of the educational setting embedded in a teaching and learning context, these discourses do not exist in a vacuum. In this study, discourses are seen as social practice, which assumes a dialectical relationship between a discursive event or process, and the wider societal structures which shape it (Fairclough et al., 2011). This means that a relationship is assumed between how German is represented in learners' and educators' discourses at grassroots level, and how German is represented in wider, public discourses. In order to investigate this relationship, as a first step, an attempt to operationalise the concept of public discourses was made in the form of a linguistic corpus of press data.

Whilst it is acknowledged that press media discourse is only a part of media discourse and public discourse, especially in current times when social media have become ubiquitous, using newspaper data has some advantages in providing a snapshot of widely circulating public discourse. Care was taken to cover more than a narrow time frame and to include a range of national newspapers with wide circulation. In addition, online news are also used and linked to on social media, which means they are not separate from other media, but rather permeable into a range of online discourses. These factors should contribute to the justifiability of using press data to investigate public discourse around German\*.

The results from the press corpus analysis are presented under 7.1. below, relating to RQ3, public discourses around German\*. The second part of the chapter (7.2.) present

results relating RQ4, which analyses the relationship between private and public discourses around German\*.

### **7.1. Representations of German\* in the UK press**

Addressing research question 3, which investigates public discourses around German, a corpus for the purpose of providing a snapshot of discourses around German in wider circulation was compiled. A corpus is a large, principled, digital collection of naturally occurring textual data, which can act as standard reference about what language patterns are typical. In the current study, the corpus was used as an empirical method to identify discourses around German\* in current and recent circulation (details of data sampling were reported in section 4.2.1.4.). The research approach here sits somewhere between corpus-driven, where the lines of investigation are guided by what is frequent and salient in the data (e.g. Baker, Gabrielatos, & McEnery, 2013), and a corpus-based approach, which is more commonly used for testing a hypothesis (e.g. Tognini-Bonelli, 2001). The approach could best be described as corpus-assisted (Partington et al., 2013). The newspaper corpus was compiled around three German-centric search terms in order to find enough articles which covered the topic, that is, unlike for a corpus-driven approach, the method was prescriptive and selective. The corpus does not claim to be a representative sample of all newspaper articles available at the time, but rather a selection of articles around the search terms from a range of publications during a particular time frame. The underlying motivation for compiling the corpus was to find out how German, the Germans and Germany are represented in the press. However, once concordances had been generated, collocates were then categorised according to emerging themes, rather more in line with a corpus-driven approach, but with a starting point of pre-conceived node words (i.e. German, Germans, and Germany) rather than of key words generated by the data

itself. Thus, the corpus was compiled with the aim of using it as a heuristic tool, which would also relate to the positioning of this part of the study as corpus-assisted.

### **7.1.1. Data processing**

A collection of newspaper articles around the search term German\* (which, through the truncation, covers ‘German’, ‘Germans’ and ‘Germany’) was downloaded via the Lexis Nexis search engine. Newspapers were selected in order to cover a range of political orientations of the readership spectrum, and included tabloids and broadsheets. Tabloids tend to be more populist and sensationalist in style, while broadsheets are aimed at more educated and influential readerships (Carvalho & Burgess, 2005).

The sampling timeframe was between the beginning of the year in which the eldest learner in the study started secondary school (2012), and end of April 2015. The corpus comprised 40,169 individual articles, and consisted of 36 million individual words or tokens (where every occurrence of a word is counted) or over 30 million word types (where only words which are different from each other are counted). For example, for the word or token count, the word ‘the’ would be counted each time it occurred in the corpus, whereas for the word type count, it would only be counted once (as words tend to occur in texts more than once, the word count is usually higher than the word type count). The online corpus analysis tool Sketch Engine was used to make a concordance for each search word of ‘German’, ‘Germans’, and ‘Germany’. As an example of a concordance generated by Sketch Engine, Figure 7.1. shows the first 20 collocates of altogether 65,373 occurrences of the search word ‘German’ with the co-text (text occurring in the immediate vicinity of a word) either side.



Figure 7.1. Screenshot of ‘German’ concordance

From the three concordances (one each for German, Germans, and Germany) three collocation lists were compiled, one for ‘German’, one for ‘Germans’, and one for ‘Germany’. For a collocation list the software makes a statistical calculation of the words that typically co-occur with the node word. This was done for the purpose of discovering linguistic patterns, which might allow for an exploration of attitudes embedded in the texts, which would otherwise remain hidden.

Collocates were sorted by log-likelihood (LL), a measure of statistical significance. However rather than using this measure to test for significance, here it was used as an analytical tool: the higher the LL score, the stronger the relationship between the two collocates. A high LL score denotes a low probability that the results are due to chance. According to McEnery, Xiao, and Tono (2006), a LL value of 10.83 already corresponds to a *p* value of .001, meaning that the linguistic patterns identified in this study’s corpus data (Table 7.2. below), which are all higher than 10.83, are very unlikely to be due to chance (at least one can be 99.9% confident that they are not due to chance). In addition to the raw

number co-occurrence count, there is also a statistical value which might lead to a word that co-occurs less often being higher ranked, because the correlation is stronger according to LL, when the co-occurring word does not appear very often elsewhere in the corpus. This results in a ranking which considers and privileges the saliency of the co-occurrence of the search word and the collocate. Table 7.1. below shows the number of occurrence (hits), the normalised occurrence-count (per million words), and the range of LL scores for the first 1000 collocates for each of the three search terms:

Table 7.1. *Descriptive statistics for collocates by search term*

<u>Search term</u>	<u>N hits</u>	<u>Per million</u>	<u>Log-likelihood score</u>	
			highest	lowest
German	65,373	1,817.96	119,579.23	237.24
Germans	1,832	384.70	39,909.70	49.70
Germany	77,768	2,162.70	101,36.36	287.19

Using this LL-based ranking system, Figure 7.2. below shows, as an example, the first page of the collocation candidates list for the search term ‘German’:

	<u>Cooccurrence count</u>	<u>Candidate count</u>	<u>log likelihood</u>
P   N the	33,738	1,685,207	119,579.233
P   N .	24,664	1,434,000	75,952.618
P   N ,	25,859	1,666,664	75,182.946
P   N of	14,002	796,678	41,276.263
P   N a	12,855	683,848	39,280.748
P   N and	12,614	680,046	38,186.395
P   N to	12,673	808,870	34,436.743
P   N in	11,443	639,782	33,675.033
P   N The	6,608	209,919	26,038.475
P   N Angela	2,484	7,033	22,325.175
P   N chancellor	2,090	3,787	21,240.328
P   N Merkel	2,666	13,485	20,383.487
P   N by	4,744	158,877	18,083.665
P   N that	5,399	308,227	15,232.400
P   N Chancellor	1,562	3,985	14,421.848
P   N "	5,918	467,306	13,302.401
P   N was	4,519	250,048	12,955.492
P   N for	4,499	269,933	12,233.779
P   N is	4,691	311,413	11,912.885
P   N with	3,948	203,546	11,801.129
P   N on	4,049	229,898	11,392.433
P   N French	1,669	16,605	10,325.485
P   N from	2,891	148,899	8,606.897
P   N has	2,744	137,989	8,284.832
P   N who	2,167	84,468	7,556.656
P   N as	2,816	185,601	7,121.741
P   N at	2,733	173,022	7,105.930
P   N said	2,145	92,132	7,087.830
P   N :	2,468	155,104	6,441.268
P   N government	1,188	19,061	6,183.561
P   N were	1,877	82,094	6,132.001
P   N had	1,958	96,897	5,949.539
P   N -	2,184	136,697	5,708.359
P   N East	826	5,932	5,664.803
P   N have	2,168	145,524	5,395.259
P   N ;	1,612	69,601	5,299.427
P   N are	1,944	126,045	4,952.519
P   N his	2,127	156,507	4,947.181
P   N A	1,227	39,272	4,723.228
P   N Wolfgang	506	1,471	4,499.569
P   N an	1,637	101,733	4,288.535
P   N British	1,018	28,039	4,210.526
P   N which	1,398	70,546	4,187.587
P   N minister	773	11,460	4,141.735
P   N after	1,260	54,527	4,130.989
P   N soldiers	569	3,624	4,046.271

Figure 7.2. Screenshot of 'German' collocates

Having generated collocation lists for German, Germans, and Germany, collocates were sorted into thematic categories which emerged from the data. As the aim was to find out whether there were any differences between emerging categories for German, Germans, and Germany, separate lists for each of the three key words were compiled. This was done by working through each list of the first 1000 collocates, based on the ranking



system based on saliency of the relationship between search word and collocate as explained above. The content words were coded into emerging categories, until a saturation point was reached, and no new categories emerged. A category was defined as a semantic field for which at least three items were present. Using the example of the first page of the collocates for the key word 'German' (Figure 7.2. above), the content words visible in the screenshot would be Angela, chancellor, Merkel, French, government, East, Wolfgang, British, minister, and soldiers, which already gives an impression of the three top themes: Angela, chancellor, Merkel, government, Wolfgang, and minister were categorised under politics, East and British under nations, and soldiers under war. However, this short list of collocations also demonstrates that another step is needed in the categorisation process. For example, Wolfgang could be referring to another context, such as music (Mozart), East might not necessarily refer to East Germany, and soldier might not necessarily refer to war, but to the military in general. This is the reason that it is important to check concordance lines for the context, so that the thematic category can be identified. Each individual collocate which was assigned to a thematic category was checked in this way. For example, where West is categorised under football, (as in Table 7.2. below,) the concordance lines revealed that here, West referred to the West-German football team. Where more than one theme was present for a collocate, the collocate was assigned to the theme which was present in the majority of concordance lines. For example, the collocate 'against' for the node word 'German' occurred in the context of economy, football, politics and sport, but mainly (twice as many times than the second highest category, economy) in the context of war. Therefore, for 'German', against was assigned to war. The same word, against, also emerged as a salient collocate for 'Germany', however here this was mainly in the context of football, with war featuring much less prominently. Where more than one theme was dominant, this has been indicated in the results tables below. Figure 7.3. below demonstrates, using the example of the collocate 'soldiers', that this word is indeed mainly

used in the context of WWI and II. From here on this theme will be termed ‘war’, but concordance lines were checked and in this analysis war refers exclusively to WWI and WWII.



Figure 7.3. Concordance lines for the collocates ‘German’ and ‘soldiers’

### 7.1.2. Results

Collocates for ‘German’, ‘Germans’, and ‘Germany’ were categorised into themes as explained under 7.1.1. above. To give an impression of the strongest collocates and the themes they were categorised under, Table 7.2. below shows the 10 strongest collocates based on strength of association as measured by Log-likelihood.

Table 7.2. First 10 thematic collocates by key word

<u>German</u>			<u>Germans</u>			<u>Germany</u>		
<u>Collocate</u>	<u>Theme</u>	<u>LL*</u>	<u>Collocate</u>	<u>Theme</u>	<u>LL*</u>	<u>Collocate</u>	<u>Theme</u>	<u>LL*</u>
1. Angela	politics	22,325.2	1. French	nations	1,466.2	1. France	countries	29,949.8
2. chancellor	politics	21,240.3	2. East	nations	1,412.5	2. against	football	12,857.6
3. Merkel	politics	20,383.5	3. British	nations	888.9	3. West	football	12,334.3
4. Chancellor	politics	14,421.8	4. Italians	nations	702.8	4. Italy	countries	10,359.6
5. French	nations	10,325.5	5. war	war	585.9	5. East	sport	8,820.5
6. government	politics	6,183.6	6. West	nations	566.449	6. Spain	football	8,704.3
7. East	nations	5,664.8	7. invaded	war	529.7	7. World	football	7,775.4
8. Wolfgang	politics	4,499.6	8. captured	war	522.5	8. Britain	countries	7,106.7
9. British	nations	4,210.5	9. Austrians	nations	472.4	9. Nazi	war	6,353.0
10. minister	politics	4,141.7	10. killed	war	463.7	10. Cup	football	6,334.2

\* Log-likelihood score

Tables 7.3., 7.4., and 7.5. below show collocates for ‘German’, ‘Germans’ and ‘Germany’ by theme. Seven themes each were identified for ‘German’ and ‘Germany’, and two themes for ‘Germans’. For ‘German’, the theme of politics dominates, and for ‘Germans’, war emerged as the most frequent theme. Most common themes for Germany are countries and football. War features at the top end for ‘German’ and ‘Germany’, but at the bottom end of the scale for ‘Germany’.

Table 7.3. 'German': Collocations by theme frequency

1. politics (31) <sup>1</sup>			2. war (15)		3. nations (12)		3. economy (12)		5. football (8)		6. media (7)		7. Sport (3)	
1.	Angela	(22,325.2) <sup>2</sup>	1. soldiers		1. French		1. economy		1. football		1. media		1. team	
2.	chancellor	(21,240.3)		(4,046.3)		(1,0325.5)		(3,910.2)		(3,983.2)		(3,100.7)		(1,925.4)
3.	Merkel	(20,383.5)	2. troops		2. East		2. finance		2. Cup		2. Bild		2. Prix	
4.	Chancellor	(14,421.8)		(3,817.8)		(5,664.8)		(3,083.1)		(1,989.4)		(1,877.3)		(1,384.1)
5.	government	(6,183.6)	3. army		3. British		3. company		3. champions		3. Spiegel		3. Grand	
6.	Wolfgang	(4,499.6)		(2,488.4)		(4,210.5)		(2,297.3)		(1,769.7)		(1,147.1)		(1,216.6)
7.	minister	(4,141.7)	4. forces		4. English		4. business		4. side		4. TV			
8.	authorities	(2,944.5)		(2,479.3)		(2,608.7)		(2,264.4)		(1,710.7)		(1,105.0)		
9.	officials	(1,974.3)	5. against		5. Italian		5. bank		5. Bundesliga		5. press			
10.	Schäuble	(1,936.9)		(2,098.3)		(2,372.9)		(1,407.2)		(1,217.4)		(948.0)		
11.	politicians	(1,915.5)	6. war		6. Spanish		6. companies		6. Bayern		6. radio			
12.	leader	(1,785.9)		(1,686.6)		(2,020.2)		(1,403.9)		(1,103.1)		(894.8)		
13.	governments	(1,508.9)	7. soldier		7. German		7. DAX		7. Borussia		7. television			
14.	taxpayers	(1,477.4)		(1,598.3)		(1,897.1)		(1,352.5)		(746.5)		(894.7)		
15.	president	(1,368.0)	8. officer		8. foreign		8. banker		8. Dortmund					
16.	parliament	(1,298.5)		(1,460.8)		(1,542.8)		(1,348.4)		(728.5)				
17.	Minister	(1,279.0)	9. military		9. people		9. industry							
18.	reunification	(1,228.7)		(1,346.1)		(1,259.2)		(1,055.1)						
19.	Schaeuble	(1,213.6)	10. invasion		10. European		10. market							
20.	ministry	(1,202.3)		(1,343.1)		(1,046.8)		(992.6)						
21.	voters	(1,052.4)	11. occupation		11. Dutch		11. car							
22.	embassy	(946.1)		(1,288.2)		(922.8)		(945.0)						
23.	Schauble	(901.8)	12. officers		12. Russian		12. Bundesbank							
24.	Guido	(900.7)		(1,237.6)		(834.3)		(795.0)						
25.	Westerwelle	(900.7)	13. Army											
26.	opposition	(866.5)		(1,088.0)										
27.	leaders	(853.6)	14. lines											
28.	Gauck	(830.2)		(1,038.0)										
29.	chancellor's	(817.1)	15. tanks											
30.	elections	(817.0)		(805.2)										
31.	Merkel's	(777.0)												

Note. Log-likelihood range 22,325.2 - 728.5. <sup>1</sup> Number of collocates per theme. <sup>2</sup> Log-likelihood score.

Table 7.4. 'Germans': Collocations by theme frequency

<u>1. war (43)<sup>1</sup></u>		<u>2. nations (14)</u>	
1. ordinary	(632.4) <sup>2</sup>	1. French (politics)	(1,466.2)
2. war	(585.9)	2. East (East Germans)	(1,412.5)
3. invaded	(529.7)	3. British	(888.9)
4. captured	(522.5)	4. Italians	(702.8)
5. killed	(463.7)	5. West (West Germans)	(566.4)
6. attack	(433.5)	6. Austrians	(472.4)
7. occupied	(342.4)	7. Greeks	(410.0)
8. lost (some football)	(319.1)	8. Dutch	(388.9)
9. fighting	(312.2)	9. Poles	(271.0)
10. men	(304.9)	10. Americans	(269.1)
11. Russians	(284.5)	11. Spaniards	(167.3)
12. defeat (some football)	(271.6)	12. Hungarians	(131.7)
13. retreating	(268.0)	13. English	(125.7)
14. front	(256.1)	14. Australians	(90.5)
15. shot	(249.5)		
16. Allies	(238.8)		
17. fight	(230.6)		
18. tanks	(220.4)		
19. escape	(218.0)		
20. troops	(213.0)		
21. fought	(208.7)		
22. 1940	(205.5)		
23. Allied	(204.3)		
24. attacked	(176.6)		
25. trenches	(166.7)		
26. Jews	(156.6)		
27. town	(154.9)		
28. retreated	(141.0)		
29. soldiers	(139.7)		
30. surrender	(137.7)		
31. victims	(137.7)		
32. allies	(134.3)		
33. War	(132.3)		
34. invade	(130.4)		
35. 1914	(119.9)		
36. casualties	(117.9)		
37. evacuated	(117.1)		
38. Hitler	(117.0)		
39. resistance	(114.1)		
40. shelled	(110.4)		
41. bombed	(109.1)		
42. surrendered	(107.7)		
43. 1944	(106.8)		

*Note.* Log-likelihood range 1,466.2 - 90.5. <sup>1</sup> Number of collocates per theme. <sup>2</sup> Log-likelihood score.

Table 7.5. 'Germany': Collocations by theme frequency

<u>1. countries/areas (29)<sup>1</sup></u>		<u>2. football (28)</u>		<u>3. politics (9)</u>		<u>4. sport (8)</u>		<u>5. economy (7)</u>		<u>6. Euro- (5)</u>		<u>6. war (5)</u>	
1. France	(29,949.8) <sup>2</sup>	1. against	(12,857.6)	1. Merkel		1. East		1. DAX		1. Europe		1. Nazi	
2. Italy	(10,359.6)	2. West	(12,334.3)		(3,857.2)		(8,820.5)		(3,340.8)	(economy)			(6,353.0)
3. Britain	(7,106.7)	3. Spain	(8,704.3)	2. Angela		2. win		2. economy		(2,537.7)		2. war	
4. Austria	(5,185.0)	4. World	(7,775.4)		(3,249.8)		(2,757.8)		(2,336.6)	2. European,			(3,419.7)
5. Portugal	(3,553.7)	5. Cup	(6,334.2)	3. Greece (also:		3. team		3. economic		(countries, Sport,		3. War	
6. countries	(3,525.6)	6. England	(5,169.0)	football (3,169.6)			(2,560.0)		(2,019.9)	economy, politics)			(721.72)
7. UK	(3,463.0)	7. Holland	(4,587.5)	4. Chancellor		4. second		4. Bundesbank		(2,494.3)		4. Hitler's	
8. Germany	(3,154.5)	8. Brazil	(3,490.6)		(1,716.8)		(1,796.1)		(878.0)	3. eurozone,			(618.8)
9. US	(2,950.3)	9. Joachim	(3,235.9)	5. Alternative		5. play		5. bank		(economy)		5. 1945	
10. Denmark	(2,683.3)	10. Greece	(3,169.6)	(für Deutschland)			(1,648.1)		(700.7)		(2,177.1)		(573.9)
11. Ireland	(2,670.7)	11. Argentina	(3,065.3)		(1,477.7)	6. Nico		6. business		4. EU			
12. Russia	(2,567.7)	12. final	(2,200.8)	6. party		(Rosberg,			(657.3)	(politics)			
13. Poland	(2,504.4)	13. beat	(2,192.9)		(1044.8)	Hülkenburg)		7. economies			(1,416.8)		
14. Netherlands	(4,618.7)	14. semi-final	(2,180.4)	7. political			(1,362.8)		(620.4)	5. Euro			
15. Sweden	(2,153.2)	15. coach	(1,793.9)		(1,020.5)	7. V				(economy)			
16. Belgium	(2,092.3)	16. Munich	(1,640.1)	8. Schäuble			(705.7)				(578.7)		
17. Switzerland	(1,886.0)	17. Löw	(1,618.7)		(765.4)	8. teams							
18. Japan	(1,856.9)	18. Manuel	(1,580.4)	9. minister			(640.4)						
19. Berlin	(1,678.5)	19. champions	(1,576.7)		(574.8)								
20. country	(1,492.0)	20. 2012	(1,568.5)										
21. northern	(1,447.5)	21. Bayern	(1,443.7)										
22. China	(1,316.4)	22. Neuer	(1,439.7)										
23. southern	(1,090.7)	23. international	(1,426.4)										
24. America	(1,038.4)	24. 2010	(938.3)										
25. Australia	(962.3)	25. Philipp	(889.8)										
26. USA	(954.7)	26. goals	(847.0)										
27. eastern	(870.1)	27. Chile	(826.3)										
28. India	(770.7)	28. football	(730.5)										
29. Canada	(756.9)												

Note. Log-likelihood range 29,949.8 – 620.4. <sup>1</sup>Number of collocates per theme. <sup>2</sup>Log-likelihood score.

Tables 7.3., 7.4., and 7.5. above show a two-fold linguistic pattern. Firstly, the patterns as indicated by the collocations show how the phenomenon of German\* is conceptualised in certain thematic categories. Secondly, the collocations reveal negative associations with ‘Germans’. Through the use of mainly negative collocates for ‘Germans’, (e.g. “invaded”, “captured”, “killed”, “attack), unlike for ‘German’ or ‘Germany’, a negative discourse prosody around “Germans” in the study’s sampled newspaper articles can be said to have emerged from the corpus data. According to discourse theory (e.g. Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008), discourse prosody reflects speaker attitudes (here: negative attitudes towards ‘Germans’), and is in turn likely to influence readers’ perceptions (here: reinforce negative attitudes towards ‘Germans’).

For ease of comparison, Figures 7.4., 7.5., and 7.6. below show emerging themes from the newspaper data for ‘German’, ‘Germans’, and ‘Germany’ as column charts on one page.



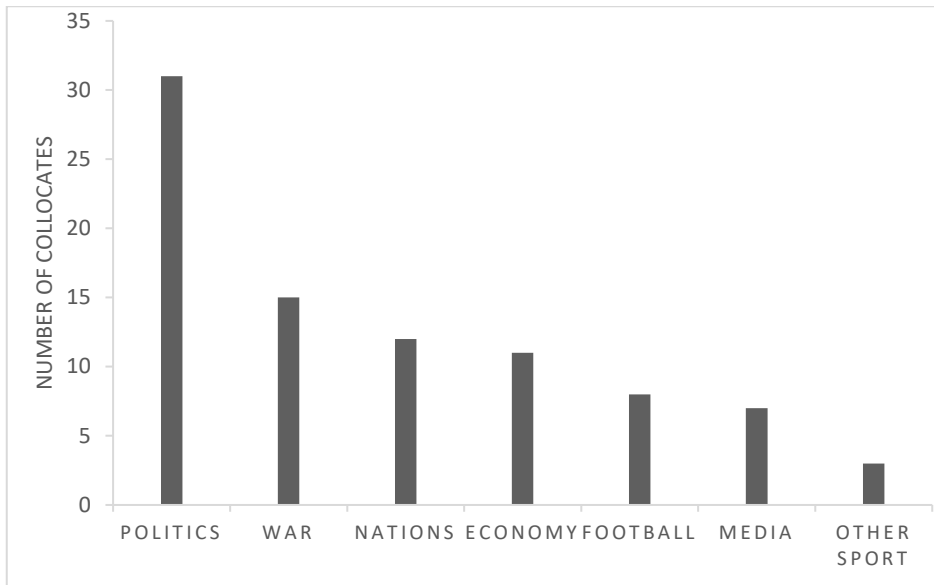


Figure 7.4. 'German': Thematic categories from collocates

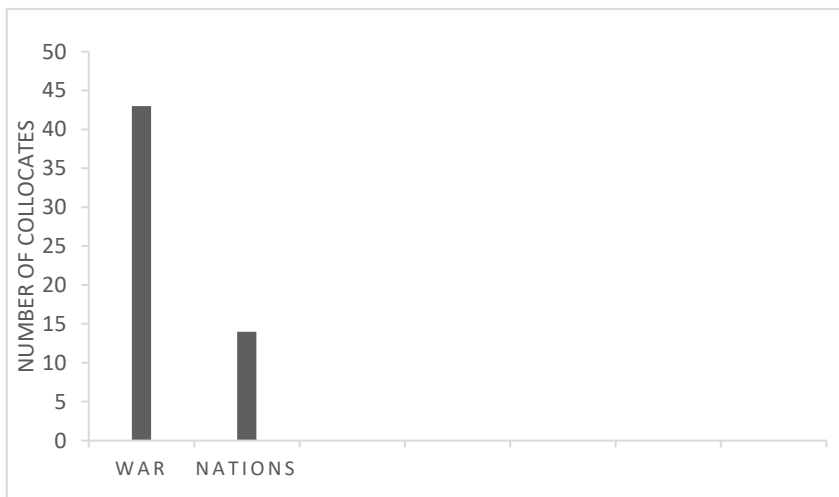


Figure 7.5. 'Germans': Thematic categories from collocates

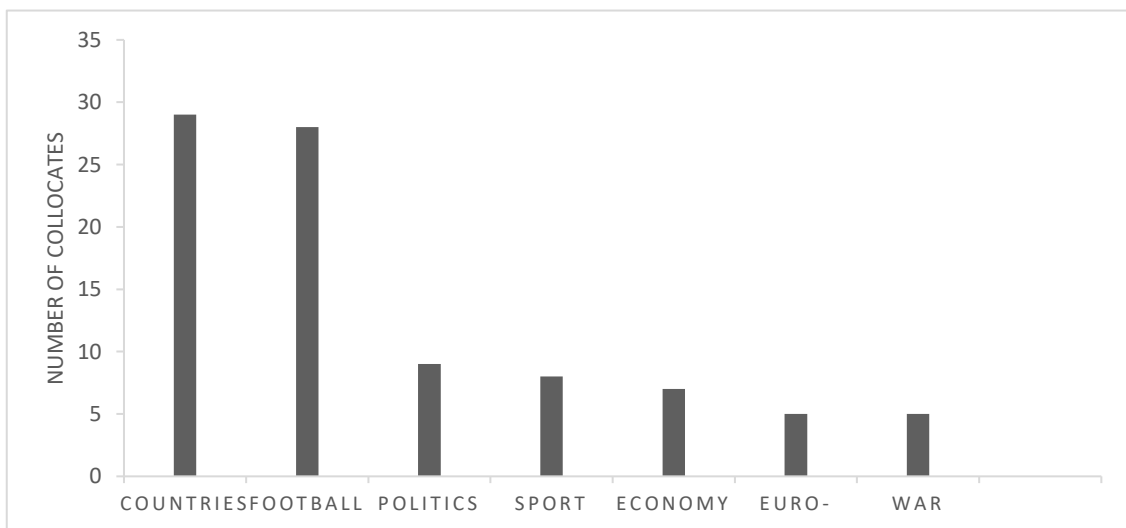


Figure 7.6. 'Germany': Thematic categories from collocates

### **7.1.3. Summary: German\* in UK public discourses**

Analysis of the corpus data showed that public discourses (as measured by the sampled press data) around ‘German’ and ‘Germany’ revolved around the same six themes: politics, other nations, football, other sport, economy/business, and war. One theme which emerged for only for ‘German’ was media, and one theme only present in discourses around ‘Germany’ was ‘Euro-related’. In descending order, public discourse themes for ‘German’ were 1. politics, 2. war, 3. nations, 4. economy, 5. football, 6. media, and 7. other sport. Discourses around ‘Germany’ focussed on 1. nations, 2. football, 3. politics, 4. other sport, 5. Euro-related, and 6., in equal measures, economy and war. In contrast to the seven thematic categories which emerged each for ‘German’ and ‘Germany’, only two themes were found for ‘Germans’. The most dominant theme for ‘Germans’ – with more than three times as many concurrences as the second most frequent theme (other nations) was war. In the sampled UK press articles then, ‘German’ was framed mainly in terms in politics and war, ‘Germany’ in relation to other nations and football, and ‘Germans’ were mainly represented in connection with war. Whilst the war theme features in press discourses on all three node terms, it features strongest in data around ‘Germans’, quite strongly for ‘German’, and least frequently for ‘Germany’.

### **7.2. The relationship between representations of German\* in public and private discourses**

This part of the chapter addresses research question 4 by exploring the relationship between private (school context) and public (press) discourses around German\*. Whilst it is acknowledged that there is unlikely to be total congruence between those discourses, the approach taken in this study assumes, in line with discourse theory, that widely circulated newspaper discourse can provide links between, and permeate into, a wide range of domains (including, here: school settings (Jäger & Maier, 2016)). The questionnaire,

interviews, and focus groups intended to elicit discourses around German\* from English secondary school learners, teachers, and head teachers. The educational setting made it likely that these discourses would revolve around the teaching and learning context, just as the media context made it more likely for the press data to include themes around politics, sports, and, media. Of course, it needs to be borne in mind that the school data were produced for the purpose of this research, whereas the newspaper data were not. The school data largely (and the metaphor data exclusively) focus on (learning) the German language, the newspaper data do not. Still, wider discourse fields beyond the immediate educational and language context were also found to be present in the school data. In the Family Fortunes data learners explicitly reflect an awareness of wider discourses around Germany. In the metaphors, despite the different nature and focus of the data, more widely spread attitudes about Germany and the German speaker community also seem to be reflected in learners' conceptualisations of the German language. Hence, the following analysis focusses on selected links which emerged between the public and private discourse data in this study, and these are presented by research instrument below. Part 1 of the Family Fortunes task was devised with the aim of generating learner data which would illuminate learners' perceptions of public discourses, and the results were presented under 6.4. above. Part 2 endeavoured to illuminate learners' stances towards these perceived discourses, and data from this task were linked with learners' German uptake decisions. Section 7.2.1. below forms the link between RQs 2, 3, and 4 by comparing learner perceptions of public discourses with actual public discourses, as found in the corpus part of the study. The line of investigation is then developed further by exploring findings from Part 2 of the Family Fortunes task, which probed how learners positioned themselves towards their perceptions of public discourses around German\*.

### **7.2.1. Public discourses and learner perceptions**

This section addresses RQ4, which investigates the relationship between public discourses as represented in press discourses (reported under 7.1. above), and in private discourses in school settings (reported in chapter 6).

For ease of comparison of themes below, the often highly frequent uncategorised themes were excluded from the learner data, and only content-based themes listed. Also, in order to compare the emerging themes better with each other across data sets, corpus themes are juxtaposed with learner data for KS3 and 4 by search term. It is important to note, however, that the learner data themes are listed by percentage, and the corpus data by number of items per category. Thus, no mathematical comparison in terms of frequencies or distribution of themes is possible or indeed intended. Setting out the data in this way does, however, enable the identification of themes which occur across data sets, as well as those which do not.

Table 7.6. below combines results of the themes which emerged for the node words of ‘German’, ‘Germans’, and ‘Germany’.

Table 7.6. 'German', 'Germans', and 'Germany': Themes across data sets

<u>Node word</u>	<u>Corpus data (N)</u>	<u>KS3 data (%)</u>	<u>KS4 data (%)</u>
German	1. politics (31)	1. language (60%)	1. language (53%)
	2. war (14)	2. culture (12%)	2. culture (15%)
	3. people (12)	3. war (4%)	3. war (5%)
	4. economy (11)	4. people/places (3%)	4. people/places (3%)
	5. football (8)	5. sports (1%)	5. sports (1%)
	6. media (7)		
	7. other sports (3)		
Germans	1. war (42)	1. war (24%)	1. war (13%)
	2. people (15)	2. people/places (12%)	2. culture (11%)
		3. culture (10%)	3. language (7%)
		4. sports (5%)	3. people/places (7%)
		4. language (5%)	5. sports (1%)
Germany	1. countries (29)	1. geography (28%)	1. culture (24%)
	2. football (28)	2. culture (18%)	2. geography (21%)
	3. politics (9)	3. war (7%)	3. war (15%)
	4. other sports (8)	4. Euro-... (6%)	4. politics/economy (5%)
	5. economy (7)	5. sports (5%)	5. Euro-... (2%)
	6. Euro-... (5)	6. politics/economy (3%)	6. sports (1%)
	6. war (5)		

### *7.2.1.1. German*

For ‘German’, Table 7.6. above shows that KS3 and KS4 data mirror each other exactly in the distribution of themes. The most frequent theme from the learner questionnaire, language, also includes the learning situation. The data show that in their perception of public discourses, learners tend to relate ‘German’ to a domain which is familiar to them, which they experience personally and directly in the school setting: the German language and German lessons. The most frequent theme around ‘German’ in the newspaper corpus, on the other hand, relates to the more abstract and conceptual domain of politics. The two world wars feature strongly across all three data sets, and there is overlap between the themes of people, and sports.

Regarding the degree to which learners agree or disagree with these perceived public discourses around German, 86.5% of KS3 learners agree to some extent with their perceived public opinion, and fewer than 2% believe that public opinion is totally incorrect. KS4 learners seem a little more discerning than KS3 learners, but still 72.5% agree more or less with public opinion. Table 7.7. below shows to what extent learners agree or disagree with public discourse around ‘German’ (as perceived by themselves):

Table 7.7. 'German': Learner views of correctness of public perceptions

<u>Public perceptions of 'German' are:</u>	<u>KS3 n (%*)</u>	<u>KS4 n (%*)</u>
Totally correct	96 (24.4)	17 (18.7)
Mostly correct	115 (29.3)	29 (31.9)
A little more correct than incorrect	129 (32.8)	20 (22.0)
A little more incorrect than correct	27 (6.9)	16 (17.6)
Mostly incorrect	18 (4.6)	7 (7.7)
Totally incorrect	8 (2.0)	2 (2.2)
Correct to some extent	340 (86.5)	66 (72.5)
Valid total	393 (100)	91 (100)

*Note.* KS3  $n = 411$ , invalid  $n = 18$  (4.4%). KS4  $n = 95$ , invalid  $n = 4$  (4.2%). \* Valid percentages shown.

### 7.2.1.2. *Germans*

For ‘Germans’, only two thematic categories (war and people) were identified. The war theme is the most frequently occurring theme across all three data sets. KS3 data mirror the corpus data also in terms of the second highest frequency theme, people. People also occurs in KS4 data, in third place.

Almost three quarters (74.5%) of KS3 students in the sample agree with the public opinion they reported, and whilst KS4 learners also agree, they do so to a lesser extent (66.3 %). Table 7.8. below shows a detailed breakdown of KS3 and 4 learners’ views of their perceptions of public attitudes towards ‘Germans’:



Table 7.8. ‘Germans’: Learner views of correctness of public perceptions

<u>Public perceptions of ‘Germans’ are:</u>	<u>KS3 n (%*)</u>	<u>KS4 n(%*)</u>
Totally correct	70 (17.0)	12 (13.5)
Mostly correct	121 (29.4)	21 (23.6)
A little more correct than incorrect	89 (21.7)	26 (29.2)
A little more incorrect than correct	55 (13.4)	10 (11.2)
Mostly incorrect	27 (6.6)	13 (14.6)
Totally incorrect	14 (3.4)	7 (7.9)
Correct to some extent	280 (74.5)	59 (66.3)
Valid total	376 (100)	89 (100)

*Note.* KS3  $N = 411$ , invalid  $n = 35$  (8.5%). KS4  $n = 95$ , invalid  $n = 6$  (6.3%). \* Valid percentages shown.

### 7.2.1.3. Germany

As shown in Table 7.6. above, a new theme specific to ‘Germany’ emerged from both KS3 and KS4 data with ‘Euro-related’ associations (KS3: 6.3%, KS4: 2%). This theme also emerged from the corpus ‘Germany’ data, but not from ‘German’ or ‘Germans’. Politics and economy (KS3: 3.2%, KS4: 5.3%) was also a new theme for the learner data, but had featured in press data around ‘German’, as well as ‘Germany’ (but not ‘Germans’). Sports features prominently in the corpus data around Germany but only appears to a minimal amount in learner perceptions of public discourses, although it is

mentioned slightly more frequently in KS3 perceptions (5.1%) than in KS4 perceptions (1.1%).

The top press theme of countries might be related to the geography theme which featured strongly in the learner data. For 'Germany', all the press themes were also found within the learner data: Sports, politics, economy, Euro-related , and war. The latter theme is the least frequently occurring one within the corpus, but takes third position in the learner data for both KS3 and 4, ranked by frequency.

Lastly, 84.2% of KS3 learners largely agree with public discourse around 'Germany'. KS4 learners are not far behind, with 77% agreeing with the sentiment of their own public discourse perceptions. Table 7.9. below shows a detailed breakdown of learners' views around perceived public discourse around 'Germany':

Table 7.9. 'Germany': Learner views of correctness of public perceptions

<u>Public perceptions of 'Germany' are:</u>	<u>KS3 n (%)</u>		<u>KS4 n (%)</u>	
Totally correct	110	(26.8)	14	(16.1)
Mostly correct	110	(26.8)	27	(31.0)
A little more correct than incorrect	99	(24.1)	26	(29.9)
A little more incorrect than correct	37	(9.0)	11	(11.6)
Mostly incorrect	12	(2.9)	5	(5.3)
Totally incorrect	11	(2.7)	4	(4.2)
Correct to some extent	319	(84.2)	67	(77.0)
Valid total	379	(100)	87	(100)

*Note.* KS3  $N = 411$ , invalid  $n = 32$  (7.8%). KS4  $N = 95$ , invalid  $n = 8$  (8.4%). \* Valid percentages shown.

#### 7.2.1.4. Differences between groups: Continuers and droppers

Statistical tests were conducted in order to ascertain whether there was any association between continuing or dropping German, and the perception of public discourses around 'German', 'the Germans', and 'Germany'. For the purposes of comparisons between groups using chi-square analysis, the small group of 13 learners who had not decided between continuing and dropping German were excluded from the statistical analysis. Results are reported separately for 'German', 'Germans', and 'Germany' and by key stage below.

### *'German'*

For these tests, in order to control for type I error, the Bonferroni correction was applied by dividing the conventional  $\alpha$ -level of .05 by the number of tests run (8), resulting in an adjusted  $\alpha$ -level of  $p = .006$ . For KS3 learners, Pearson's chi-square test showed a significant association between learners' perceptions of public discourse around German, and their choices whether to continue or drop the subject ( $\chi^2(3) = 27.70$ ). For continuers, there was a significant association between perceiving public attitudes as either positive ( $p = .00067$ ) or neutral ( $p = .0053$ ). Dropping German was associated with perceived negative public attitudes ( $p = .00001$ ).

There were no significant associations regarding the theme of war for either KS3 continuers or droppers. For KS4 learners, no significant associations with any type of perceived public attitudes could be detected. Using the same chi-square procedure, no association between continuing or dropping German and a particular perceived public discourse theme for any key stage was found.

Further tests were conducted in order to ascertain whether any particular group of learners was more likely to agree or disagree with public opinion than another. Among KS3 learners, some cells had a cell count of less than 5, therefore Fisher's exact test is reported instead of Pearson's chi-square test. Fisher's exact test ( $p < .001$ ) showed a statistically significant difference between continuers' and droppers' views of perceived negative public attitudes: continuers disagreed strongly with negative public discourse, whereas droppers did not.

For the smaller sample of KS4 learners ( $n = 95$ ), there were no statistically significant differences between continuers and droppers as regards stance towards public discourse for either positive, negative, neutral, or war-related views of 'German'.

### *'Germans' and 'Germany'*

For 'Germans' and for 'Germany', no statistically significant association was found between continuing or dropping German, and perception of public discourse at either key stage. For both KS3 and 4, neither group of learners (continuers or droppers) was more likely to agree or disagree with public opinion around 'Germans' or 'Germany' than another. The pattern of a high frequency ranking for war for both KS3 and KS4 learners ties in with the newspaper corpus data, in which war appears as the most frequent theme in collocations with 'Germans'.

A noteworthy theme which emerged from the Family Fortunes data was learners' use of the word 'angry' across all three trigger words. 'Germany' and 'German', but mainly 'Germans' were conceptualised as angry. In the case of 'Germans', sometimes angry was used in conjunction with other perceived attributes, e.g. "**angry accent**" (S02\_90\_KS3\_f\_d), "**angry people**" (S02\_159\_KS3\_f\_d), "**stern and angry**" (S05\_27\_KS3\_m\_d), and, interestingly, "**Hitler and angry**" (S06\_56\_KS3\_m\_d). This theme of 'angry German' was also identified in the learner metaphors, and will be explored in relation to its connections with public discourses below.

#### **7.2.2. Public discourse and learner metaphors**

As shown under 7.1.2. above, 'Germans' in UK public discourse (as ascertained via the press corpus compiled for this study) appear to be mainly associated with war. Singling out verbs from the 'Germans' collocates for the war theme gives an impression of public perceptions of what 'Germans do' (in descending order of strength of association with the node word 'Germans'):

What Germans do:

1. **invade**
2. **capture**
3. **kill**
4. **attack**
5. **occupy**
6. **lose**
7. **fight**
8. **defeat**
9. **retreat**
10. **shoot**
11. **attack**
12. **surrender**
13. **invade**
14. **evacuate**
15. **shell**
16. **bomb.**

It is worth noting that there were no verbs amongst the ‘Germans’ collocates which framed Germans in a context other than war, as the only other theme for this node word was nations, and consisted only of nouns. From the above verb list alone, a picture emerges of ‘Germans as threat’. Whilst the above pertains to ‘Germans’, not ‘German’, it is here proposed that parallels of this view of German can be identified in learners’ animal metaphors. Learners’ animal metaphors were therefore coded for ‘German as threat’. This included responses such as “scary” and “makes me feel anxious”, but not ones which did not include the sentiment of threat, such as “bad”, “annoying”, “disgusting”, or “horrible”.

Table 7.10. 'German as threat' metaphors by key stage and uptake decision

	<u>KS3 % (n)</u>			<u>KS4 % (n)</u>		
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Continuers</u>	<u>Droppers</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Continuers</u>	<u>Droppers</u>
German as threat	14.1 (58)	16.2 (22)	12.9 (33)	32.6 (31)	35.7 (5)	32.1 (26)
N/A	4.4 (18)	3.7 (5)	4.3 (11)	7.4 (7)	21.4 (3)	4.9 (4)
Total	100 (411)	100 (136)	100 (255)	100 (95)	100 (14)	100 (81)

Interestingly, Table 7.10. above shows framing German as a threat is more common among KS4 learners than KS3 learners: about one third of KS4 learners described German as a threat in their animal metaphors, compared with about one seventh of KS3 learners. When split by uptake decision (droppers/continuers), whilst there is not much variation between groups, eyeballing the descriptive data shows that for both key stages, the percentage of continuers who seemed to perceive German as a threat is higher than the percentage of droppers who did so.

According to some learners in this study, German sounds, innocently enough, loud:

- |  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| <b>“its loud”</b>                                    | (S05_146_KS4_f_d) |
| <b>“it makes some weird and loud noises“</b>         | (S04_47_KS4_f_c)  |
| <b>“I feel conspicuous and loud when I speak it”</b> | (S02_06_KS4_m_c)  |

and strong, rough, and tough:

- |  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| <b>“it is strong in the way it is pronounced”</b>        | (S04_56_KS4_f_c) |
| <b>“it's faced past and rough sounding”</b>              | (S02_14_KS4_f_d) |
| <b>“it sounds rough”</b>                                 | (S04_35_KS3_f_c) |
| <b>“the sound of the German language is quite tough”</b> | (S02_03_KS4_f_c) |

Other learners' responses suggest a perception of German as angry-sounding:

- |  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| <b>“it sounds very loud and angry”</b> | (S06_95_KS3_f_d)  |
| <b>“it sounds angry”</b>               | (S05_124_KS4_m_d) |
| <b>“German sounds quite angry”</b>     | (S05_153_KS4_f_d) |
| <b>“it sounds angry all the time”</b>  | (S05_132_KS4_f_c) |



<b>“they sound angry when listened to”</b>	(S06_07_KS4_m_d)
<b>“its yappy and quite an angry sounding language”</b>	(S02_112_KS3_f_c)
<b>“they get angry sometimes and German sounds angry sometimes”</b>	(S02_113_KS3_f_d)
<b>“its an angry language/matches the accent”</b>	(S04_52_KS4_f_d),

aggressive:

<b>“German sounds aggressive”</b>	(S04_50_KS4_f_c),
-----------------------------------	-------------------

and threatening in other ways:

<b>“the words have a brutal, guttural sound”</b>	(S04_36_KS3_f_c)
<b>“it sounds intimidating”</b>	(S06_01_KS4_m_c)
<b>“it's a vicious sounding language”</b>	(S05_37_KS3_f_d)
<b>“it's a vicious sounding language”</b>	(S05_38_KS3_f_d).

In some learners' view, German does not just sound loud, rough, angry, and aggressive, but it takes on those properties:

<b>“the language is strong and forcefull like dogs”</b>	(S02_02_KS4_f_d)
<b>“it is hard and rough”</b>	(S02_67_KS3_m_d)
<b>“it is rough”</b>	(S04_22_KS3_f_c)
<b>“it is hard and rough”</b>	(S02_67_KS3_m_d)
<b>“it is an angry language”</b>	(S04_53_KS4_f_d)
<b>“small and aggressive”</b>	(S05_120_KS4_m_d)

**“it’s a sharp and aggressive language”** (S02\_33\_KS3\_m\_c)

**“it seems aggressive and is a ‘dying language’”** (S02\_05\_KS4\_f\_d)

German comes across as scary:

**“they are scary”** (S04\_10\_KS3\_f\_d)

**“it’s hard to catch and scary”** (S04\_12\_KS3\_f\_d)

**“big and scary”** (S05\_40\_KS3\_m\_d)

**“I’m scared of”** (S05\_104\_KS3\_m\_d)

**“they are scary I hate them”** (S06\_117\_KS3\_f\_d)

**“I am scared of them and I hate them (spiders)”** (S05\_60\_KS3\_f\_d)

**“scared of spiders and being called to say something”** (S06\_71\_KS3\_f\_c)

**“it’s scary”** (S06\_18\_KS3\_f\_d)

**“they scare me but I have to get over it”** (S05\_150\_KS4\_f\_d),

threatening:

**“its spiking and hard to get hold of”** (S02\_122\_KS3\_m\_d)

**“there evil”** (S02\_79\_KS3\_m\_d)

**“it is fierce”** (S04\_38\_KS3\_f\_c)

**“it is poisonous and no-one understands it”** (S05\_03\_KS3\_m\_c)

**“it is unpredictable”** (S05\_76\_KS3\_99\_99)

**“I don’t like them [wasps] I get anxious“** (S06\_94\_KS3\_f\_d),

and as a wild force which needs to be controlled or tamed:

**“it is very difficult to understand and learn and keep under control”**

(S02\_30\_KS3\_f\_c)

- “it is scary but tameable”** (S05\_04\_KS3\_m\_c)
- “It is hard to tame but cool in the long run”** (S05\_101\_KS3\_m\_d)
- “it seems scary but once tamed is loving”** (S02\_03\_KS4\_f\_d).

Some learners took the theme of ‘German as threat’ further and depicted it with its own agency, where German is framed as devious, sly, and on the attack. Here, learners seem to endow German with certain powers, in this representation German can make learners feel a certain way. Through such responses, learners appeared to characterise German as a powerful force pursuing its own, sinister agenda, positioning themselves as a victim on the receiving end of German aggression:

- “there annoying and they hurt”** (S05\_106\_KS3\_f\_d)
- “it is vicious and always cruel to you”** (S02\_152\_KS3\_m\_d)
- “it’s scary and it hunts me down”** (S05\_32\_KS3\_f\_d)
- “it keeps coming back to get more out of you”** (S05\_39\_KS3\_f\_d)
- “it eats people up”** (S05\_86\_KS3\_m\_d)
- “it eats people”** (S05\_87\_KS3\_m\_c)
- “it jumps at me from nowhere”** (S05\_89\_KS3\_f\_c)
- “it looks harmless until you get too close”** (S06\_02\_KS4\_m\_d)
- “cool to look at, deadly to touch (cool when people speak it, difficult to do yourself)”** (S02\_128\_KS3\_f\_m)
- “it's sly and unexpectedly hard”** (S05\_66\_KS3\_f\_d)
- “a hippo - it looks all nice at first, but hippos actually kill more people than lions do”** (S05\_90\_KS3\_m\_d)
- “it is deceptive and it waits for you to make a move then it strikes you right in the vocab/past/perfect future tense”(S02\_106\_KS3\_m\_d)**

- “stabs you in the back when you think its gets easier”**  
(S05\_140\_KS4\_m\_d)
- “if you go near it it will stress you out/scare you”** (S06\_96\_KS3\_f\_d)
- “it looks nice and kind(easy) but it turns out to be meaner than you  
first think”** (S05\_118\_KS3\_f\_c)
- “it always disturbs me in the night”** (S06\_14\_KS4\_m\_d)
- “its nice and friendly but it can also attack you”** (S05\_15\_KS3\_f\_c)
- “it can kill you”** (S06\_73\_KS3\_m\_d)
- “I want to kill it”** (S06\_74\_KS3\_f\_d)
- “easy to kill”** (S06\_47\_KS3\_m\_c)

(The last two statements hint at learners feeling threatened by German, expressed in their extreme response of a desire to kill it, and were therefore grouped under the ‘German as attacker’ view above).

While there seems to be a consensus amongst learners that German **sounds** and **is** loud, angry, and aggressive, some learners, however, bestow it with redeeming features. Nonetheless, the theme of German as threat emerges here also:

- “it is loud and sounds angry, but is less scary when you are familiar  
with it”** (S05\_152\_KS4\_f\_d)
- “it sounds angry but is loveable angry”** (S04\_39\_KS3\_f\_c)
- “it can be aggressive sounding at times but overall nice”**  
(S04\_44\_KS4\_f\_d)
- “it always sounds aggressive but it's nice at the same time”**  
(S02\_21\_KS4\_m\_d)

**“it's aggressive when you first meet it, but you get to know it”** (S02\_29\_KS3\_f\_d)

**“sweet but aggressive”** (S02\_76\_KS3\_m\_d)

**“once you get to know it its' not scary”** (S05\_142\_KS4\_f\_d)

**“it is scary but can be good at the same time”** (S06\_21\_KS3\_m\_c)

**“some people are scared and don't like them but a lot of people love it”**  
(S05\_96\_KS3\_f\_c)

**“they are scary but fun to watch”** (S06\_124\_KS3\_f\_d)

**“it is slightly scary but very useful once you get used to I”**  
(S05\_162\_KS4\_f\_d)

**“it sounds mean but is very nice”** (S02\_24\_KS3\_m\_d)

**“It can sting and be annoying but it is useful and quite cute”**  
(S04\_01\_KS3\_f\_c)

**“it's nice when it's not clawing you with hard vocab”** (S04\_18\_KS3\_f\_c)

**“it is nice but can be threatening (challenging)”** (S05\_42\_KS3\_m\_c)

**“It's scratches me alot and sometimes it's nice”** (S06\_61\_KS3\_f\_d)

**“could bite or love you”** (S06\_70\_KS3\_99\_99)

**“it can be cute but can stab you”** (S05\_10\_KS3\_f\_c)

**“cute + exciting but can be dangerous”** (S04\_49\_KS4\_f\_d)

**“it's mostly predictable, but does it cunning”** (S04\_58\_KS4\_f\_d)

**“cat - it looks nice, but it can scratch you unexpectedly (can be very  
hard for no reason)”** (S05\_156\_KS4\_f\_d).

### 7.2.3. Public discourse and learner focus groups

As seen under 7.1.2. above, a theme of business and economy features in public discourses around ‘German’ and ‘Germany’. For ease of reference, Table 7.11. below lists those collocates in descending order of strength of association with the node word.

Table 7.11. *Press corpus business/economy collocates for ‘German’ and ‘Germany’*

<u>German</u>		<u>Germany</u>	
1.	economy	1.	DAX
2.	finance	2.	economy
3.	company	3.	economic
4.	business	4.	Bundesbank
5.	bank	5.	bank
6.	companies	6.	business
7.	DAX	7.	economies
8.	banker		
9.	industry		
10.	market		
11.	car		
12.	Bundesbank		

The business/economy theme could also be identified in the learner focus group data. Learners seem to have a sense that German is associated with the world of business, however, the exact nature of this connection remains vague. Learners’ contributions tend to focus on the strength and size of Germany, and the number of German companies.

S05\_11\_3\_f\_c mentions ‘German establishments’:

Focus group S05\_KS3:

**S05\_11\_KS3\_f\_c: I feel like, like Germany is quite like a like a, I don’t know how to explain it like it like a strong country, like they’ve got a lot of establishments and they’re quite famous for a lot like, companies, and, like trademarks, like they’re quite a big country like in the world, so it’s**

**quite useful to know their language especially if you're in business.**

S02\_26\_KS3\_m\_c thinks along similar lines, but names the car sector and a German sports company:

Focus group S02\_KS3:

**S02\_26\_KS3\_m\_c : So many big companies and businesses are German and it feels like, it's just there's lots of reasons I think to learn German as in, on a job perspective. And, coz German, the Germans, they, they have so many big companies, they would be, it's really good for business, and sort of marketing area I guess,**

**I: Ok, so why, do you think? Where did you hear that?**

**S02\_26\_KS3\_m\_c: Well, I just know for a fact that lots of the big car companies, and I think Adidas, are German.**

For S04\_21\_KS3\_f\_c, German is “**quite important coz it's like one of the main countries in Europe and erm, if you're going to like a businessy job then that'd be very helpful, if you do German**”. S04\_02\_KS3\_f\_d tried to explain why ‘German is good for business’:

Focus group S04\_KS3:

**S04\_02\_KS3\_f\_d: Also I think like Germany, I mean I know they're good at, like, cars and stuff like that, and... I'm not sure, banking? I mean it's got a really big capital city, Berlin,**

so, I mean it's like a good place for like business and stuff, so if you know it, you'll, you know, do well, I don't know... yeah... I think also on the news, you never hear about Germany, like, I mean I, they might have some money problems at the moment but you never really hear them about being really poor, kind of thing, and I think like, with like the refugees as well they can afford to like bring in quite a lot as well, so it shows that like the country isn't corrupt or anything, so, that, and also like Audis and Vaux- no, Volkswagen, and other cars like that, you know... and engineering? I don't know but I heard that kind of German engineering is like, good...

someone: Construction?

S04\_02\_KS3\_f\_d : Yeah, constructions...

I: Ok, what else did you hear about that's associated with German or Germany?

S04\_02\_KS3\_f\_d : Like makes of like things, so you have German names, you know like...

S04\_41\_KS3\_f\_c: ...Lots of, erm like engineering, and er, yeah as S04\_02\_3\_f\_d said, like car companies, and erm, like technical things like that's German.

I: Yeah and so does that make you think that German is good for business?

S04\_41\_KS3\_f\_c: Yeah, mm!



Asked why German might be helpful in the world of work, S06\_36\_3\_m\_d links the language with Science:

Focus group S06\_KS3:

**S06\_36\_KS3\_m\_d: There are a lot, quite a lot of German Scientists.**

**I: Yes? How do you know that?**

**S06\_36\_KS3\_m\_d: Because of like, erm... [pause]... erm Albert Einstein was German and a lot of other... Scientists... in... the... world?**

Asked where they got their knowledge on the association between German and business from, learners referred to television:

Focus group S04\_KS3:

**S04\_41\_KS3\_f\_c: Yeah so if you watch Top Gear they always say how good the German cars are and stuff**

**I: Ah, so on TV?**

**everyone: Yeah!**

**S04\_02\_KS3\_f\_d: I think also on the news, [...],**

Instagram:

**S06\_17\_KS3\_f\_d: It was a meme account... I was looking for a meme on there and it said apparently Germany and France have lower prices for education, than England and America, and then everyone was like ah I'm gonna move to there then!**

**I:** Oh ok! So you weren't actually looking for information on countries, you were looking for a meme account so for something funny or something and then that came up and, but, you remembered that?

**S06\_17\_KS3\_f\_d:** [nods],

the school:

**S05\_130\_KS4\_f\_d:** In year 9 teachers told us that taking a language would be really useful and it would look good on your CV and stuff. And if you ever go into kind of business and trading and things, it means that you can trade with more countries just because you can speak the language,

or that they "just knew it":

**S05\_123\_KS4\_m\_d:** Coz a lot of, now cars and vehicle brands are all made like German, German... they are aren't they? [looking around for reassurance] ... German manufacturers, so...

**I:** so is it just something that you knew anyway or did anyone give you that information?

**S05\_123\_KS4\_m\_d:** I knew that anyway.

KS3 learners in School S06 reported one teacher's anecdotal 'chat' as the source of their information on the German car industry, linked with its perceived implications for Brexit (this interview took place one week before the EU referendum, June 2016).

Focus group S06 KS3:

**I:** Can you remember where you got that information?

**S06\_18\_KS3\_d:** Er, [laughs], computing...

**I:** ? What, the internet?

**S06\_18\_KS3\_d:** No, in Computing [lesson] Miss said, our teacher, she was just talking about the EU referendum, [giggles...],

**I:** What, just recently?

**S06\_18\_KS3\_d:** Yeah, she was talking about the EU referendum, and she said like, how like Germany's like, erm they make the, they're the big manufacturers of the EU. And she was saying that if we pulled out of the EU, that it would be more expensive to buy cars and things like that, and then I just kinda got the idea that Germany made cars and likes... coz I have a little brother who talks about cars ...

**S06\_47\_KS3\_m\_c:** Well basically our computing teacher was going shopping, she sat in her car with her shopping, and she sniffed the air. And she said, yeah, that 80 percent of this car park is German air.

**I:** [laughs] what did she mean by that?!

**S06\_47\_KS3\_m\_c:** She meant, she didn't mean anything like 'oh there's so many German people here', it's because, like, she was talking about the EU referendum and how it, if England, if the United Kingdom pulled out of the E-, of the European Union, then everything will go up, coz Germany, if we don't, coz they're, er, the kind of reason Europe have the trading link, so they sell off their goods

**to other countries in their area, so that's why here,  
there's lots of cars, like Audis and Mercedes and BMWs.  
So she said that most of the cars in the car park were  
German, so that's what she meant by German air.**

Whilst there seemed to have been a consensus amongst learners that 'German is good for business', not everybody agreed. Hinting at a discrepancy between promotional messages regarding language study and choice of language offered, S02\_06\_4\_m\_c questioned the rationale behind the teaching of German (and French) for alleged utilitarian reasons:

Focus group S02 KS4:

**S02\_06\_KS4\_m\_c: If they're teaching us how to, if they say they're teaching us language so we can do business all across the world, that's I think that's the main reason they always say that you must learn a language, and if you want to, if you're doing that then why learn German which is only spoken in Germany, Austria and Switzerland? And Liechtenstein? Or French which is yeah it's spoken over bits in Africa but other than that it's not really spoken elsewhere across the world, if you want to do, if you want to do, learn a language that really**

**someone: Chinese!**

**S02\_06\_KS4\_m\_c: Yeah, Chinese, Mandarin, that would be, that would be a much better language to learn.**

The majority of the above examples and other learner contributions on the link between German and business from the focus groups (6.2.2.) and the case studies (6.3) show that learners perceive a connection, but are not sure exactly what that connection might be, or how it might translate into a factor for their uptake decision making.

#### **7.2.4. Summary: The relationship between public and private discourses**

##### *7.2.4.1. Family Fortunes*

Exploring data from the Family Fortunes task, discourses from the press corpus and the two key stage learner groups appeared to be reproduced across the three data sets. Learners' stance towards their own perception of public discourses was explored. For KS3, parametric tests showed a statistically significant association between perceived positive public attitudes and continuing with German, and between perceived negative attitudes and dropping German. KS3 continuers disagreed strongly with perceived negative public opinion, but droppers did not.

##### *7.2.4.2. Metaphors*

One link between the public and private discourses around German was analysed using the 'German as threat' theme. Just under one third of KS4 and one seventh of KS3 learners framed German as a threat, either through their perception of what German sounds like, or as a perceived direct property of the language.

##### *7.2.4.3. Focus groups*

Linking Focus group data with the corpus data via the business and economy theme suggests that learners perceived a connection between German and the world of business,

but were rather unsure what this means. There appeared to be an awareness of promotional messages around studying German for utilitarian reasons but less understanding of what this may mean in practical or personal terms.

The chapter addressed RQ3 and 4 by first exploring a corpus of press data which was compiled for the purpose of providing a snapshot of discourses around German\*, and then linking the findings to some of the qualitative school level data. The next chapter (8) will present a discussion of the results from chapters 5, 6, and 7.

## Chapter 8: Discussion

The previous three chapters (5-7) presented results from the empirical part of the study by research question. Chapter 5 addressed RQ1 and analysed quantitative data on learner motivation for German in relation to learners' German uptake decisions, SES, and EAL background. It further presented data on learners' self-reported reasons for their uptake decisions, and their perceptions of subject advice received. Chapter 6 dealt with RQ2 and focussed on the representation of German\* in school discourses. Chapter 7 addressed RQ3 and 4, firstly by identifying public discourses around German\*, and secondly by relating these to the private or grassroots discourses analysed in chapter 6. The current chapter (8) discusses key findings presented in the previous three chapters in relation to the literature reviewed in chapters 2 and 3. The discussion is organised by research question, and by corresponding research instruments.

### **8.1. RQ1: How do motivational dimensions in learning German relate to continuing or dropping the language?**

Descriptive motivation statistics based on mean scores showed that all learner participants of the study appeared to be overall positively motivated for German. This finding appears to contrast with the downward trend in language uptake in the UK, which has been described as a crisis (e.g. Lanvers, 2014; Lanvers & Coleman, 2013), and suggests a need for a more detailed investigation. Eyeballing the results from the motivation section of the questionnaire (Table 5.2. above) showed that amongst the sampled learners, overall KS4 mean motivation levels for German were higher than those of KS3. Whilst previous research has documented deteriorating motivation levels as learners progress through secondary school, it is worth bearing in mind that much of this

research occurred at a time when language study at GCSE was compulsory, i.e., pre-2004 (e.g. Chambers, 2000; Williams et al., 2002).

The variable of compulsory/non-compulsory language policy for GCSE was explored by splitting KS3 data into a compulsory group (Schools S02 and S04) and non-compulsory group (Schools S05 and S06). Motivational dimensions in compulsory and non-compulsory settings were found to follow similar patterns to each other, and also follow the pattern of the whole KS3 data set. However, one difference was found between KS3 learners in compulsory and non-compulsory settings: compulsory KS3 learners showed higher levels of self-efficacy than non-compulsory learners, and the same was true for compulsory/non-compulsory droppers. In addition, a trend was observed for both the whole compulsory KS3 group as well as for compulsory droppers towards higher motivation for learning situation, but not for perception of value. It could be argued that schools which make language study at GCSE compulsory send a message to learners that a language is an important element of the curriculum, and hence increase their perceptions of value. It is therefore interesting that the difference in KS3 learner motivation between compulsory and non-compulsory groups was observed for self-efficacy (and to some extent, the learning situation), but not for perceptions of value. It suggests that compulsion does not help increase learners' sense of importance, and seems particularly irrelevant if, as in the case of droppers, self-efficacy is low.

Furthermore, as explained under 5.1.1., the distinction between compulsory and non-compulsory language groups may not be as clear-cut as it may seem. Firstly, the two groups each included the socially most advantaged (S04) and the most disadvantaged school in the study (S06) respectively, and hence results may be influenced by SES-related factors (as well as by other, school-specific ones). Secondly, some learners from the non-compulsory group (School S05 and S06) did not seem to be aware that language study at KS4 was optional for them: For example, learners from S06 stated in the focus groups that



they believed a language for GCSE was compulsory for the top set, when this was in fact not the case. Therefore, findings based on the compulsory/non-compulsory data split should be interpreted with caution, and, unless explicitly stated otherwise, the KS3 data set as a whole (i.e. not split by school language policy) is used in the current study as the main source of findings.

One explanation for the present study's finding of higher motivation levels among KS4 learners compared with KS3 learners might be that all KS4 learners in this study had, at an earlier stage, actively chosen German as a GCSE option (although schools S02, S04 and S05 made it compulsory for most learners to study a language at GCSE, all schools in the study offered a choice between at least two different languages). It is here suggested that motivation levels might be higher if learners have chosen the subject, as opposed to it being a compulsory part of their education. This view would be supported by self-determination theory (SDT), which groups individuals' motivational styles into autonomous, controlled, and impersonal causality orientations (Deci & Ryan, 1985). People with high autonomy-orientation tend to view contexts as possibilities for choice and self-determination; those with controlled orientations react to the perceived controlling influence of the environment and tend to be motivated by external rewards, and those with an impersonal orientation view contexts as uncontrollable and lack a sense of personal causation. According to SDT, people who have developed a particular orientation are likely to experience new contexts similarly to previous ones, for example, controlled-orientated people are likely to experience new contexts as controlling too, even if these contexts supported autonomy (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Adolescent participants in the current study were at an age where they were negotiating their transition from other-controlled child to balanced-regulated young adult, and they operated within the school environment, which, on the whole, can be called a controlling context. Being forced to study a subject against their will would likely be experienced by KS3 learners as a further instance of the

controlling behaviour of the authoritative context and would, within the SDT framework, lead to negative results such as perceptions of undermined autonomy and reduced motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2012). Therefore, SDT might help to explain the finding of overall higher motivation levels for KS4, compared with KS3.

For both key stages, the learning situation emerged as the area which attracted the highest motivation ratings. On average, KS4 motivation levels were found to be higher than those of KS3 not just for overall motivation, but also for the three individual motivation scales (learning situation, self-efficacy, and perception of value). KS4 learners had, of course, been learning German for longer, and therefore were more likely to feel more proficient in German than KS3 learners. Research has identified a correlation between L2-proficiency and language self-confidence (Clément, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1994; Williams et al., 2002). Language self-confidence is a concept derived from Clément, (e.g. 1980), which aligns with Bandura's notion of self-efficacy, denoting a learner's confidence levels in achieving L2 success. Whilst self-efficacy refers to cognitive processes, however, self-confidence is held to be socially constructed. Furthermore, recent research in mainstream psychology suggests that chosen items are valued higher than non-chosen items (Voigt, Murawski, & Bode, 2017). This would go towards explaining why KS4 learners, who, unlike KS3 learners, had all voluntarily chosen German, would show more positive attitude towards the subject they had made a conscious decision to study.

It has been suggested that at primary school, lessons are more closely aligned with learners' goals for language learning, namely communication in the target language, and that with increasing focus on assessment and fewer speaking-based activities at secondary school learners become disenchanted with the language learning situation (Courtney, 2014; Graham et al., 2016). Focus group data from this study, especially in KS4, also point towards this deterioration in attitudes towards the learning situation, as lessons become less interactive and more exam-focused.

The foregoing discussion of descriptive statistics gained from the motivation section of the learner questionnaire, treating the KS3 and KS4 cohorts as populations, acts as a starting point for a consideration of other aspects of the results from the study. The study aimed to investigate learners' uptake decisions in relation to their motivation for German learning, and for this reason participants were grouped by uptake decision for both KS3 (continuers, droppers, and maybes) and KS4 (continuers and droppers).

### **8.1.1. German uptake choices**

When grouped by German uptake decision, a more nuanced picture of learner motivation emerged (detailed results were reported in chapter 5 above). Inferential statistics showed significantly higher motivation levels for KS3 continuers than for droppers, with large effect sizes for all three motivation scales. Of these, the largest effect was found for learning situation. KS3 learners who were still undecided whether to continue or drop German ('maybes') were also more highly motivated than droppers overall, as well as for perception of value and for self-efficacy, but not for learning situation.

Whilst it is perhaps not too surprising that KS3 continuers generally showed significantly higher levels of motivation than droppers, these results suggest that learners' German uptake decisions for this age group are, at least to some extent, related to their motivation, with some aspects of learners' motivation more influential than others.

In the current study, the learning situation stands out for three reasons. Firstly, the largest difference between KS3 continuers' and droppers' motivation levels was found in that area. Secondly, maybes showed lower motivation levels for value and self-efficacy than droppers, but there was statistically significant difference in terms of motivation for learning situation between these two groups, suggesting that it was how maybes felt about the learning situation that made them undecided, as opposed to their perception of the

value of German or self-efficacy. Thirdly, KS4 continuers and droppers felt similarly about their German lessons, but continuers were significantly higher motivated than droppers for self-efficacy and perception of value of German. This may suggest that KS4 uptake decisions are governed by different motivational forces than those of KS3: KS3 continuers in the present study, unlike droppers, were highly motivated for lessons, whereas KS4 continuers and droppers did not seem to feel too differently from each other about their German lessons.

The learning situation as a key factor for language learning motivation which emerged from the current study has also been identified in previous studies (e.g. Courtney (2014), Graham et al. 2016, Lamb (2007)). Lamb's study, unlike the others, was conducted in a non-Anglophone context (with Indonesian learners of English), and other studies have shown that negative attitudes towards the learning situation tend to universally increase as learners move through secondary school, regardless of the language setting (e.g. Chambers, 2000). However, in non-Anglophone settings, instrumental motivation can counteract these negative attitudes (e.g. Chambers, 2000; Lamb, 2004, 2007; Tragant, 2006), whereas for L2 learners in England, foreign languages simply do not seem to have the same inherent 'protective factor' so that learners remain motivated despite becoming disaffected with their learning environment. Similarly, when split by compulsory/non-compulsory group, KS3 continuers in the compulsory group indicated that they chose German for learning-situation-related reasons, rather than for the value they attributed to German. By contrast, continuers for whom a language for GCSE was optional, named the learning situation less frequently, but value-related reasons more frequently than learners for whom a language was compulsory (Table 5.12. above). This supports the idea that making language study for GCSE compulsory does not increase perceptions of value (see also 8.1. above): Compulsion to study at least one language seems to align with learners' pragmatic focus on their current learning situation, whereas voluntary language study

seems to encourage a more long-term perspective through the holistic appreciation of the overall value of the language. The learning situation, as well as the other two motivational constructs examined in this study (self-efficacy and perceptions of value) will be discussed further by research instrument (e.g. metaphor elicitation task, focus groups) in section 8.2. below.

### **8.1.2. Motivation and SES**

When learners' SES was linked with their uptake decision, chi-square analysis showed that for KS3, there was a significant association between learners from the highest SES group (1) to continue German, and between learners from the lowest SES group (3) to drop German. This pattern reflects previous evidence of the growing elitification of language study at school level in the UK (e.g. Sammons et al., 2015; Tinsley & Board, 2017a).

When learners' motivation scores were linked with their SES, post-hoc tests with conservative Bonferroni adjustments for analysis of variance (ANOVA) showed that KS3 learners from the two higher SES levels attributed more value to the study of German than learners from the lowest SES background. The result for learning situation approached significance. An interesting aspect of the SES dimension of learner motivation is the finding that SES1 and SES2 learners (the highest and medium SES) in the current study attributed more value to the study of German than learners from SES3 (the lowest SES group), and that there was some effect of SES group (although not statistically significant) in relation to learning situation too. This result suggests that in the current study, KS3 learners had similar self-efficacy levels regardless of SES backgrounds, but learners from more advantaged backgrounds felt a little more positive about lessons, and were significantly more convinced of the value of the study of German. Interestingly, self-efficacy does not seem to play as much of a role in motivation as did perception of value

and, to a lesser extent, learning situation, when the KS3 learners in this study were grouped by SES. This results chimes with Coffey (2016), who conceptualises the value of language study as an asset in terms of cultural capital. It also ties in with Yashima's (2009) international posture, a construct influenced by Gardner's construct of integrativeness (e.g. 1985), which denotes a tendency for the learner to relate him or herself to the international community, rather than to a specific community of target language speakers. However, the concept of international posture is usually applied to the EFL context, where, unlike for German taught in the UK, no specific target language speaker community exists. Therefore, attitudes such as those examined by Coffey which are embedded in the discourses tied up with social strata would more specifically relate to Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide, and Shimizu's (2004) distinction between Japanese EFL learners' immediate goals, such as grades and qualifications, and international communication goals. It is these international communication goals which represent a positioning of the learner as a participant in discursive events which can be more easily accessed by the higher socio-economic groups, such as travel.

This study's findings of advantaged learners attributing more value to the study of German appears to contradict Lanvers (2016a), who found no attitudinal difference towards languages amongst year 9 learners from four participating schools with a range of demographic intakes. She did, on the other hand, find a difference amongst the expectations of educators, in that senior management tended to frame lower SES learners as having less to gain from the study of languages than higher SES learners. Similarly, Gayton (2016) found in her interview study with four Scottish secondary school teachers that teachers perceived a link between a higher language learner SES and higher motivation, mainly through a perception of enhanced opportunity for travel compared with lower SES learners. Results from the current study seem to confirm these teachers' perceptions of a link between SES and language learning motivation, but it is hard to tell

on the basis on perceptions alone whether disadvantaged learners' lower motivation is a self-fulfilling prophecy due to low expectations, or whether it is due to more complex mechanisms. Therefore, in order to triangulate the data from this study, learners', teachers', and head teachers' qualitative responses in the focus groups and interviews will also be examined in relation to discourses around opportunity and value under 8.2.2. and 8.2.3. below.

### **8.1.3. Motivation and EAL**

Parametric tests showed no association between learners' EAL background and their motivation for German. This seems to contradict Lanvers et al. (2016), who concluded from their intervention study that 12 and 13-year-old language learners from multilingual backgrounds valued the cognitive effects of multilingualism more than monolingual learners did. In their study, EAL learners also appeared to be more susceptible than non-EAL learners to an intervention which aimed to raise awareness of the ubiquity and benefits of multilingualism. However, the two studies are not directly comparable as Lanvers et al. defined "multilingual background" (p. 11) as applicable when learners' first language was a language other than English, whereas in the present study the EAL variable was operationalised through a questionnaire item which asked learners whether they spoke a language other than English in the home. In addition, sample sizes of the studies were rather disparate: Lanvers et al.'s sample of EAL learners consisted of only six out of 97 learners, (6% of the whole sample), whereas this present study 77 KS3 learners and 18 KS4 learners identified as EAL (just under 20% for each key stage).

While in the present study no statistical correlation between EAL data and motivation was observed, the questionnaire data did, however, provide an insight into what some learners might mean by 'speaking a language', as explored under 5.3. above. Whilst these learners quite clearly did not use a foreign language for real communication in the

home, they nevertheless appeared to be under the impression that they were speaking a language other than English, even if this appeared to consist of accents or rudimentary foreign language elements. This glimpse into some learners' perception of what it means to speak a language seems to link with learners' feelings with regard to interacting with native speakers outside the linguistic conditions of the classroom, as explored under 8.2.2. below. Arguably, the stylised and often highly scaffolded classroom language situation may suggest to learners that their language use is more authentic and functional than it really is, which only becomes apparent when the conditions of language use are changed, for example through exchanges or trips.

#### **8.1.4. Learners' reasons for continuing and for dropping German**

Put simply, data from the questionnaires indicated that learners of both key stages seemed to continue German for reasons relating to the learning situation, and dropped German because of lack of self-efficacy. Interestingly, KS4 learners also frequently named perceptions of the value of German as a rationale for both continuing and dropping: continuers cited a perceived high value of German as a reason for continuing, whereas droppers named a perceived lack of value as a reason for dropping. In linking self-efficacy and value beliefs with the framework of expectancy-value theory, Eccles and Wigfield (2002) suggest that "lowering the value one attaches to difficult activities is likely to be an effective way to maintain a positive global sense of efficacy and self-esteem" (p. 121). It is important to note, however, that in the current study learner motivation was related to learners' uptake decisions, not their achievement. Studies examining learner achievement operationalised as, for example, grades, might find different relationships between motivational variables. For example, in their study on the influence of self-efficacy and other motivational beliefs on University students' French language achievement, Mills et al. (2007) found that perceived value of French did not predict achievement when other



motivational variables were controlled for. The only variable which did predict achievement in their study was self-efficacy for self-regulation. In addition, as discussed under 2.1.4.2., the way Mills et al. operationalised the concept of ‘value’ is potentially problematic when comparing their paper’s results (which investigates self-belief concepts) only, with those of the current study, which uses external as well as internal concepts.

The idea that learners attach more value to what they believe they do well in, might play a part in explaining KS4 results with regard to learners’ perception of the value of German. Whilst no linear causalities are claimed, the data of the study suggest that learners continue German largely for learning situation-related reasons, and then, based on the subconscious processes suggested by expectancy-value frameworks and mainstream psychological theories (e.g. Voigt, et al., 2017), come to attach more value to it. Taylor and Marsden (2012), drawing on Juvonen (2000), also refer to a “face-saving attributional shift” (p. 27), where learners attributed decisions to drop a language to external reasons such as perceived lack of relevance, rather than internal reasons, such as low self-efficacy.

Self-worth theory (Covington & Beery, 1976) offers a useful perspective on learners’ reasons for devaluing a subject or learning activity. A central tenet of self-worth theory is the idea that learners strive towards success and seek to avoid failure in their achievement behaviour (Covington, 1984). Covington argues that they do this because success generally reflects well on the individual in terms of perceived societal worth as well as self-worth, whereas failure can lead to feelings of worthlessness. Since ability is commonly assumed to be linked with success, learners typically endeavour to avoid or obscure suspicions of low ability by employing a range of strategies. Devaluing the subject or learning task could here be conceived as a failure-avoiding strategy which learners use, probably subconsciously, to protect their self-worth (Covington, 1992; Graham, 1994): if the activity is not valued, failure can also be perceived as relatively low-stakes, and the

learner's self-worth is less threatened than it would be if the activity was regarded as high-stakes.

Motivation data from this study (5.1. above) have demonstrated that, for learners from both KS3 and KS4, strong positive relationships exist between all three motivational scales (learning situation, self-efficacy, and perception of the value of German). Results thus align with Taylor and Marsden's (2012) enjoyment-competence-relevance triangle. Closer examination of the strength of the correlations between the three variables revealed that for the learners of the current study, that the relationships between KS4 value and self-efficacy, as well as between KS4 value and learning situation, were slightly less strong than the relationships between the other pairs of variables (KS3 all three pairings, and KS4 self-efficacy/learning situation). These findings support the idea that perceptions of value by KS4 learners are underpinned by different motivational forces than for KS3, possibly because KS4 learners have chosen German voluntarily, possess higher levels of proficiency and self-efficacy, are developmentally more mature, and can appreciate (more than KS3 learners) the wider value of German beyond their immediate learning context and perceptions of self-efficacy. These results highlight the complex dynamic relationships between the motivational variables of learning situation, self-efficacy, and perceptions of value.

Some learners appeared to show a functional view of German in their explanations why they decided to drop it, by stating that they could always acquire it outside school if they wanted or needed to. This further suggests that these learners view the goal of German learning as a skill for communication rather than an academic qualification, hinting at a misalignment between learner and official educational rationales for language learning. Regarding the conflict between learner and teacher perceptions of appropriate learning, Volet (2001) speaks of an absence of congruence, which can lead to reduced motivation

and learner engagement. This aspect of learner motivation will be discussed further in the context of focus groups (8.2.2.) below.

Learners' rationales for studying German in this study emerged as envisaged personal future use, travel to German-speaking countries, and communication with native German speakers. In relation to learners' SES, KS3 learners from the highest SES attributed significantly more value to the study of German than did learners from the middle and lower SES. It might be then, applying Coffey's (2016) perspective of discourses of value as forms of cultural capital, that learners from the lower SES bands do not perceive themselves as having the same opportunities as their more advantaged peers to access these situations where they would imagine using the target language, and this might well undermine the value they attribute to the study of German.

#### **8.1.5. Advice on German learning**

Learners' responses to the questionnaire item that asked them whether they had received any advice on their German uptake decision, and if so, from whom, revealed firstly a surprisingly low percentage of learners who indicated that they had received advice from their school, including their teacher, and secondly a high degree of emotional response emerging from the data. Only just over one fifth of KS3 and just under one third of KS4 learners indicated that they had received advice from their school, which contrasts with teachers' and head teachers' assertions that the school advises learners through official school events, such as option evenings and assemblies, as well as individual advice at parents' evenings or in lessons. The low percentage of learners who indicated they received no careers advice echoes findings from a recent large-scale government survey of UK secondary schools (Ofsted, 2015), where just under half of sampled year 9 learners ( $N = 3,100$ ) reported that they received no careers advice (not subject-specific), or that what they received was insufficient. Given that schools have a legal duty to provide careers

guidance for all pupils from years 8 to 13 (the statutory guidance that underpins this duty can be found at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-guidance-provision-for-young-people-in-schools](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-guidance-provision-for-young-people-in-schools)), these figures show that either not enough advice is given, or that it is given, but not perceived as such by learners. Clearly, school messages on language choice do not always filter through to learners: while information events and advice may well be given out with the best of intentions, learners appeared to not perceive them as helpful, or even just as guidance. One possible reason might be the misalignment between promotional messages given out by the school, which tends to emphasise the utilitarian value of languages in general, and learners' rationales for choosing a language, which tends to be heavily influenced by how positive learners feel about their learning situation. Learners might, in such situations, simply 'switch off', as hinted at in Focus group S02\_KS3, where two learners said they could not remember an options assembly on foreign languages, while others could.

Perhaps paradoxically, while some learners seemed to complain about not receiving enough advice on language choices, others, especially in KS3, expressed strong feelings about being 'told what to do'. It looks like learners on the one hand felt they miss out on useful advice, but on the other hand rejected advice if they experience it as controlling.

The phenomenon of learners experiencing advice as controlling can be related to SDT (see also 8.1. above). The data would support the idea that some learners, who possessed more controlled orientations, would experience advice on subject choice as controlling, and felt that their autonomy was being thwarted. Learners with a more autonomous causality orientation would experience the same advice as informational and supportive of their autonomy. According to Ryan and Deci (2017), autonomy-orientation would mean learners "experiencing choice with respect to their actions and reactions and finding or creating opportunities for the engagement and expression of what they find interesting and important" (p. 217), which would explain that some learners welcomed the

opportunity for advice on German uptake, whereas others did not. In this regard the causality orientation theory aspect of SDT may play a part in explaining the seeming contradiction in the data regarding learners' attitudes to advice.

## **8.2. RQ2: How is German\* represented in discourses of key players in school settings?**

Before a discussion of the representation of German in the school context, a reminder is issued that the potentially influential variable of the representation of German, Germans, and Germany in textbooks as well as in the history curriculum has been excluded from the investigation for reasons of time and space. Particularly history materials with an emphasis on World War II may well affect learner attitudes, and this should be borne in mind when interpreting findings from the present study.

### **8.2.1. Metaphors**

The same six themes emerged from the open, animal, and food metaphors, albeit in different frequencies (analysed under 6.1.4. above), revealing conflicting conceptualisations of German learning. The top three themes (accounting for over more than half of all metaphors for each type) for the open metaphors were difficulty, pleasure, and ambivalence, for the animal metaphors unpleasantness, ambivalence and drudgery, and for the food metaphors ambivalence, unpleasantness and pleasure. Whilst not directly comparable with Fisher's (2013a) longitudinal study of 59 year 8 learners (Fisher assigned one code per learner response, whereas in the current study as many codes per item as emerged from the data were assigned), it is nevertheless interesting to note that Fisher generated similar codes for the pre-intervention open metaphor task from her data as emerged from the current study. Fisher's learners (pre-intervention), like the ones in the current study, named learning German as difficulty most frequently, followed by German as drudgery and mystery, and lastly as pleasure, surmountable challenge and physical

suffering (p. 118). Notably the difference between Fisher's results for the open metaphors responses and the ones from the current study lies in the higher frequency in which learners from the current study named learning German as pleasure, which seems to suggest that assigning several codes to one learner response item might allow for a different pattern to emerge than does coding for one theme per item. Arguably the coding approach used in this current study might be helpful to uncover more positive attitudes which learners may hold about German, perhaps alongside negative ones, identifying complex and at times conflicting learner attitudes.

Unlike for the animal and food metaphors, for the open metaphors learners in the current study framed learning German mainly as difficulty. Possibly, conceptualising German as animal or food helped learners see a different side to the subject – although the themes stayed constant between metaphor types, the frequency with which learners named them varied. Conceptualising German as an animal appeared to encourage a view of German as unpleasantness, whereas 'German as a food' generated more ambivalent views of the subject. Ambivalent views of German could be said to be helpful for language learning, as this suggests that learners can see at least something positive (as well as negative) about it.

When the broad themes for the animal and food metaphors were grouped into conducive, non-conducive, and neutral for German learning, the food metaphors showed a lower percentage of non-conducive attitudes, and a higher percentage of conducive attitudes than the animal metaphors. It could be said that using food to frame the metaphors already casts German in a more positive light than animals, in that food cannot be avoided and usually there are at least some popular foodstuffs dependent on personal preference, whereas learners' relationship with animals might conceivably be more distant or could be avoided altogether. Whilst on the surface then the three metaphor tasks (open, animal, and food) appear similar and generated the same themes, the frequency in which these themes

emerged suggest that out of the three, the German as food metaphors might be the most helpful ones for supporting learners to conceptualise German in a positive way.

The notion that learning a language is a ‘worthwhile pursuit’ seems to be an idea which is commonly invoked by lobbyists for promoting language study (Filmer-Sankey & Marshall, 2010). Whilst acknowledging that languages are hard, promotional messages to learners imply that if they persevere, languages will make them stand out from the masses and reward them with a better-paid job. Yet, although the theme of ‘worthwhile pursuit’ does feature in learners’ discourses to some extent, from the metaphor data it does not seem as though learners on the whole conceptualised German in this way. In addition, the worthwhile pursuit line of argumentation implies the framing of students’ effort as worthy and ultimately leading to success. However, effort clearly does not always lead to success, and Covington and Omelich (1979) have shown within the self-worth theory framework, how the focus on effort as a source of worthiness can also pose a threat to learners’ perceptions of self-worth (see also 8.2.2. below).

#### *8.2.1.1. Views of German: static, ambivalent, and dynamic metaphors*

When metaphors were coded into ambivalent, dynamic, and static view of German (see 6.1.1.9. above), for KS3 an association was found between use of static metaphors and dropping German, and a trend was identified for use of ambivalent metaphors and continuing. For KS4, on the other hand, all learners who chose ambivalent metaphors were droppers. Further analysis of the static and dynamic metaphors showed that in both key stages, learners tended to use static metaphors to convey a negative view of German, KS4 (approximately two thirds) learners slightly less so than KS3 learners (approximately three quarters). For dynamic metaphors, the opposite was true: a larger majority (more than four fifths) of KS3 and 100% of KS4 learners used dynamic metaphors in a positive way. This

pattern appears to show that if learners in this study were convinced that German was ‘all bad’, as expressed through static metaphor use, they were unlikely to continue it. If, however, they expressed an ambivalent or dynamic view of German, they were more likely to continue. The data further seem to suggest that KS4 learners’ German uptake is underpinned by different forces than KS3. For KS3, it appears that if learners could see something positive about German, even if this was accompanied by negative factors, the positive seemed to outweigh the negative, and this was associated with uptake. For KS4, whilst learners could see positive sides to German, this did not seem to be incentive enough to make them choose it for their next stage of education.

In the first round of her intervention study with KS3 German learners, Fisher (2013a) found that metaphors conveying the idea that learning German might be a worthwhile pursuit, were rare (p. 211). The data from this part of the current study suggest that it is conducive for German learning if learners can conceptualise the process in terms of a challenge which can be overcome through effort and persistence. This idea links with self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1997), which suggests that if challenges are approached with the expectation of success, learners are more prepared to expend the necessary effort and persistence. It would follow that fostering this attitude could possibly help learners see challenges as a necessary and manageable part of the learning process. However, as referred to above, Covington and Omelich (1979) have shown how the notion of effort can be a “double-edged sword” (p. 1), since, if followed by unsuccessful outcomes, it can lead to suspicions of incompetence. This, in turn, can threaten learners’ perceptions of self-worth. Therefore, whilst integration of worthwhile-pursuit-type notions such as effort and persistence in how learners conceptualise their language learning can, as data from the current study have shown, be constructive, it is essential that learners experience some successful outcomes. It is suggested that it would be conducive for language learning if



such experiences of learner success were facilitated by the teacher, linking back to Bandura's (1997) concept of mastery experiences.

The data from this part of the study, like Fisher (2013b), suggest that work with metaphors might help learners conceptualise German in helpful ways. For the open metaphors, KS4 learners' metaphors were shown to be more conducive than KS3 learners' metaphors, which suggests that KS3 learners would need more help to conceptualise German in eventually positive ways than do KS4 learners, possibly in part due to increased language proficiency on the part of the latter. This idea would be supported by Kramsch (2003), who suggests that proficiency seemed to increase positivity of metaphors in her study with language undergraduates. In addition, other studies have shown that language proficiency correlates with positive self-beliefs about language learning (Clément et al., 1994; Williams et al., 2002). Within expectancy-value frameworks (e.g. Wigfield & Eccles, 2000), more proficient learners would also be seen to attach higher value and more positivity to the learning activity.

### **8.2.2. Focus groups**

The focus groups offered an opportunity to explore themes which had emerged from the learner questionnaire at a deeper level. In terms of the three motivational constructs which underpinned the motivation questionnaire, learners confirmed the data from the questionnaire which suggested that they mostly chose to continue German for reasons of enjoyment, i.e. learning situation factors, and mostly chose to drop the subject because of lack of self-efficacy. Whilst personal relevance emerged as a strong influential factor for uptake, notions about the importance of German in the wider world did not (although continuers did attribute more 'external' value to German than droppers). Learners frequently spoke about "having fun" and "enjoyment" (or the lack of it) in lessons. Far from being superficially entertainment-focussed, learners' ideas of what it

meant to “have fun” seemed to be closely tied up with learning, making progress, and self-efficacy. This confirms findings from Evans and Fisher (2009), Taylor & Marsden (2012), and Graham et al. (2016), which showed that what learners enjoyed the most (engaging, interactive activities) were also what they perceived to be most helpful for learning.

The importance of effort and persistence as an influential factor in positive language motivation had already emerged from the metaphor data. Bandura (1997) sees self-efficacy as based on ‘mastery experiences’, tasks which are challenging but achievable. Learners seemed keen for this type of task, yet, while teachers appeared to work hard to provide a ‘fun’ learning environment, this could at times have quite the opposite effect. For example, learners from School S06 described an unsuccessful, if not counterproductive game experience with their account of what they called “the shaming game”. Wingate (2016) has described how teachers tried extremely hard with all the best intentions to build games into language lessons, because they thought that this was what learners would not only enjoy, but what would help them make progress. However, games in Wingate’s study were often uncommunicative, unchallenging, uneducational (in the sense that little language learning took place), and above all, unenjoyable. Wingate’s snapshot of not only ineffective, but at times counter-productive games relates to Focus group S06\_KS3 learners’ account of “shaming games”. Covington (1984) explains how, in the self-worth model, feelings of shame and humiliation can arise out of the disclosure of incompetency. Learners in the current study described their feelings of being “picked on”, feeling “embarrassed” and “ashamed”, and coined the term “shaming games”, suggesting that their self-worth was severely threatened by these games. Covington further distinguishes between effort and ability as a perceived source of worthiness, and explains that of the two, adolescents and adults appear to view ability as the more powerful (although there is a complex interplay). This might explain that S06\_17\_KS3\_f\_d felt that being the victim of a shaming game is even more humiliating when the answer in question

had not been taught (6.2.2.). In this case the learner's failure might not just appear to disclose lack of effort in learning the word, or, worse, lack of ability through applying effort but still failing, but such assumptions about the learner would be false and unfair, if the learner was not even given the opportunity to learn the word. However, from a teaching and learning as well as from an empathy point of view, whether the answers required in the game were taught or not is a moot point. Teachers have a responsibility to not expose learners to feelings of shame and embarrassment, as felt by KS3 learners from School S06. What becomes clear is the detrimental effect such games can have on not just learners' language motivation, but on their sense of self-worth. Covington (1992) links feelings of shame with emotions and persistence, when he writes "improvements in emotional climate, such as reduced shame, may also promote a willingness to persist" (p. 67). For the learners from School S06, this would mean that not being forced to participate in the "shaming games" may well lead to increased persistence. Learners in focus group S06\_KS3 articulated their feelings around these "shaming games" very clearly, linking them to reduced progress and suggesting alternatives, such as games where no individuals are exposed as potentially incompetent.

Learners' main aim for language learning emerged as real communication with native speakers. In their lessons, they would like the classroom situation to facilitate and practise such imagined encounters as far as possible. They desired interactive, oral-focussed lesson content which they perceived as relevant to their lives, unlike current GCSE topics which they see as having little relevance to how learners envisage using the target language. This echoes results from Courtney (2014) and Graham et al. (2016), who showed, for younger UK language learners at primary school level, how a classroom environment which did not allow learners to make progress could have a demotivating effect. Furthermore, that study illustrated the disjuncture between what learners would like to do most (communicate in the target language) and what lessons enable them to do,

leading to low self-efficacy in the area of communicating in the target language. A similar phenomenon was identified in the current study. Learners' main goal for studying a language, as expressed in the focus group interviews, was to communicate with native speakers, yet learners experienced few such opportunities. When the opportunity of contact with native speakers did arise, contrary to their expectations, learners commonly felt frustrated by their lack of proficiency. It seemed that when learners did find themselves in a situation which facilitated communication with native speakers, this could lead to the realisation that they had not acquired enough proficiency to do this. Learners experienced authentic language as too fast, dialect-ridden, and not conforming to the conventions of the textbook. They often found that in real life their language skills did not enable them to engage successfully in service encounters or in peer to peer dialogue, as practised in language lessons. They could also feel discouraged when they discovered that foreign language exchange students possessed higher levels of proficiency in English than they themselves had in the target language. This puts into perspective the apparent learner consensus that communication with native speakers is not only the most desired activity to lead to the perceived end goal of language learning, but also the end goal itself. If learners find that they are not able to achieve the objective which drives them to persist with language learning, this is very likely to affect their motivation. This finding ties in with Keller (1991) and Coleman (1999) that exchange trips can have negative as well as positive consequences. It may be, due to the rarity of exchanges and trips in the current UK secondary language landscape, simply not enough learners have experienced this demotivating effect for it to impact on uptake, as authentic communication with native speakers and travel to Germany or German-speaking countries emerged as a consistent popular learning goal from the learner data. In the current study, teachers embraced trips and exchanges with uncritical enthusiasm and saw them endowed with enormous motivational potential. Based on the learner focus group data, teachers organising trips and

exchanges might be advised to take the high expectations of learners into account, and prepare them for what to expect, in order to avoid disappointment and frustration.

In the focus groups, learners elaborated on the impact of the teacher on their language learning attitudes. Previous research has shown that learners perceive the teacher as a key factor for their attitudes to the learning situation (e.g. Bartram, 2010; Williams, Burden, Poulet, & Maun, 2004). Learners appreciated it when they felt that the teacher viewed them as an individual. Interestingly, whilst the metaphor data suggested learners can view German as threatening (echoing previous MFL motivation research on languages which also included languages other than German, e.g. Taylor & Marsden, 2012), learners in the focus groups did not portray their German teachers as intimidating – with the exception of HT\_S04, who spoke about her own German-learning experiences of the past.

The construct of the value of German was operationalised in the questionnaire as two items relating to the value of German for people in general (item 6: ‘German is useful for getting a good job’, item 3: ‘For people in the UK today, it is not important to be able to speak German’), and one item relating to the learner as an individual (item 8: ‘For me personally, it is important to be able to speak German’). Thus, this scale included both ‘importance for oneself’ and ‘general importance’. Taylor & Marsden (2014) tested 604 KS3 learners’ perceptions of “the importance of languages for themselves” versus “the importance of languages for others” (p. 911), and found not only that learners appeared to conceptualise these two concepts as separate constructs, but also that higher levels of perceived importance of languages for oneself predicted higher language uptake, whereas higher levels of ‘importance for others’ predicted dropout. Whilst in the current study the ‘importance of languages for others’ was not tested directly, focus group data suggest that in their assessment of the value of German, learners did, however, distinguish between importance for themselves as individuals, and the importance for people in wider society. Although some learners acknowledged the benefits and importance of knowing a foreign

language in general, this did not translate into choosing a language for themselves, if they could not see the relevance for their own future.

The studies of Graham et al. (2016) and Taylor and Marsden (2012, 2014) as well as the findings from the current one point to the close relationship between the learning situation, self-efficacy, and perception of value of the target language. For learners in the current study, ‘enjoyment’ seemed to mean tasks which aligned with their idea of the aims of language learning (interactive oral activities) and enabled learners to make progress, and therefore bridged the domains of self-efficacy and learning experience. ‘Value’ for learners of the present study constituted personal relevance for their current or future lives. In their study of KS3 language learners, Taylor and Marsden (2012) found a dynamic relationship between learners’ enjoyment of, competence in, and perceived personal relevance of the target language, and proposed the ‘enjoyment, competence-relevance triangle’ (see Figure 2.6. above). This model formed a ‘virtuous circle’, where one element of the three notions would also ensure the other two, and at the same time a ‘vicious circle’ where if one element was negative (e.g. lack of enjoyment), the other two would turn negative too. Of the three elements, enjoyment appeared to be the most powerful one in influencing language take-up. Whilst this pattern can also be seen in the current study’s KS3 data, there seems to be an important difference between KS3 and KS4 learners’ German uptake motivation. This could already be seen in the motivation data, where a positive attitude to the learning situation in KS3 emerged as the key factor for German uptake. For KS4, there was not as much difference in attitudes to the learning situation as for KS3. The focus group data confirmed findings from the motivation and ‘reasons for continuing/dropping’ sections of the questionnaire, which suggested that KS4 learners tended to be guided by more strategic considerations in their language choices. Personal relevance still emerged as an important factor for KS4, but despite being highly motivated for German KS4 learners would commonly not choose it because they felt it was just not as useful for them

personally as other subjects. Just under one quarter of KS4 learners indicated that they dropped German because there was no room for it on their timetable, and other subjects took priority. These subjects in question were commonly STEM subjects, which were viewed as more prestigious and useful in the focus groups. In the A'level system, of course, commonly only three subjects are studied in the 6th Form (KS5/ year 12 and 13), far fewer than at GCSE level, thus offering even less freedom in subject choice. To some extent the A'level system, especially with AS level (which offered the opportunity to study an additional, fourth subject in year 12) being phased out, discourages the take-up of languages in favour of the take-up of STEM subjects, and KS4 learners were aware of this.

### **8.2.3. Interviews with teachers and head teachers**

Teachers and head teachers indicated in the interviews that they believed learners chose German for reasons related to how much they enjoyed lessons and learning the language, a view which the data from learners in the current study support. Yet, promotional messages given out by the school seemed to focus on utilitarian rationales for language learning. Hence a discrepancy between what mostly motivates learners to continue a language and lobbying strategies was observed. A similar disjuncture was already highlighted by Evans and Fisher (2009), who found that in surveys, heads of language departments described the benefits of languages in terms of personal and social gains, but in discussions said that for KS3 language promotion they would focus on careers-related aspects. It seems odd that on the one hand educators, including both language teachers and head teachers, are aware of the main forces underlying motivation, yet they emphasize not what they know will make a difference, but instead reproduce media and official discourses (e.g. Graham & Santos, 2015; Lanvers & Coleman, 2013), which hold that learners need to study languages to address the national skills shortage and to improve the UK's economy (e.g. Gibb, 2012). A possible explanation for this

phenomenon might be that utilitarian rationales do indeed play a part in learner motivation underlying language uptake. For example, Taylor & Marsden (2012) reported that learners in their study chose a language largely for instrumental reasons. The authors did, however, code personal reasons such as specific plans to travel or work in the target language country as instrumental motifs, when elsewhere in their study they distinguished between importance for other people and importance for the individual, i.e. personal relevance. For questionnaire items eliciting learners' self-reported instrumental/utilitarian motifs, 'instrumental' would likely be more akin to the concept of personal relevance than general instrumental value. The lure of utilitarian factors for adolescent learners may simply not be strong enough to warrant the singular focus on this one rationale in promotional messages, and it may fall on deaf ears with learners. This view also relates to the findings in this study with regard to how learners perceive advice, and how little guidance they felt they received from their school. Whilst the impact of career-orientated motives increases as learners move through the secondary school system (e.g. Courtney, 2014), KS3 learners appeared to continue a language mainly for reasons related to the learning situation. It would follow that increasing learners' enjoyment of lessons and fostering healthy self-efficacy levels would be better lobbying strategies for KS3, which is the stage at which language pathways are set: once learners have decided to drop a language in KS3 going into KS4, this is usually the end of their contact with that language in the school system. It seems that while learners make momentous language choices in KS3, less attention is paid to what motivates KS3 learners as opposed to KS4 learners. In addition, where a school needs to staff language classes by a non-specialist, this appears to apply more commonly in KS3 than in KS4. Given how important the nature and quality of lessons were for KS3 learner motivation, the idea that non-specialist language teaching is acceptable as long as this 'only' applied in KS3 might have a conceivable impact on language uptake for KS4. A recent government report, tellingly entitled "Key stage 3: The wasted years?", based on a



large-scale survey of UK secondary schools (Ofsted, 2015), highlighted MFL as a problem area in KS3, characterised by a lack of engagement and challenge, impacting on GCSE uptake. It seems then that, since KS3 languages has already been flagged up as problematic, KS3 language learners would benefit from specialist teachers in an attempt to address the lower quality of education (compared with KS4) which, according to the report, characterises MFL in KS3.

Perhaps, teachers and head teachers promote the utilitarian value of languages so strongly partly because they think this is what ought to motivate learners. By appealing to learners' sense of strategic thinking in terms of career progression, as well as to their envisaged role in contributing to wider societal gains (e.g. reducing the UK's home-grown language labour deficit), language lobbyists foreground what they perceive as rational decision-making based on cognitive-orientated decision-making. Vocational benefits of language are probably also a relatively easy message to communicate to learners (e.g., through facts and figures in a presentation). Making learners feel more proficient and increase their self-efficacy levels is a more complex and harder objective to achieve.

There is some evidence from the interview data that teachers and head teachers dismiss learners' – especially KS3 learners' – language choices rationales as inappropriate and irrational, based on their comments on learner choices in the interviews. Yet, as Sullivan (2006) points out, “any action can be interpreted as rational in the light of some set of beliefs and desires” (p. 2). Learners' reasons for their language choices were perceived by their teachers as invalid or immature, but to the learners themselves they would be based on solid, justifiable grounds. In addition, none of the educators interviewed brought up the developmental stage of adolescent learners, at the time they are asked to make important choices (at age 13). During adolescence, as well as a bodily maturing through the processes of puberty, the brain is also affected by major physical changes. Recent technological advances in neuro-imaging techniques have allowed for evidence-

based insight into adolescent brain development and its implications. With age, developments in the pre-frontal cortex enable growing capacity for decision-making and cognitive control. However, until neural connections between the pre-frontal cortex and other areas of the brain are strengthened, teenagers will find it difficult to control their impulses. Blakemore and Mills (2014) showed that brain areas mediating emotions change more rapidly than those mediating cognitive functions, resulting in greater self-focus, reward-seeking, and increased risk-taking. Whilst cognitive functions such as attention, memory, and processing speed do improve with age, and adolescents learn to think in more abstract, relativistic, and empathetic ways, this process does not follow a smooth and steady trajectory. These factors are important to bear in mind when considering decision-making asked of adolescent learners as young as age 13, impacting on their future professional and personal lives, as in this study. However, irrational bias in decision-making is not confined to teenage behaviour. Studies from a range of diverse disciplines such as Neuroscience and economics have more recently been contributing to evidence for an affective dimension of human decision-making (e.g. Sołtys et al., 2017; Orrell, 2010).

In favouring career and society-focussed rationales for language learning, educators appeared to neglect the emotional aspects of learning and decision-making. Evidence from brain-damaged patients has also contributed to a better understanding how emotion-related processes underlie so-called rational decision-making and learning (Immordino-Yang & Damasio, 2007). The notion that emotions play a part in cognitive processes would support the idea that educators' dismissal of learners' more emotion-oriented rationales is rather unhelpful. Teachers and head teachers appeared to acknowledge learners' rationales for decision-making, but they did not seem to accept them when they revealed anything other than long-term, utilitarian planning. Hence promotional messages appeared to be based on rationales which educators would prefer to underlie learners' uptake motivation, rather than the ones which do. A better starting point for subject guidance would be an

acceptance on behalf of lobbyists that learner rationales for decision-making are valid for their cognitive, as well as for their emotional dimensions.

Moreover, pushing utilitarian rationales for language learning implicitly condones and encourages adoption of the external goals such as economic gains through a well-paid job. Within the SDT framework, such external goals based on financial rewards can have a negative undermining effect on motivation (Frey, 1997). Deci and Ryan (2012) explain how an extrinsic goal orientation can prevent basic psychological need satisfaction, leading to negative outcomes. It is just such an orientation, however, which the uncritical framing of languages as an aid for financial gains encourages, both at individual and at societal level. Learners might just instinctively feel that the idea of increasing the country's economy through continuing a language does not value them as an individual, even if they would benefit financially at individually level too. Deci and Ryan (2012) argue convincingly how the culture of achievement, consumerism, and material accumulation is embedded in the capitalist system, and how this undermines the three human psychological needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness, leading to decreased well-being. Based on this theory and data from this study, a better motivational strategy to encourage language uptake would be to emphasise intrinsic aspects of the value of languages over extrinsic ones.

In the interviews, three out of four head teachers stated that a language was compulsory for most, but that some learners were given extra literacy support instead. Interestingly out of all interviewees, only one (Teacher\_S02) questioned this approach of excluding or discouraging low literacy learners from language study. Head teacher\_S06, from the most deprived school, commented directly on his perception of a correlation between higher SES and higher value attributed to the study of language, echoing findings by Lanvers (2016b) and Gayton (2016).

Tinsley (2018) points out that the government did not make languages optional in 2004, as is often stated. Rather, in a move to grant schools greater autonomy, it allowed head teachers to make the decision whether at their school a language should be compulsory at GCSE level or not. Head teachers appear to make this decision along socio-economic lines. Schools with a high level of deprivation have the lowest GCSE entry levels for languages, and are also more likely to exclude learners from language study either directly on grounds of literacy, or by setting up curriculum pathways which hinder lower socio-economic groups from continuing a language onto KS4 (Tinsley & Board, 2017a). Data from the current study have also confirmed an association between a high learner SES and continuing, and a low SES and dropping German (discussed under 8.1.2. above). Three out of the four participating school heads in this study had made a language compulsory at GCSE, and these were the school with above average FSM indices, i.e. the more advantaged schools (including a private school which was considered advantaged on the grounds that it was fee-paying, although no FSM data were available). Even in the participating schools where a language was compulsory at KS4, however, this did not apply to lower achieving learners. Exempting some learners from language study, ostensibly to provide literacy support, only appears to increase the social divide in language study. Tinsley (2018) links exclusion from language study with recent political events around Brexit and the rise of populism:

...those who only see threats from globalisation and the world beyond our borders will be easy prey for unthinking populism and exclusionary nationalism. These are the people most likely to be excluded from language learning but paradoxically those who have most to gain from it (p. 133-134).

It may not be a coincidence that HT\_S06, from the most deprived school and therefore the school with the least language learners at KS4, thought that his students

would associate German, the Germans, or Germany with the war, framing this association as commonplace and reasonable by adding: “of course”. Interestingly, based on percentages, the Family Fortunes data for both KS3 and KS4 learners’ perceptions of public associations with war do appear to show a trend for learners from the lowest and medium SES groups to make this link, whereas few learners from the highest SES did so.

#### **8.2.4. Learner case studies**

The case studies helped to paint a more nuanced picture of some individual learners’ motivation. Becky (KS3 dropper) appeared to be disaffected for German with negative attitudes and low motivation. Analysing her data in more detail, however, showed the benefit of studying the subtle shifts in language learners’ motivation, which could be used to provide more targeted support for learners. Becky, for example, already shows high motivation for learning situation, but would benefit from scaffolded tasks which would increase her self-efficacy levels, as well as from some guidance of how German could benefit her personally. Olivia (KS3 dropper) seemed untypical in that her background was privileged, and she appeared as the ‘ideal German learner’ with high motivation, positive attitudes, and with some evidence of displaying international posture (Yashima, 2009; see also 8.2.1. above). Yet, she decided to drop German in favour of French, which she rated more highly in terms of personal relevance. Although Olivia showed high self-efficacy in German, the way she talked about French suggests that her self-efficacy for French was even higher. Olivia’s case showed that learners might well be highly motivated but might just prefer other subjects, with the option block system discouraging more than one language for most learners at GCSE level. Mahdi (KS3 continuer) was from a distinctly non-privileged background both on the grounds of SES and school attended. He showed high motivation levels with especially high self-efficacy, and had thought carefully about German, what it was useful for, and how to improve German lessons. Mahdi demonstrated

the importance of teacher influence, because although he has high self-efficacy in both, his preference for German is linked to the teacher. Above all, Mahdi exemplifies learners' perceptions of what it means to have fun, and why they perceive this as a key motivating factor. Mahdi's case demonstrates the need to foster learners' enjoyment of lessons by facilitating progress, and by providing the opportunity for interactive oral communication. India (KS4 dropper), like Becky, displayed low motivation levels and again, like Becky, might appear like a 'lost cause' for German at first glance. However, looking at India's contributions in more detail suggests that similar to Becky, experiences of success in German-learning to increase her self-efficacy, as well as some ideas of how German could benefit her future plans even if she does not intend to travel to German-speaking countries might help her to re-interpret her relationship with German. Amber (KS4 continuer) had strong German-speaking family connections, yet, her motivation was more fragile than can be assumed from her high motivations cores. Amber's case shows that high motivation learners, not just those lacking in motivation, would also benefit from targeted support to sustain their motivation and continue German. Based on what she said in the focus group, Amber might benefit from teaching and learning approaches which favour actual use of the target language in scenarios which should be as authentic as possible, such as pen friends, skype calls, trips, exchanges, or role plays based on realia (authentic materials). Although Amber was highly motivated, her conviction to continue the subject was still fragile. Her case points to the complex dynamics around German learning motivation for UK learners.

#### **8.2.5. Family Fortunes: Learner perceptions of public discourses**

Learners' perceptions of public discourse were elicited via the Family Fortunes task. Separately for German, Germans, and Germany, responses were coded by sentiment into positive, negative, neutral, and war (as detailed under 6.4. above). For German, a large majority of learners from both key stages believed the British public held neutral or

negative views. Only 8% of KS3 and 16% of KS4 learners thought the British perceived German in a positive way. Around five percent of both key stages thought German was associated with war. Linking these results with an analysis of thematic categories which emerged from the data (reported under 6.4.2. above), it becomes clear that learners interpreted German first and foremost as a language and not as an attribute of national characteristics. Nevertheless, specific stereotypical associations emerged too, relating to culture, war, people and places, and sports.

For Germans, perceived neutral and positive associations dominated the data from both key stages. However, a striking increase in perceived associations with war for Germans compared with German emerged for both key stages, though this was more pronounced in KS3. After non-categorisable responses, war was the most frequently named association. Double the percentage of KS4 learners than KS3 learners felt that ‘Germans’ were perceived positively by the British public. For Germany, however, the reverse was true: nearly double the percentage of KS4 learners (compared with KS3) felt the public associated Germany with war. In terms of detailed themes, after non-categorisable responses, geography, and culture, war was the fourth most frequent theme for both key stages for Germany.

Findings from the Family Fortunes task suggest that for German alone, learners felt that they are studying a language which is associated with a country or speaker community that is not at all perceived positively by the British. With regard to Germans as the target language speaking community, positive attitudes towards the target language speaking community have been shown to be a factor in FL motivation (e.g. Byram, Esarte-Sarries, & Taylor, 1991) and play a role in Gardner’s (1985a) concept of integrative orientation. However, in Anglophone contexts such as the UK, arguably integrative motivation can be said to be of lesser influence on learners, as there are not as many opportunities for contact with the target language and its speakers as there would be in an EFL context. This would

be supported by data from this study which showed that learners desired contact with native speakers and welcomed opportunities for travel, although these were scarce. Regarding learners' perceptions of public opinion, the fact that more than 70 years after the end of the war, young people in the UK today still believe that this is a theme with which Germans, German, and Germany are still associated, is noteworthy. Opinions may be divided on Britain's "fixation" with the world wars (Cawthorne, 2016), but data from this study suggest that this theme is salient amongst current adolescent learner perceptions of Germans, German, and Germany.

### **8.3. RQ3: How is German\* represented in UK public discourses?**

In the Family Fortunes task learners' perceptions of public associations around German\* were explored, relating to RQ2 which explored discourses around German\* at school level. This task sits on the intersection between RQ2 and RQ4, the latter of which relates to the relationship between private and public discourses around German. Before relating the findings from the private setting to the public discourse domain, as a snapshot of discourses around German\* in recent and current circulation, a newspaper corpus was compiled and analysed (7.1. above). Data from the corpus were explored in order to address RQ3. For German, and Germany, seven themes emerged. Most frequent themes for German were politics, war, and, with equal frequency counts, nations, and economy. For Germany, most frequent themes were countries, football, and politics. Remarkably, for Germans only two themes emerged: the most dominant theme with a large majority of collocates was war, followed by nations. Since RQ3 was devised to generate data on public discourses around German\*, which would then be used in a comparison with data from school discourses (RQ2) in order to answer RQ4, results relating to RQ3 are discussed under 8.4. below.



#### **8.4. RQ4: What is the relationship between public and private discourses around German\* in the UK?**

Drawing together results from learners' perceptions of public discourses (as per Family Fortunes task) and actual public discourses (as per newspaper corpus compiled for this study) suggests that considerable overlap exists between the themes from the private and public discourse domains (reported under 7.2.1. above). Whilst, predictably, domain-specific semantic fields featured in both data sets (e.g. politics, media in the newspaper corpus; language in the learner data), the strong link between the two in spite of the difference in genre and thematic focus (i.e. language in school setting, current affairs in newspapers) is remarkable. Roth (2013) provides empirical evidence for how widely circulated discourse can permeate from mass media into other discourse domains. In line with discourse theory (e.g. Fairclough, 2003), this finding of the links between the schools setting and British media discourses around German\* supports the view that adolescent German learners are embedded in the wider UK discourse community and have, consciously or subconsciously, formed an awareness of how German, Germans, and Germany are represented. For example, it is quite striking that war is the one exclusive dominant theme in public as well as learner discourses around Germans, and also features in both linguistic domains in discourses around German and Germany. Mainly, teachers and head teachers felt that the association with war was not relevant for today's adolescent German learners, when quite the contrary was borne out by the learner data. The overlap between learners' perceptions of public attitudes and the actual discourse themes identified in the newspaper data showed that young language learners were engaging in discursive interaction with official, public, or media messages around languages and German. Since previous data has shown that such media messages are commonly portraying languages in a 'crisis-themed' light, or evoke utilitarian motifs for lobbying which do not appeal to younger learners (e.g. Graham & Santos, 2015; Lanvers & Coleman, 2013; Taylor &

Marsden, 2014), an awareness of the powerful influence of such messages and some idea of how to counter them might be helpful for devising strategies to support language learners in their uptake decision making.

#### **8.4.1. Family Fortunes: Learner stance towards perceptions of public discourses**

Whilst synergies between the learners' perceptions of public associations with German\* and actual discourse data suggest that the private and public discourse domains interact with each other, the research aim which is guiding this study is to investigate the implications for German learner motivation. Therefore, statistical tests were conducted with a view to identifying relationships between how learners positioned themselves towards perceived public discourses, and their uptake decisions. Overall, most learners agreed with perceived public associations to at least some extent. For all three node terms, KS4 learners agreed approximately 10% less than KS3 learners, possibly due to a higher level of maturity and cognitive development in terms of critical thinking, but also possibly related to the fact that all KS4 learners had earlier selected to study German, when KS3 learners had not.

Linking learners' stance towards their own perception with uptake revealed that for KS3, positive or neutral perceptions of discourses around German were associated with continuing German, whereas negative perceptions were associated with dropping German. Moreover, KS3 continuers disagreed strongly with perceived negative public discourse. These findings suggest that not only is there is an overlap with learner and public discourses around German, the Germans, and Germany, but also that KS3 learners' positioning towards these public discourses was correlated with their uptake decisions. This information should therefore be taken into account not just for educators in terms of subject guidance, but possibly also for teachers in day to day classroom interactions with

learners. Data from the learner focus groups in this study have illustrated that learners remember information about German, the Germans, and Germany from sources which educators might not consider as influential, such as anecdotes told in the classroom by a non-language teacher about her shopping trip (S06\_47\_KS3\_m\_c), or Instagram (S06\_17\_KS3\_f\_d). These examples show how wider discourses can and do mix with school discourses, and how learners can take on board a multitude of subliminal messages about German\*.

Whilst the statistically significant results for this section applied to KS3 only, it is still important to consider carefully KS4 learners' perception of public discourses. For example, although KS4 learners generally showed more positive attitudes and agreed less than KS3 with their own perceptions of public discourses, double the percentage of KS4 learners thought that Germany was associated with war than did the younger learners. One explanation might be the focus on the world wars in the history curriculum (Ramsden, 2006; Wittlinger, 2004), a link which, however, lies outwith the scope of this study. KS4 learners also produced a higher rate of 'German as threat' metaphors than KS3 learners (reported under 7.2.2.), which will be discussed below.

#### **8.4.2. Metaphors: German as threat**

The percentage of KS4 learners whose animal metaphors fell under the 'German as threat' theme was more than twice that of KS3 learners. Again based on percentages, and perhaps counterintuitively, for both key stages more continuers seemed to perceive German as a threat than droppers. A closer look at how learners framed German as a threat, however, suggests that some learners characterised German as aggressive-sounding, aggressive in nature, and altogether categorically 'bad'. For others, German was as 'not as bad as it sounds': whilst such learners would agree with German sounding loud, rough and aggressive, they also saw it as potentially tameable. One learner (interestingly, a continuer)

went as far as positing that “people who learn German like shouting, because that’s what Germans do” (S04\_16\_KS3\_f\_c), possibly implying that the perceived penchant for shouting extended from the target language community to the target language learners. While in the learner data no evidence of the so-called ‘Exotenmotif’ (Riemer, 2006; Stolte, 2015) was found (which denotes the phenomenon of high motivation for a contextually unusual language because learners believe it makes them stand out from their peers in a positive way), a possible explanation might link to the concept of the ‘Exotenmotif’.

German as a stern and aggressive language seems to have forged a niche online presence in popular culture. Cartoons, memes and YouTube videos from ‘Hitler’s rant’ parodies to the infamous ‘Angry German kid’, ‘How German sounds compared to other languages’, and ‘This angry German tells you how to pronounce things properly’ clips have attracted millions of views, and might have a part to play in learners’ perceptions here too. It might just be that some learners take pride in ‘taming’ a language which they perceive as difficult, tying in with Bandura’s (1986) mastery experiences as a factor in self-efficacy.

The remarkable way in which some learners endowed German with an agency that pursued its own, often sinister agenda, would support this line of thinking: on the one hand, learners could conceptualise German as a force of evil which is ‘coming for them’, on the other hand they could perceive ‘conquering’ German as an achievement. Altogether this might partly explain why more KS4 learners, and more continuers than droppers, framed German as a threat. It also links with the metaphor data categorised into views of German such as static, dynamic, or ambivalent (reported under 6.1.1.), where a trend for ambivalent metaphor use to be associated with continuing German was observed. Two examples which are meant to be humorous are provided below. Figures 8.1. and 8.2. below are illustrations of the type commonly seen in British popular culture on ‘how German sounds’.

How Germans see Germans talking to each other..



How foreigners see German people talking



9GAG.COM/GAG/4414275

Figure 8.1. How foreigners see German people talking (Source: 9Gag.com)

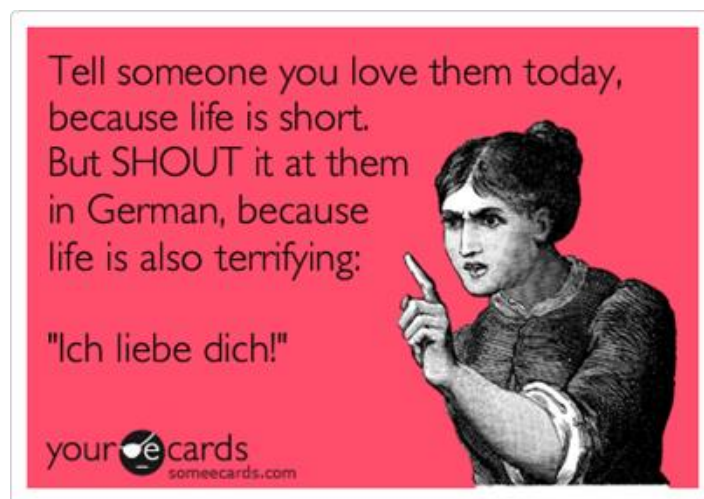


Figure 8.2. Shouting “I love you” in German sounds terrifying (Source: Someecards.com)

### **8.4.3. Focus groups: German as good for business**

Focus group data identified learners' confusion regarding the connection between German and business. A link between German and business/economy emerged from the corpus data on German and Germany, and was shown in the teacher and head teacher interviews to play a key role in the utilitarian lobbying messages administered to adolescent learners. Data from this study showed quite clearly how learners find it hard to see how the link between German and business would apply to them personally. Apart from a vague awareness that Germany is somehow linked to car manufacture, learners were not clear on business-related connections. It would follow that, where business careers-oriented advice is given out, that this should be illustrated with some concrete examples, showing the applicability to learners' individual lives and personal goals.

### **8.5. Chapter 8: Summary**

This chapter discussed the findings of the results chapters 5-7 by research question. This structure does not imply that the discussion and implications can be neatly segregated and contained within a single research question or instrument which relates to it. The aim of the study was to investigate how motivation for German learning relates to all the diverse discourses around German in private and public domains. Therefore the results and issues arising from the various parts of the study are closely linked by the question of how they relate to motivation for German learning at school level. Motivation is underpinned by complex forces, and each research question and instrument has contributed a small amount of new information, which needs to be seen in connection with the other elements in this mixed methods study. The next chapter draws together the implications of the discussion. It reflects on the research aim of the study, explains the contribution, outlines limitations, and suggests directions for future research.

## Chapter 9: Conclusion

The research questions of the study were answered in detail in the results chapters (5-7), and discussed in the previous chapter (8). The current chapter (9) summarises the answers to the research questions and explicates the study's significance, implications for practice, contribution to knowledge, and limitations. Finally, it looks to the future by suggesting further research directions.

The research aim of the study was to identify the relationship between motivation for German learning and the representations of German, the Germans and Germany in private and public UK discourses. To fulfil the research aim, four research questions were developed, which are restated below:

- RQ1: How do motivational dimensions in learning German relate to continuing or dropping the language?
- RQ2: How is German\* represented in discourses of key players in school settings?
- RQ3: How is German\* represented in newspaper discourses in the UK?
- RQ4: What is the relationship between public/official and private/grassroots discourses around German\* in the UK?

The research questions were answered via a mixed methods research design. The study is underpinned by the theoretical assumptions of discourse theory, which takes a view of language as social practice (Wodak & Meyer, 2016). Thus the discourse analysis approach served as a uniting principle to triangulate the quantitative and qualitative data of the study, and facilitated the investigation of private and public discourses around German with each other, and with motivation for German learning for adolescents in a UK context.

### **9.1. Contribution to knowledge**

The study contributes to knowledge in three different ways. First, it provided insights into British adolescents' motivation for German learning in secondary schools, which is an under-researched area. The study contributes to the field of L2 motivation theory by applying a number of models to the data, and found that a combination of elements from pre-existing models served as the best fit for the data generated by the study's participants. The study provided support for Gardner's (1985a) socio-educational model in its emphasis of the influence of attitudes towards the target language speaking communities, as well as the influence of cultural beliefs in learners' social milieu. Through the reproduction of discourses in both private (school) and public (press) domains and its influence on learner motivation, Gardner's view of language learning as a social process was confirmed. Moreover, Gardner's postulation of the learning situation as a determinant of learner motivation aligns with the study's findings. However, although Gardner's constructs explain much of the findings, the study also puts forward a critique of the socio-educational model. For example, informal learning contexts were found to be of little applicability for English adolescent German learners, and the concept of integrative orientation needed to be reconceptualised towards more applicable concepts such as international posture (Yashima, 2009) to accommodate the study's findings. Integrativism was also reframed in Dörnyei's (2005, 2009) self-based model, however, data from the study did not suit the application of the ideal L2 or the ought-to L2 dimension. Nonetheless, it did support Dörnyei's learning situation level, also incorporated in Gardner (1985a), and Dörnyei's earlier (1994) model. The latter was found to be more appropriate for its application to this study's participants, as the motivation variables operationalised in the questionnaire (perception of value, self-efficacy, and learning situation) aligned with Dörnyei's (1994) language, learner, and learning situation level, respectively. Findings confirmed that the emphasis placed on the learning situation in a number of motivation



models seems highly relevant for learners in the Anglophone context of the UK, where instrumental factors do not appear to hold the same motivational power as they would in non-Anglophone contexts (e.g. Lamb, 2004, 2007).

Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory was found to be relatable to learners' decisions to drop German, which they appeared to do mainly for reasons around lack of self-efficacy.

Taylor and Marsden's (2012) enjoyment-competence-relevance triangle appeared to explain much of the motivational forces underlying adolescent German learners' motivation in this study. Not only were the three constructs found to be strongly correlated, but the study also supported the model's conceptualisation as a virtuous as well as a vicious triangle. In this dynamic relationship between the three variables, one variable was related the other two, and at the same time the absence of one variable related to lack of the others. Of the three variables, the learning situation was found to be the key factor associated with uptake.

The study confirms not just L2-specific, but also mainstream motivational theories such as SDT and self-worth theory. With its construct of a self-regulation continuum ranging from non-self-determined and extrinsic motivation at one end, and autonomous and intrinsic motivation at the other, SDT was found to be highly relevant for the results of this study. Learner data supported the view that contexts which support autonomy, competence, and relatedness are conducive for (language) learning and well-being.

Second, the study bridges the research fields of motivation for German (the target language) learning, and the study of representations of the Germans and Germany (target language speakers and community of speakers). Whilst previous studies have made claims about the influence of media representations of languages or of the target language speaking communities on learner attitudes, there was a lack of empirical evidence investigating this area. The current study provides some empirical evidence towards the

idea that discourses from the mass media permeate through layers in society, whether individuals are aware of the original texts or not. Thus, the present study has identified a hitherto unsubstantiated link between the representation of German in UK newspaper discourses, and German learner motivation at school-level.

Third, the study makes a methodological contribution in that it provided an example of how discourse analysis can be used in a mixed methods approach to bring together the two distinct research fields of L2 motivation and the study of the representation the target language and its community of speakers. This approach allowed for the analysis of a range of eclectic quantitative and qualitative data formats (e.g. newspaper articles, metaphors, motivation scores, interviews) to show patterns which are typical, but also facilitated the exploration of data at a deeper level and reveal underlying beliefs and attitudes.

## **9.2. Outcomes of the study**

Overall, learners in the study were found to be positively motivated for German. KS4 learners (who had all opted to study German voluntarily) however, were more highly motivated than KS3 learners (who all studied German in a compulsory setting). Perhaps not too surprisingly, overall higher levels of motivation for German distinguished continuers from droppers. Out of the three motivational variables of self-efficacy, perception of value of German, and learning situation assessed in the questionnaire, it was the learning situation which emerged as the factor most strongly associated with choosing German for further study. Most importantly, the three motivational constructs (self-efficacy, perception of value, learning situation) were found to be closely interrelated. For continuers, enjoyment of lessons linked with increased self-efficacy and higher perceptions of value in the study of German. For droppers, low self-efficacy levels were associated

with less enjoyment of lessons, and droppers also attributed less value to the study of German than continuers. The growing trend of elitification in language learning (Tinsley & Board, 2017a) was reflected in the study's data. There was an association between KS3 learners from the highest SES group to continue, and from the lowest group to drop German. Learners from the higher two SES groups attributed more value to German than learners from the lowest group.

The metaphor elicitation part of the study showed that learners conceptualised German in a range of themes, which were categorised into static, ambivalent, and dynamic. Static metaphor use was associated with dropping German and a lower SES, whereas ambivalent and dynamic metaphor use and a higher SES was associated with continuing German. The metaphor analysis confirmed results from the motivation questionnaire, in that KS4 learners, who were already continuing with German post-14, on average produced metaphors which were more conducive for German learning than metaphors produced by KS3 learners.

In the focus groups, learners revealed that a sense of personal relevance was a key factor for their German uptake decisions. If learners could not envisage their future self as using the language, they were not likely to continue it. A discrepancy emerged between learners' goals for language learning, communication in the target language, and the realities and objectives of language lessons. What learners desired most was to engage in interactive language use, but such opportunities were limited. Another discrepancy was found between learners' rationales for choosing a language, and promotional messages by their school. Despite teachers' and head teachers' perceptions that learners make subject choices on the basis of lesson enjoyment, language lobbying was found to be mainly based on utilitarian arguments. Regarding which language (s) their school offered, head teachers used only school-internal rationales (such as staffing and pre-existing structures) rather than the value of respective languages for their students.

Asked for their perceptions of public associations with German, Germans and Germany, learners from both key stages believed British attitudes towards German were mainly neutral or negative, and related to the German language or learning the language. For Germans, the most frequently perceived public association for both key stages was related to war. However, out of the two key stages, a higher proportion of KS3 learners subscribed to this view. For Germany, this pattern was reversed: double the percentage of KS4 learners (compared with KS3 learners) felt the British public associated Germany with war.

In the British newspaper corpus, German was associated with the themes of (in order) politics, war, other nations, football, the media, and sports. Germans was represented in the context of only two themes, the first, much more frequent theme was war, and the second was other nations. Germany was found to be represented in relation to other countries, football, politics, sports, business/economy, European themes, and war.

The relationship between learner discourses around German, the Germans, and Germany and press discourses around the same concepts was found to be strong. There were statistically significant associations between KS3 learners' positive perceptions of public attitudes and continuing German on the one hand, and between perceived negative attitudes and dropping German on the other hand. A frequent theme which emerged from both the newspaper discourse and the school settings data was 'German as threat', and 'German is good for business'.

### **9.3. Significance of the study**

The thesis has shown that motivation for German for British learners who study the language at school level needs to be viewed in relation to its unique UK contextual embeddedness. When British learners start secondary school age 11, they expect to engage

with German vocabulary and grammar, German culture, and German people. Most of all, they look forward to speaking the German language. As time goes on, their hopes of achieving this goal are being thwarted. They are not given the necessary amount of curriculum time to develop enough proficiency to give them confidence. Opportunities for speaking the target language in and outwith lessons are rare. Whilst teachers appear to try hard to engage learners with light-hearted and ‘fun’ tasks, this can have the opposite of the desired effect and can end in feelings of boredom, and even shame. In the focus groups learners shared how the emphasis on grades and exam practice contributes to the unenjoyable atmosphere they felt developed in their language classes over time. From their wider social context, learners receive messages that language study has little value, and that German is somehow threatening. Since the Brexit vote to leave the European Union in June 2016, language teachers have been reporting the views of some parents that European languages should not be taught in schools any more (Tinsley & Board, 2017b). The study has shown that on the whole, learners could be better supported around their German uptake decision-making, be it at learner level (e.g. self-efficacy levels), language level (e.g. beliefs about the value of German), or at learning situation level (e.g. enjoyment of lessons, alignment of learner goals and outcomes). This is where the significance of the study lies. It has shown, in one small area of the curriculum, how motivation for German learning is related to how German is represented in school and media discourses. On the basis of the results of this investigation, a number of suggestions for practice, policy, and curriculum design are made.

#### **9.4. Implications for practice, policy, and curriculum design**

The study’s results support the view that settings which foster students’ autonomy are conducive for language learning motivation. Making language study optional would

therefore align with the findings. Apart from subject choice, task-level choice is also likely to support learners' self-determination. For a German learning context this may mean a choice of different homework tasks, or a choice in lesson activities.

The classroom learning situation has emerged as a key factor for learner motivation in the UK's Anglophone context. Learners who enjoy German lessons are more likely to feel more language-confident, as well as attribute more value to the study of German. Many language teachers aim to facilitate foreign language enjoyment (FLE; Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014) by making lessons fun. However, fun can mean different things to different people. This study has shown that learners interpret fun not as simplistic games where they, for example, are not allowed to sit down unless they can produce a word in the target language, but as a form of positive emotional engagement. Here the role of the teacher is crucial in creating a safe, non-competitive classroom environment. Examples for German lessons might be the digital game mentioned by learners from Focus group S06\_KS3, *Kahoot* (<https://kahoot.com/>) in which learners can take part under the guise of an anonymous persona.

The notion of emotional engagement does not imply that only 'happy' emotions are beneficial for language learning. Despite the high number of games as routine elements, a common learner complaint is that language lessons are boring (Young, 2014). Lessons are being perceived as boring because the topics commonly covered in textbooks for KS3 and KS4, such as describing the contents of a pencil case or buying apples at the market, do not interest teenage learners. If curricula and lesson content were more geared towards the interests of learners, this would be a move towards fostering intrinsic types of motivation – interest in the activity itself, which is the type of motivation which is more likely to be sustained than other, more extrinsic forms of motivation (e.g. Ryan & Deci, 2000b). An example of the use of more engaging topics for KS3 language learners is the current research project 'Creativity in Language Learning' by the universities of Reading and

Cambridge (<https://www.creativeml.ox.ac.uk/research/language-learning>), in which topics such as the Holocaust, death, relationships, and poverty are being trialled with 13-year-old learners.

The importance of fostering learners' self-efficacy is another suggestion based on the results from this study. One simple way to boost self-efficacy levels is through increasing curriculum time. Schools usually devote not more than two or three lessons per week to language study at KS3. Increased curriculum time would be likely to result in higher learner proficiency, which is, in turn, linked with self-efficacy (Graham, Courtney, Marinis, & Tonkyn, 2017; Macaro, 2008). Explicit teaching of learning strategy use has also been shown to increase learners' self-efficacy (e.g. Graham, 2007), in that it encourages learners to attribute success to effort, and promotes resilience in the face of failure. Another way to increase self-efficacy would be to move away from grades, and redefine success and failure (e.g. Covington et al., 2017). If learners can reframe success as a mastery experience (Bandura, 1997), and can view failure as an opportunity for learning, this would be beneficial in fostering their self-efficacy. Again, the teacher is crucial in that he or she would need to facilitate a learning environment which encourages learners to reconceptualise success and failure in more helpful ways.

The case studies suggested that learner motivation can be less robust (in the case of highly motivated learners) and more fragile (in the case of learners with seemingly low motivation) than it may appear. Implications for practice on the basis of these insights gained from the case studies are that it may be helpful to explore motivation not just as a composite construct, but by its constituent variables. If the domain where the learner showed lower motivation scores was known, more targeted and effective support could be given. For example, 'low motivation' learners might yet enjoy lessons, which would be a good basis from which to boost their self-efficacy (Becky). Some highly motivated learners, on the contrary, might benefit more from an understanding of how German can be

relevant for their future (Olivia), or from a reassessment of the value of German compared with other foreign languages (Amber).

For language promotion, official and school messages tend to focus on instrumental rationales to demonstrate the benefit of languages. Of course, it is easier for the purposes of language promotion to demonstrate the utilitarian value of German through material based on facts and figures related to career opportunities. However, it has become clear from the study that the instrumental, careers-related argument to study German does not drive learners to choose the language. Instead, the study has shown that unless they have gained an understanding of how a language can be personally relevant for them in the future, learners are highly likely to discontinue language study. Inviting former pupils from the school or other outside speakers who can share a ‘language success’ narrative with learners might be helpful, as might a one-to-one conversation with the teacher or careers adviser on how a language could be incorporated into an individual learners’ future plans (Taylor & Marsden, 2014). Demonstrating the opportunities around languages on a one-to-one level seems particularly opportune for learners from disadvantaged backgrounds, who, as the study and other sources have confirmed (Tinsley & Board, 2017a) are being disenfranchised from language study, and should therefore attract a higher level of support. Subject guidance around languages needs to be handled sensitively and supportive of learners’ autonomy, but it also needs to stand out from the ordinary, given that some learners (especially KS3) reacted negatively to advice if they felt they were being told what to do, and a large percentage indicated they received no advice at all from their school on language choices.

Last, while national press discourse around German or languages would ideally offer representation in a more positive light, this is not a variable which can easily be manipulated. In the classroom, however, an intervention in the shape of a meta-level discussion about learners’ attitudes and beliefs may be something to consider. Fisher



(2013a,b) has demonstrated how such a class discussion, carefully managed by the teacher, can change learners' beliefs about language learning towards more conducive attitudes.

Stakeholders who it is hoped will find the results of this study of interest may include British employers, UK university departments, German government agencies, as well as language teachers and MFL coordinators, head teachers, language advisors, careers advisors, policy makers, and researchers.

### **9.5. Limitations**

Limitations to the research are acknowledged. Although the dynamic nature of motivational trajectories is recognised, the study is not based on a longitudinal design. A longitudinal design would be helpful in discovering the development of learner motivation for German over time. Rather, in a cross-sectional design, data were collected at one point in time but from different key stages, with the intention of providing a snapshot of learner motivation for German around the time that uptake decisions were made. Whilst a range of schools was selected for participation, it is acknowledged that the chosen, limited number of schools (four) cannot, and do not claim to represent all schools in the UK. A higher number of schools and participants, possibly from other countries of the UK, would have increased the generalisability of the study. However, for reasons of time, cost, and space, the number of participating schools had to remain limited, and from within the same geographical regional. In addition, while the study refers to 'UK learners', for reasons of time and resources participants are limited to England. As it stands, the findings are likely to apply mostly to England, similarly also to Wales and Northern Ireland, and to a lesser extent to Scotland. Investigating learner motivation around German means that learners' attitudes were only explored as far as they related to German, and not to other foreign languages which learners might also study. Nevertheless, at times it was felt appropriate

(with reference to data and/or theory) to draw conclusions for learner motivation around other languages too. No language assessment has been carried out as part of the study, nor have, for reasons of anonymity, school attainment data been used, so no conclusions regarding language competence (as opposed to perceptions of self-efficacy) can be drawn. While it is likely that learners for whom at least one language for GCSE is compulsory are subject to different motivational dimensions than learners for whom a language is voluntary, KS3 data were not always separated by language policy for pragmatic reasons. All school-based participant data, be they from learners, teachers, or head teachers, are self-reported.

Finally, the potential importance of the representation of German, Germans, and Germany in learner materials (e.g. language and history textbooks) and the implications of not including this variable in the current investigation is acknowledged. Therefore, findings should be interpreted with this limitation in mind. Although the influence of the representation of German\* learner materials could not be considered in the current study, subsequent studies might focus on this potentially important research area.

### **9.6. Directions for future research**

Since the study was conceived and begun in 2014, a major change in political circumstances has taken place. In 2015 the then Prime Minister David Cameron announced that a referendum would be held, in which citizens were asked to vote whether to remain in or leave the EU. In June 2016, when data collection for the study was nearly completed, the UK voted to leave the EU. Since then, a whole new discourse field has opened up around Brexit. Whilst language as well as business experts argue that the UK needs citizens with European language skills even more after Brexit than before, this view does not appear to be shared by all (Tinsley & Board, 2017b). A larger-scale study comparing

wider discourses around German with those around French and Spanish, and in turn with Brexit discourses, would provide valuable insights into learners' attitudes and their relationship with media discourses.

A further extension of the study would be to include younger, as well as older learner participants (KS2/age 7-11 and KS5/age 16-18), and examine how public discourses are being reproduced differently depending on learner age. This would be helpful for developing age appropriate language lobbying interventions.

Another avenue which is personally important to me would be the investigation of the socio-economic divide in language learning, and work towards ensuring that learners from lower socioeconomic groups are not disadvantaged any further by the growing elitification of languages in the UK.

### **9.7. Final conclusion**

Contrary to what is often thought about motivation for language learning, this study suggests that adolescent learners in the UK are motivated to continue German not by instrumental rationales, but rather by their enjoyment of language lessons and by a sense of personal relevance. The representation of German, the Germans, and Germany in private (school) and public (press) discourses was reproduced in a reciprocal relationship across the two discourse domains found to be a determinant of learner motivation. This research hopes to have made a contribution to a deeper as well as broader understanding of what attracts and rebuffs adolescent UK learners as part of wider discourses about German, the Germans, and Germany. This may help German language providers to adjust their strategies and may perhaps lead to more effective lobbying. Most importantly for me personally, it is hoped that UK schools and policy makers would use this evidence to better support all learners but especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, and address the socially unjust distribution of access to language study.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A: Pilot Questionnaire

'Learning German' Questionnaire

Thank you for your help!

**A. Please complete the statements below.**

Example: For me, playing football is like \_\_\_\_\_

because \_\_\_\_\_

1. For me, learning German is like:

\_\_\_\_\_

because \_\_\_\_\_

2. If German was a food it would be a:

\_\_\_\_\_

because \_\_\_\_\_

3. If German was an animal it would be a:

\_\_\_\_\_

because \_\_\_\_\_

4. When I'm learning German I feel :

\_\_\_\_\_

**B. If we asked 100 random British people about the first thing that comes into their heads when they think of a particular word, what do you think they would say? Please write it down. Then, circle whether you think this opinion is totally correct or totally incorrect or somewhere in between (please circle only a whole number).**

Example:      Sharks: \_\_\_\_\_.  
                  In my view, that opinion is:

Totally correct					Totally incorrect
1	2	3	4	5	6

1.      German: \_\_\_\_\_.  
          In my view, that opinion is:

Totally correct					Totally incorrect
1	2	3	4	5	6

2.      The Germans: \_\_\_\_\_.  
          In my view, that opinion is:

Totally correct					Totally incorrect
1	2	3	4	5	6

3.      Germany: \_\_\_\_\_.  
          In my view, that opinion is:

Totally correct					Totally incorrect
1	2	3	4	5	6

**C. What do you think people who learn German are like?**

People who learn German are \_\_\_\_\_

because \_\_\_\_\_

**D. Now please answer the following questions for yourself:**

1. I enjoy German lessons

Totally correct

Totally incorrect

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6

2. I don't like our German learning materials (like for example text books)

Totally correct

Totally incorrect

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6

3. German is useful for getting a good job

Totally correct

Totally incorrect

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6

4. For me personally, it is important to be able to speak German

Totally correct

Totally incorrect

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6

3

5. For people in the UK today, it is not important to be able to speak German

Totally correct

Totally incorrect

1                    2                    3                    4                    5                    6

6. I would like to travel to Germany someday

Totally correct

Totally incorrect

1                    2                    3                    4                    5                    6

7. I am good at German

Totally correct

Totally incorrect

1                    2                    3                    4                    5                    6

8. My teacher makes German lessons fun

Totally correct

Totally incorrect

1                    2                    3                    4                    5                    6

9. When I leave school I will have a good level of German

Totally correct

Totally incorrect

1                    2                    3                    4                    5                    6

**E. Nearly done! Please just answer the questions on the next page:**

1. Did anyone give you advice regarding continuing or dropping German? If so, please write who (e.g. parents, teacher etc.):

---

2. Have you chosen German for GCSE?                      yes                       no

Why/why not? Please write your reason(s).

---

---

4. I am a:                      boy                       girl

5. At home, do you speak any language(s) other than English? If yes, please write down which one(s):

---

6. What is your father/carer's main job?

---

7. What is your mother/carer's main job?

---

**Thank you very much for filling in this questionnaire!**

5



## **Appendix B: Pilot Teacher Interview Schedule**

### **Pilot Teacher Interview Schedule**

Equipment:

- recording device(s) + spare batteries
- pen and paper

Pre-recording introduction

- Thank interviewee for agreeing to take part in this focus group interview
- Remind them that they have given their permission for the interview to be taped in order that I am able to transcribe the results and listen better during the interview
- Inform them that I will also make some notes as we talk
- Reiterate the purpose of the interview - find out about their thinking regarding language learning
- Remind the interviewee that they have volunteered to participate in this project, that they have given their informed consent which they are free to withdraw at any time without any repercussions
- Reassure the interviewees that the session is not scheduled to take more than 30 mins
- Give the interviewee assurance that they will remain anonymous in any written report, publication or discussions resulting from the project and that their response will be treated in the strictest confidence.
- Tell the interviewees that they are to feel free to interrupt, ask for clarification or choose not to answer any of the questions
- Ask if they are comfortable and happy to go ahead, and if so:

Start recording

State date, School, and name of teacher

1. Question: Could you please state, for the recording, your role within the school?
2. Could you briefly explain the situation regarding languages when boys start here - which language do they start with, then what happens until the option stage?

Can we do a few fun tasks please.

3. Task 1: Family fortunes  
If we asked 100 British people to come up with words they think of when they hear the word ...X..., what would they come up with? You've got 5 minutes to discuss amongst yourselves.

- a) German
- b) The Germans
- c) Germany

4. Task 2: Alien visit

If an alien appeared who didn't know anything about life on earth, how would you explain to them what these words mean (you've got 5 minutes to discuss amongst yourselves and make some notes):

1. German
2. The Germans
3. Germany

5. Task 3: Metaphors/How do you feel

Please complete the following statements:

1. Teaching German is like \_\_\_\_, because \_\_\_\_.
2. If German was a food it would be a \_\_\_\_, because \_\_\_\_.
3. If German was an animal it would be a \_\_\_\_, because \_\_\_\_.
4. When I'm teaching German I feel \_\_\_\_.

6. Question: Ok thanks, so my first proper question: you know I'm interested in students' choices around languages, and really I am interested specifically in their choices around German. What do you think the reasons are for students a) choosing German and b) not choosing German? Follow up with more questions, as appropriate. Aim to cover source of belief if belief is stated ("Why do you think that?")
7. Question: Do you think students' choices are related to how well they feel they're doing in German, and/or how well they're actually doing?
8. Question: Compared with other subjects, how well in general do you think boys (boys' school!) do in German?
9. Question: What do you think is the value of learning German for students in the UK?
10. Question: (related to above) Would you say it's important for people in the UK to learn German? If yes, how important, and why? (This goes to everyone, including those who chose not to do German)
11. Question: If I asked the head teacher if it is important for students to learn German these days, what do you think they would say? Your colleagues? Boys' parents?
12. Question: If a new student came new to the school, and he was thinking about whether to choose German or not, what advice would you give them? (cover: a) what's German like at your school, incl lessons, teachers, materials b) wider rationales for learning German, if forthcoming?)

#### Closure

Invite interviewee to add anything that they think they would like to add about learning German. Invite them to give feedback on how they think this interview went, and what else I could have asked or done differently.

Thank interviewee for their time and their contributions, which are much appreciated.

## **Appendix C: Pilot Focus Group Schedule**

### **Pilot Focus Group Schedule**

Equipment:

- recording device(s) + spare batteries
- pen and paper
- blank cards for writing student names on
- thick pen (board marker)

Pre-recording introduction

- Thank students for agreeing to take part in this focus group interview
- Remind them that they have given their permission for the interview to be taped in order that I am able to transcribe the results and listen better during the interview
- Inform them that I will also make some notes as we talk
- Reiterate the purpose of the interview - find out about their thinking regarding language learning
- Remind the interviewees that they have volunteered to participate in this project, that they have given their informed consent which they are free to withdraw at any time without any repercussions
- Reassure the interviewees that the session is not scheduled to take more than 30 mins
- Give the interviewees assurance that they will remain anonymous in any written report, publication or discussions resulting from the project and that their response will be treated in the strictest confidence. Their teachers or parents will not be told what they said
- Tell the interviewees that they are to feel free to interrupt, ask for clarification or choose not to answer any of the questions
- Tell students that it would help if they held up the name sign say their name before they speak so I can tell when they want to say something, and say their name out loud for the recording
- Ask if everyone is comfortable and happy to go ahead, and if so:

Start recording

State date, School, and current year of participants

1. Question: Could you please each state, for the recording, your name, and your option/A level choices for next year?

We are going to start with a few fun tasks.

2. Task 1: Family fortunes

If we asked 100 British people to come up with words they think of when they hear the word ...X..., what would they come up with? You've got 5 minutes to discuss amongst yourselves.

- a) German
- b) The Germans
- c) Germany

3. Task 2: Alien visit

If an alien appeared who didn't know anything about life on earth, how would you explain to them what these words mean (you've got 5 minutes to discuss amongst yourselves and make some notes):

1. German
2. The Germans
3. Germany

4. Task 3: Metaphors/How do you feel

Please complete the following statements:

1. Learning German is like \_\_\_\_, because \_\_\_\_.
2. If German was a food it would be a \_\_\_\_, because \_\_\_\_.
3. If German was an animal it would be a \_\_\_\_, because \_\_\_\_.
4. When I'm learning German I feel \_\_\_\_.

5. Question: You told me earlier what subject choices you have made for next year. You know I'm interested in your choices around languages, and I am interested specifically in your choices around German. You all could have

chosen German, but some of you did and some didn't. Can you explain to me your reasons for the choice you made?

Go in whatever order is natural. Follow up with more questions, as appropriate. Aim to cover source of belief if belief is stated ("Why do you think that? Where have you heard that?")

6. Question: How well do you feel you're doing in German right now? Why do you think that?
7. Question: Those of you who are carrying on with German, how well do you expect to do?
8. Question: Would you say it's important for people in the UK to learn German? If yes, how important, and why? (This goes to everyone, including those who chose not to do German)
9. Question: If I asked your teachers if it is important for students to learn German these days, what do you think they would say? Your classmates? Your parents?
10. Question: If someone your age came new to the school, and he was (boys' school!) thinking about whether to choose German or not, what advice would you give them? (cover: a) what's German like at your school, incl lessons, teachers, materials b) wider rationales for learning German, if forthcoming?)

#### Closure

Invite students to add anything that they think they would like to add about learning German. Invite them to give feedback on how they think this focus group went, and what else I could have asked or done differently.

Thank students for their time and their contributions, which are much appreciated.

## Appendix D: Main Study Questionnaire

### Learning German - your views

Please complete all six pages. Thank you very much for your help!

#### A. Please complete the statements below.

Example: For me, playing football is like \_\_\_\_\_

because \_\_\_\_\_

1. For me, learning German is like:

\_\_\_\_\_

because \_\_\_\_\_

2. If German was a food it would be a:

\_\_\_\_\_

because \_\_\_\_\_

3. If German was an animal it would be a:

\_\_\_\_\_

because \_\_\_\_\_

4. When I'm learning German I feel :

\_\_\_\_\_

B. If we asked 100 random British people about the first thing that comes into their heads when they think of a particular word, what do you think they would say? Please write it down. Then, circle whether you think this opinion is totally correct or totally incorrect or somewhere in between (please circle only a whole number - half numbers won't be counted).

Example: Sharks: \_\_\_\_\_.

In my view, that opinion is:

<i>Totally correct</i>			<i>Totally incorrect</i>		
1	2	3	4	5	6

i. German:

\_\_\_\_\_.

In my view, that opinion is:

<i>Totally correct</i>			<i>Totally incorrect</i>		
1	2	3	4	5	6

ii. The Germans:

\_\_\_\_\_.

In my view, that opinion is:

<i>Totally correct</i>			<i>Totally incorrect</i>		
1	2	3	4	5	6

iii. Germany:

\_\_\_\_\_.

In my view, that opinion is:

<i>Totally correct</i>			<i>Totally incorrect</i>		
1	2	3	4	5	6

2



**C. What do you think people who learn German are like?**

People who learn German are \_\_\_\_\_

because \_\_\_\_\_

**D. Now please answer the following questions for yourself (please circle only a whole number - half numbers won't be counted).**

1. I enjoy German lessons

**Totally correct**

**Totally incorrect**

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6

2. When I leave school I will have a good level of German

**Totally correct**

**Totally incorrect**

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6

3. For people in the UK today, it is not important to be able to speak German

**Totally correct**

**Totally incorrect**

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6

4. I don't like the activities we do in German lessons

**Totally correct**

**Totally incorrect**

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6

3

5. I am good at German

**Totally correct**

**Totally incorrect**

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6

6. German is useful for getting a good job

**Totally correct**

**Totally incorrect**

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6

7. German lessons are fun

**Totally correct**

**Totally incorrect**

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6

8. For me personally, it is important to be able to speak German

**Totally correct**

**Totally incorrect**

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6

9. When I speak German I feel unsure of myself

**Totally correct**

**Totally incorrect**

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6

**E. Nearly done! Please just answer the questions below:**

1. Did anyone give you advice regarding continuing or dropping German? If so, please write who (e.g. parents, teacher etc.):

---

4

2. Will you continue with German next year?      yes       no

Why/why not? Please write down your reason(s).

---

---

---

3. If there is anything else you'd like to tell us about German, please write it down here:

---

---

---

---

4. I am a:      boy       girl

5. At home, do you speak any language(s) other than English? If yes, please write down which one(s):

---

6. What is your father/carer's main job?

---

5

7. What is your mother/carer's main job?

---

8. If you would be happy to discuss your answers in a focus group with other people in your year group and the researcher, please write down your name below (will be anonymised). The session will be audio-recorded. What you say remains strictly confidential and will not affect your grades and will not be shared with anyone outside the group like your teachers or your parents.

I agree to be contacted about taking part in a focus group:

Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you very much for filling in this questionnaire!**

## **Appendix E: Main Study Focus Group Schedule**

### Main Study Focus Group Schedule

#### Equipment/materials:

- recording device(s) + spare batteries
- pen and paper
- blank name stickers
- thick pen (board marker)
- forms for tasks
- consent forms

#### Pre-recording introduction

- Thank students for agreeing to take part in this focus group interview
- Get them to fill in consent form
- Give each student a copy of their previously filled-in questionnaire. Make sure I have copies too.
- Remind them that they have given their permission for the interview to be taped in order that I am able to transcribe the results and listen better during the interview
- Inform them that I will also make some notes as we talk
- Reiterate the purpose of the interview – find out about their thinking regarding language learning, especially: German learning.
- Remind the interviewees that they have volunteered to participate in this project, that they have given their informed consent which they are free to withdraw at any time without any repercussions
- Reassure the interviewees that the session is not scheduled to take more than 30 mins
- Give the interviewees assurance that they will remain anonymous in any written report, publication or discussions resulting from the project and that their response will be treated in the strictest confidence. Their teachers or parents will not be told what they said
- Tell the interviewees that they are to feel free to interrupt, ask for clarification or choose not to answer any of the questions
- Tell students that it would help if they said their name out loud for the recording before they contribute
- Ask if everyone is comfortable and happy to go ahead, and if so:

#### Start recording

State date, School, and current year of participants

1. Question: Could you please each state, for the recording, your name, which language(s) you're studying right now and whether you're taking a language next year - if so, which one?

Follow format of Section D of questionnaire Refer to students' previous answers. Ask students why they responded the way they did, can they say a bit more about it. Explore salient points more deeply. What do they think of others' answers?

Section D of questionnaire:

1. I enjoy German lessons– learning situation
2. When I leave school I will have a good level of German– self-efficacy
3. For people in the UK today, it is not important to be able to speak German - value
4. I don't like the activities we do in German lessons – learning situation
5. I am good at German– self-efficacy
6. German is useful for getting a good job - value
7. German lessons are fun– learning situation
8. For me personally, it is important to be able to speak German - value
9. When I speak German I feel unsure of myself– self efficacy

by motivation scale:

1. I enjoy German lessons– learning situation
2. I don't like the activities we do in German lessons– learning situation
3. German lessons are fun– learning situation
  
4. When I leave school I will have a good level of German– self-efficacy
5. I am good at German– self-efficacy
6. When I speak German I feel unsure of myself– self efficacy
  
7. For people in the UK today, it is not important to be able to speak German - value
8. German is useful for getting a good job - value
9. For me personally, it is important to be able to speak German - value

What role does German play for your future?

If someone your age came new to the school, and they were thinking about whether to choose German or not, what advice would you give them? (cover: a) what's German like at your school, incl lessons, teachers, materials b) wider rationales for learning German, is it important to do German or not, if forthcoming?)

## **Appendix F: Main Study Teacher Interview Schedule**

### Teacher Interview Schedule

1. Question: Could you please state, for the recording, your role within the school?
2. Question: Could you please explain the situation regarding languages when students start here– which language(s) do they start with, then what happens as they progress through the school?  
(also ask re languages/ German department, relationship between German and other languages. Has anything changed over time?)
3. Question: I'm interested in students' choices around languages, and really I am interested specifically in their choices around German. What do you think the reasons are for students a) choosing German and b) not choosing German? Has this changed at all?  
Follow up with more questions, as appropriate. Aim to cover source of belief if belief is stated ("Why do you think that?"). Influences on students' choices – eg parents, friends, media?
4. Question: Compared with other subjects, how well in general do you think students do in German?
5. Question: Do you think students' choices are related to how well they feel they're doing in German? (self-efficacy)
6. Question: If I asked your students if it is important for them to learn German these days, what do you think they would say? What about their parents? What about the head teacher? What about the British public? (value of German)
7. Question: How do you think your students feel about German lessons? (learning situation)
8. Question: If you were to give an options talk to student in year 9 who currently study German and another language, what advice would you give them? (cover: a) what's German like at your school, incl lessons, teachers, materials b) wider rationales for learning German, importance, value for students here specifically?
9. If time: What do you think your students associate with German/ Germans/Germany? Has this changed over time at all?

If time: What's it like to teach German?

### Closure

Invite interviewee to add anything that they think they would like to add about learning German. Invite them to give feedback on how they think this interview went, and what else I could have asked or done differently.

Thank interviewee for their time and their contribution, which are much appreciated.

## **Appendix G: Main Study Head Teacher Interview Schedule**

### Head teacher interview schedule

1. Question: Could you please state, for the recording, your role within the school?
2. Question: Could you please explain the situation regarding languages at your school – which language(s) do students start with, then what happens until the option stage? (research this in advance so you know what to expect and what follow-up ques to ask. Why is the structure of languages as it is now? Also ask re Languages/German department, relationship between languages. Has anything changed over time/can you foresee it changing in the future? Reasons?)
3. Question: I'm interested in students' choices around languages, and specifically in their choices around German. What do you think the reasons are for students a) choosing German and b) not choosing German? Has this changed at all?
4. Follow up with more questions, as appropriate. Aim to cover source of belief if belief is stated ("Why do you think that?"). Influences on students' choices – e.g. parents, friends, media? If I asked students' parents if it is important for students to learn German these days, what do you think they would say?
5. Imagine you're talking to students regarding option choices. What would you say about German? Would you separate the individual MFLs? Why/Why not? If not, then go with languages generally here. What's different about German/MFLs to other subjects? Selling points/downsides? Are there some subjects which are perceived as harder than others?
6. What would you say about German in relation to other MFLs taught at your school (French, Spanish?) Probe– usefulness (jobs?), fun, holidays
7. How important do you feel people in the UK think it is to learn a language? (Then if they say 'most would say they don't need to learn one as everyone speaks English', ask 'and what is your view about that? What would you say to a learner/parent who voiced that opinion?') How about students at your school, how about parents? (value of German)
8. How well are students doing in German? Do you think choices are related to how well students feel they're doing?
9. Do you think some students are more suited to the study of German/languages than others? (probe re changes since MFL not compulsory for ks4, notion of aptitude, what does that mean, what type of learner is better suited to MFL in your opinion?)
10. What do you think your students associate with German/Germans/Germany? Has this changed over time at all? Do you think it affects choices?



## Appendix H: Instructions for Questionnaire

### LEARNING GERMAN – YOUR VIEWS – QUESTIONNAIRE

#### INSTRUCTIONS FOR TEACHER:

1. Please make sure that the learner as well as the parent information/consent forms have been distributed at least one week before the questionnaire is conducted. This is an opt-out form – if you don't hear back from anyone this means they agree to filling in the questionnaire (however students may still choose to opt out at any stage).
2. Please get the class to do the questionnaire in lesson time. Guide time: 15 minutes. If possible please allow enough time for every student to answer every question. Please familiarise yourself with the questionnaire so that you can answer students' questions.
3. Hand out questionnaire – **tell students not to start yet**. Before starting, please read out the following to the class:
  - **Thank you for filling in this questionnaire for a research study at Reading University, which asks you how you feel about German. It is not a test and there is no German in it. There are no right or wrong answers, but it is important that you answer each question. Please take this seriously and attempt to answer in a sensible manner. Don't think too long, just write down what first comes into your head. There are six pages altogether – don't forget the last page.**
  - **The questionnaire is confidential – your teacher will not see your answers. When everyone has finished, the questionnaires will be collected in by one of you and sealed in an envelope in front of the class.**
  - **If you are asked to circle a number, please only circle a complete number- half numbers can't be counted.**
  - **Now please read through the instructions of sections A, B, C, D, and E. Make sure you understand the instructions. If you have any questions, ask your teacher for clarification now.**
4. If everyone is good to go, start the questionnaire. It is important that students attempt each question. If some finish before others, they could try and write down any other thoughts or feelings they have about learning German.
5. When finished, please get a student to collect the questionnaires and seal them in the envelope in front of the class so that confidentiality can be ensured.
6. Please complete the below and pass the envelope to the Head of Languages. Many thanks for your help!

Name of school: \_\_\_\_\_

School year (e.g. year 9): \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix I: Ethics documents

University of Reading  
Institute of Education  
Ethical Approval Form A



Tick one:

Staff project: \_\_\_\_  
Postgraduate project: PhD ✓ EdD \_\_\_\_

Name of applicant (s): Heike Bruton

Title of project: German learning in the UK

Name of supervisor (for student projects): Professor Suzanne Graham, Dr Melani Schröter  
**Please complete the form below including relevant sections overleaf.**

	YES	NO	
<b>Have you prepared an Information Sheet for participants and/or their parents/carers that:</b>			
a) explains the purpose(s) of the project	✓		
b) explains how they have been selected as potential participants	✓		
c) gives a full, fair and clear account of what will be asked of them and how the information that they provide will be used	✓		
d) makes clear that participation in the project is voluntary	✓		
e) explains the arrangements to allow participants to withdraw at any stage if they wish	✓		
f) explains the arrangements to ensure the confidentiality of any material collected during the project, including secure arrangements for its storage, retention and disposal	✓		
g) explains the arrangements for publishing the research results and, if confidentiality might be affected, for obtaining written consent for this	✓		
h) explains the arrangements for providing participants with the research results if they wish to have them	✓		
i) gives the name and designation of the member of staff with responsibility for the project together with contact details, including email. If any of the project investigators are students at the IoE, then this information must be included and their name provided	✓		
k) explains, where applicable, the arrangements for expenses and other payments to be made to the participants	✓		
j) includes a standard statement indicating the process of ethical review at the University undergone by the project, as follows: ‘This project has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct’.	✓		
k) includes a standard statement regarding insurance: ‘The University has the appropriate insurances in place. Full details are available on request’.	✓		
<b>Please answer the following questions</b>			
1) Will you provide participants involved in your research with all the information necessary to ensure that they are fully informed and not in any way deceived or misled as to the purpose(s) and nature of the research? (Please use the subheadings used in the example information sheets on blackboard to ensure this).	✓		
2) Will you seek written or other formal consent from all participants, if they are able to provide it, in addition to (1)?	✓		
3) Is there any risk that participants may experience physical or psychological distress in taking part in your research?		✓	
4) Have you taken the online training modules in data protection and information security which can be found here: <a href="http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/imps/InformationComplianceTraining/imps-information-compliance-training.aspx">http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/imps/InformationComplianceTraining/imps-information-compliance-training.aspx</a>	✓		
5) Have you read the Health and Safety booklet (available on Blackboard) and completed a Risk Assessment Form to be included with this ethics application?	✓		
6) Does your research comply with the University’s Code of Good Practice in Research?	✓		
	YES	NO	N.A.
7) If your research is taking place in a school, have you prepared an information sheet	✓		

and consent form to gain the permission in writing of the head teacher or other relevant supervisory professional?			
8) Has the data collector obtained satisfactory DBS clearance?	✓		
9) If your research involves working with children under the age of 16 (or those whose special educational needs mean they are unable to give informed consent), have you prepared an information sheet and consent form for parents/carers to seek permission in writing, or to give parents/carers the opportunity to decline consent?	✓		
10) If your research involves processing sensitive personal data <sup>1</sup> , or if it involves audio/video recordings, will you obtain the explicit consent of participants/parents?	✓		
11) If you are using a data processor to subcontract any part of your research, have you got a written contract with that contractor which (a) specifies that the contractor is required to act only on your instructions, and (b) provides for appropriate technical and organisational security measures to protect the data?	✓		
12a) Does your research involve data collection outside the UK?		✓	
12b) If the answer to question 11a is "yes", does your research comply with the legal and ethical requirements for doing research in that country?			✓
13a. Does the proposed research involve children under the age of 5?		✓	
13b. If the answer to question 12a is "yes": My Head of School (or authorised Head of Department) has given details of the proposed research to the University's insurance officer, and the research will not proceed until I have confirmation that insurance cover is in place.			✓
<b>If you have answered YES to Question 3, please complete Section B below</b>			

PLEASE COMPLETE EITHER SECTION A OR B AND PROVIDE THE DETAILS REQUIRED IN SUPPORT OF YOUR APPLICATION, THEN SIGN THE FORM (SECTION C)

A: My research goes beyond the 'accepted custom and practice of teaching' but I consider that this project has <b>no</b> significant ethical implications.	
Give a brief description of the aims and the methods (participants, instruments and procedures) of the project in up to 200 words. Attach any consent form, information sheet and research instruments to be used in the project (e.g. tests, questionnaires, interview schedules).	
Please state how many participants will be involved in the project: 9 <i>This form and any attachments should now be submitted to the Institute's Ethics Committee for consideration. Any missing information will result in the form being returned to you.</i>	
This application is for a questionnaire, interviews and focus groups for a PhD project. I plan to run two focus groups per school with four to eight learner participants each, one group from year 8 or 9 and one group from year 11. The purpose of the focus groups will be to explore learners' views on German learning, the Germans and Germany, and learners' choices around language learning. I also plan to interview the head teacher and a member of teaching staff about the same topics. Each session will take no longer than 30 minutes and I will audio-record the sessions, subject to the appropriate permissions.	

<b>B: I consider that this project <b>may</b> have ethical implications that should be brought before the</b>	
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<sup>1</sup> Sensitive personal data consists of information relating to the racial or ethnic origin of a data subject, their political opinions, religious beliefs, trade union membership, sexual life, physical or mental health or condition, or criminal offences or record.

Institute's Ethics Committee.	
<b>Please provide all the further information listed below in a separate attachment.</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. title of project</li> <li>2. purpose of project and its academic rationale</li> <li>3. brief description of methods and measurements</li> <li>4. participants: recruitment methods, number, age, gender, exclusion/inclusion criteria</li> <li>5. consent and participant information arrangements, debriefing (attach forms where necessary)</li> <li>6. a clear and concise statement of the ethical considerations raised by the project and how you intend to deal with them.</li> <li>7. estimated start date and duration of project</li> </ol>	
<i>This form and any attachments should now be submitted to the Institute's Ethics Committee for consideration. Any missing information will result in the form being returned to you.</i>	

C: SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT:

I have declared all relevant information regarding my proposed project and confirm that ethical good practice will be followed within the project.

Signed:  Print Name: Heike Bruton Date 30/01/2015

STATEMENT OF ETHICAL APPROVAL FOR PROPOSALS SUBMITTED TO THE INSTITUTE ETHICS COMMITTEE

This project has been considered using agreed Institute procedures and is now approved.

Signed:  Print Name Prof Andy Kempe Date 21.2.15  
 (IoE Research Ethics Committee representative)\*

\* A decision to allow a project to proceed is not an expert assessment of its content or of the possible risks involved in the investigation, nor does it detract in any way from the ultimate responsibility which students/investigators must themselves have for these matters. Approval is granted on the basis of the information declared by the applicant.



**Researcher:**  
Ms Heike Bruton  
Tel: 0118 3782645  
Email:  
[h.bruton@reading.ac.uk](mailto:h.bruton@reading.ac.uk)

**Supervisor:**  
Prof Suzanne Graham  
Tel: 0118 3782684  
Email: [s.j.graham@reading.ac.uk](mailto:s.j.graham@reading.ac.uk)

[Head Teacher information sheet](#)

**Research Project:** Language learning in the UK

**Project Team Members:** Ms Heike Bruton

We would like to invite your school to take part in a research study about studying languages.

**What is the study?**

The study is being conducted at the University of Reading as part of Heike Bruton's PhD study. Its aim is to investigate secondary school students' views on language learning and their choices. Eventually it hopes to make recommendations regarding how we can best support students in their language learning. The study will involve students who are in the last year of key stage 3 and key stage 4 respectively (years 8 or 9, and 11).

**Why has this school been chosen to take part?**

Your school will be one of four participating schools, which have been chosen to achieve a balanced sample. Also a good working relationship between your school and the University of Reading has already been established.

**Does the school have to take part?**

It is entirely up to you whether you participate. You may also withdraw your consent to participation at any time during the project, without any repercussions to you by contacting Ms Heike Bruton, Tel 0118 3782645, email [h.bruton@reading.ac.uk](mailto:h.bruton@reading.ac.uk).

**What will happen if the school takes part?**

All German learners in the last years of key stage 3 and 4 will be asked to fill in a questionnaire. There will be two student focus groups (one group per year), two lesson observations (one per year group), one teacher interview, and one interview with yourself. Four to eight students from the last year of key stage 3 and four to eight students from year 11 will be asked to participate in a focus group. Each session will take no more than 30 minutes and will take place during a language lesson. Students will have the opportunity to share their views on language learning. The teacher interview will be with a volunteer language teacher. The focus groups and interviews will be recorded with a small battery-operated digital audio recorder. Students and staff will be asked to sign a consent form giving permission for the interview and its recording. Notes will be taken during the lesson observations, with a focus on how learners relate to German as a subject.

**What are the risks and benefits of taking part?**

The information given by participants in the study will remain confidential and will only be seen by the research team listed at the start of this letter. Neither you, any students, any teachers, nor the school will be identifiable in any published report resulting from the study. Information about individuals will not be shared with the school.

We anticipate that the findings of the study will be useful for supporting students in their language learning. An electronic summary of the findings of the study can be made available to you by contacting the researcher.

**What will happen to the data?**

Any data collected will be held in strict confidence and no real names will be used in this study or in any subsequent publications. The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you, the school or any individuals to the study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Children will be assigned a number and will be referred to by that number in all records.





**University of  
Reading**

**Researcher:**  
Ms Heike Bruton  
Tel: 0118 3782645  
Email:  
h.bruton@reading.ac.uk

**Supervisor:**  
Prof Suzanne Graham  
Tel: 0118 3782684  
Email: s.j.graham@reading.ac.uk

Research records will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet and on a password-protected computer and only the research team will have access to the records. The data will be destroyed securely once the findings of the study are written up, after five years. The results of the study may be presented at national and international conferences, and in written reports and articles.

**Who has reviewed the study?**

This project has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct. The University has the appropriate insurances in place. Full details are available on request.

**What happens if I change my mind?**

You can change your mind at any time without any repercussions. If you change your mind after data collection has ended, we will discard the school's data.

**What happens if something goes wrong?**

In the unlikely case of concern or complaint, you can contact Professor Suzanne Graham at University of Reading by phone on 0118 3782684 or by email on [s.j.graham@reading.ac.uk](mailto:s.j.graham@reading.ac.uk)

**Where can I get more information?**

If you would like more information, please contact Heike Bruton by phone on 0791 2353239 or by email on [h.bruton@reading.ac.uk](mailto:h.bruton@reading.ac.uk).

**What do I do next?**

We do hope that you will agree to your participation in the study. If you do, please complete the attached consent form and return it, sealed, in the pre-paid addressed envelope provided.

Thank you for your time.

Yours sincerely,

Ms Heike Bruton



**Researcher:**  
 Ms Heike Bruton  
 Tel: 0118 3782645  
 Email:  
 h.bruton@reading.ac.uk

**Supervisor:**  
 Prof Suzanne Graham  
 Tel: 0118 3782684  
 Email: s.j.graham@reading.ac.uk

**Research Project:** Language learning in the UK

Head Teacher Consent Form

I have read the Information Sheet about the project and received a copy of it.  
 I understand what the purpose of the project is and what is required of me. All my questions have been answered.

Name of Head Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Secondary school: \_\_\_\_\_

Please tick as appropriate:

I consent to the involvement of my school in the project as outlined in the Information Sheet

Please tick as appropriate:

	Yes	No
I consent to participating in an interview	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I consent to the audio-recording of the interview	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in subsequent publications.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



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Ms Heike Bruton  
Tel: 0118 3782645  
Email:  
[h.bruton@reading.ac.uk](mailto:h.bruton@reading.ac.uk)

**Supervisor:**  
Prof Suzanne Graham  
Tel: 0118 3782684  
Email: [s.j.graham@reading.ac.uk](mailto:s.j.graham@reading.ac.uk)

#### Student information sheet

**Research Project:** Language learning in the UK

**Project Team Members:** Ms Heike Bruton

We would like to invite you to take part in a research study about studying languages.

#### **What is the study?**

The study is being conducted at the University of Reading as part of Heike Bruton's PhD study. Its aim is to investigate secondary school students' views on language learning. It hopes to make recommendations regarding how we can best support students in their language learning. The study will involve students who are in Years 8/9 and 11.

#### **Why have I been chosen to take part?**

You have been invited to take part in the project because you are currently in Year 8, 9 or 11.

#### **Do I have to take part?**

No, not at all. It is entirely up to you whether you take part. You may also withdraw your consent to participation at any time during the project, without any reason, by contacting me at Tel 0118 3782645, or email [h.bruton@reading.ac.uk](mailto:h.bruton@reading.ac.uk).

#### **What will happen if I take part?**

You will be asked to fill in a questionnaire asking your views on language learning. This will take no more than 15 minutes to complete and will be done in one of your regular language lessons. One of your language lessons might be observed and notes taken by the researcher, focusing on the class as a whole. You MIGHT also be asked to be part of a focus group with other students from your year. This session will take about 30 minutes and will take place during a language lesson. You will have the opportunity to share your views on language learning. The focus group session will be recorded with a small battery-operated digital audio recorder. You will be asked to sign a consent form giving permission for the interview and its recording.

#### **What are the risks and benefits of taking part?**

The information you give will remain confidential and will only be seen by the research team listed at the start of this letter. Neither you nor the school will be identifiable in any published report resulting from the study. Taking part will in no way influence the grade you receive at school. Information about individuals will not be shared with the school.

We hope that the findings of the study will be useful for teachers in planning how to best support students' language learning. An electronic summary of the findings of the study can be made available to you by contacting the researcher.

#### **What will happen to the data?**

Any data collected will be held in strict confidence and no real names will be used in this study or in any subsequent publications. The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you or the school to the study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Students will be assigned a number and will be referred to by that number in all records. Research records will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet and on a password-protected computer and only the research team will have access to the records. The data will be destroyed securely once the findings of the study are written up, after five years. The results of the study may be presented at national and international conferences, and in written reports and articles.





**University of  
Reading**

**Researcher:**  
Ms Heike Bruton  
Tel: 0118 3782645  
Email:  
h.bruton@reading.ac.uk

**Supervisor:**  
Prof Suzanne Graham  
Tel: 0118 3782684  
Email: s.j.graham@reading.ac.uk

**Who has reviewed the study?**

This project has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct. The University has the appropriate insurances in place. Full details are available on request.

**What happens if I change my mind?**

You can change your mind at any time without a reason. During the research, you can stop completing the activities at any time without any repercussions. If you change your mind after data collection has ended, we won't use your data.

**What happens if something goes wrong?**

In the unlikely case of concern or complaint, you can contact Professor Suzanne Graham at University of Reading by phone on 0118 3782684 or by email on [s.j.graham@reading.ac.uk](mailto:s.j.graham@reading.ac.uk)

**Where can I get more information?**

If you would like more information, please contact Heike Bruton by phone on 0118 3782645 or by email on [h.bruton@reading.ac.uk](mailto:h.bruton@reading.ac.uk).

**What do I do next?**

We do hope that you will agree to taking part in the study. If you are to take part you do not need to do anything. If, however, you do not wish to take part you need to complete and return the form on the next page to the school office (reception) as soon as possible.

Thank you for your time.

Yours sincerely,

Ms Heike Bruton



**Researcher:**  
Ms Heike Bruton  
Tel: 0118 3782645  
Email:  
h.bruton@reading.ac.uk

**Supervisor:**  
Prof Suzanne Graham  
Tel: 0118 3782684  
Email: s.j.graham@reading.ac.uk

**Research Project:** Language learning in the UK

**If you are happy to take part then you do NOT need to take any further action.**

**If you do not want to take part then please fill in the form below and return it to the school office (reception).**

Student Consent Form

I **do not** give consent to take part in the research.

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

year 8 or 9

year 11

Please tick as appropriate:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



**Researcher:**  
Ms Heike Bruton  
Tel: 0118 3782645  
Email:  
[h.bruton@reading.ac.uk](mailto:h.bruton@reading.ac.uk)

**Supervisor:**  
Prof Suzanne Graham  
Tel: 0118 3782684  
Email: [s.j.graham@reading.ac.uk](mailto:s.j.graham@reading.ac.uk)

[Parent/carer information sheet](#)

**Research Project:** Language learning in the UK

**Project Team Members:** Ms Heike Bruton

We would like to invite your child to take part in a research study about studying languages.

**What is the study?**

The study is being conducted at the University of Reading as part of Heike Bruton's PhD study. Its aim is to investigate secondary school students' views on language learning. It hopes to make recommendations regarding how we can best support students in their language learning. The study will involve students who are in the last year of key stage 3 and 4 (year 8 or 9, and year 11 respectively).

**Why has my child been chosen to take part?**

Your child has been invited to take part in the project because they are currently studying a language in year 8, 9 or 11.

**Does my child have to take part?**

It is entirely up to you whether your child participates. You may also withdraw your consent to participation at any time during the project, without any repercussions to you or your child, by contacting Ms Heike Bruton, Tel 0118 3782645, email [h.bruton@reading.ac.uk](mailto:h.bruton@reading.ac.uk).

**What will happen if my child takes part?**

If your child is in year 8, 9 or 11 they will be asked to fill in an anonymous questionnaire asking their views on language learning. The questionnaire will be filled in during a language lesson and will take no more than 15 minutes to complete. One of your child's language lessons might be observed and notes taken during the lesson of how the class as a whole relates to the language studied. Your child MIGHT also be asked to participate in a focus group with other students from his/her year. The session will take about 30 minutes and will take place during a language lesson. Students will have the opportunity to share their views on language learning. The focus group session will be recorded with a small battery-operated digital audio recorder. Your child will be asked to sign a consent form giving permission for the interview and its recording.

**What are the risks and benefits of taking part?**

The information you and your child give will remain confidential and will only be seen by the research team listed at the start of this letter. Neither you, your child, nor the school will be identifiable in any published report resulting from the study. Taking part will in no way influence the grades your child receives at school. Information about individuals will not be shared with the school.

We anticipate that the findings of the study will be useful for teachers in planning how to best support students' language learning. An electronic summary of the findings of the study can be made available to you by contacting the researcher.



**Researcher:**  
Ms Heike Bruton  
Tel: 0118 3782645  
Email:  
h.bruton@reading.ac.uk

**Supervisor:**  
Prof Suzanne Graham  
Tel: 0118 3782684  
Email: s.j.graham@reading.ac.uk

**What will happen to the data?**

Any data collected will be held in strict confidence and no real names will be used in this study or in any subsequent publications. The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you, your child or the school to the study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Children will be assigned a number and will be referred to by that number in all records. Research records will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet and on a password-protected computer and only the research team will have access to the records. The data will be destroyed securely once the findings of the study are written up, after five years. The results of the study may be presented at national and international conferences, and in written reports and articles.

**Who has reviewed the study?**

This project has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct. The University has the appropriate insurances in place. Full details are available on request.

**What happens if I change my mind?**

You can change your mind at any time without any repercussions. During the research, your child can stop completing the activities at any time without any repercussions.

**What happens if something goes wrong?**

In the unlikely case of concern or complaint, you can contact Professor Suzanne Graham at University of Reading by phone on 0118 3782684 or by email on [s.j.graham@reading.ac.uk](mailto:s.j.graham@reading.ac.uk)

**Where can I get more information?**

If you would like more information, please contact Heike Bruton by phone on 0118 3782645 or by email on [h.bruton@reading.ac.uk](mailto:h.bruton@reading.ac.uk).

**What do I do next?**

We do hope that you will agree to your child's participation in the study. If you are happy for your child to take part you do not need to do anything. If, however, you do not wish for your child to take part you need to complete and return the form on the next page to the school office (reception) as soon as possible. Your child will also be given an information sheet to read. They will be asked to fill in a form if they do not want to be included in the project.

Thank you for your time.

Yours sincerely,

Ms Heike Bruton



**University of  
Reading**

**Researcher:**  
Ms Heike Bruton  
Tel: 0118 3782645  
Email:  
h.bruton@reading.ac.uk

**Supervisor:**  
Prof Suzanne Graham  
Tel: 0118 3782684  
Email: s.j.graham@reading.ac.uk

**Research Project:** Language learning in the UK

**If you are happy for your child to take part then you do NOT need to take any further action.**

**If you do not want your child to take part then please fill in the form below and return it to the school office (reception) in an envelope marked 'Language Learning Study'.**

Parent/Carer Consent Form

I **do not** give consent for my child to take part in the research.

Name of child: \_\_\_\_\_

Please tick as appropriate:

year 8 /9

year 11

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



**Researcher:**  
Ms Heike Bruton  
Tel: 0118 3782645  
Email:  
h.bruton@reading.ac.uk

**Supervisor:**  
Prof Suzanne Graham  
Tel: 0118 3782684  
Email: s.j.graham@reading.ac.uk

**Student Consent Form**

I have read the Information Sheet about the project and received a copy of it.

I understand what the purpose of the project is and what is required of me. All my questions have been answered.

	yes	no
I consent to participating in an interview	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I consent to the audio-recording of the interview	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in subsequent publications.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



**Researcher:**  
Ms Heike Bruton  
Tel: 0118 3782645  
Email:  
[h.bruton@reading.ac.uk](mailto:h.bruton@reading.ac.uk)

**Supervisor:**  
Prof Suzanne Graham  
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Email: [s.j.graham@reading.ac.uk](mailto:s.j.graham@reading.ac.uk)

Teacher information sheet

**Research Project:** Language learning in the UK

**Project Team Members:** Ms Heike Bruton

We would like to invite you to take part in a research study about studying languages.

**What is the study?**

The study is being conducted at the University of Reading as part of Heike Bruton's PhD study. Its aim is to investigate secondary school students' views on language learning and their choices. It hopes to make recommendations regarding how we can best support students in their language learning. The study will involve students who are in Years 8 or 9, and 11.

**Why have I been chosen to take part?**

You have been invited to take part because you are a language teacher and/or have a guiding role in which you advise students on subject choices.

**Do I have to take part?**

It is entirely up to you whether you participate. You may also withdraw your consent to participation at any time during the project, without any repercussions to you, by contacting the researcher Ms Heike Bruton, Tel 0118 3782645, email [h.bruton@reading.ac.uk](mailto:h.bruton@reading.ac.uk).

**What will happen if I take part?**

You will be asked to complete a short interview about your views regarding language learning. With your permission, the interview will be recorded, then transcribed and anonymized before any data are analysed. You will be asked to sign a consent form giving permission for the interview and its recording.

**What are the risks and benefits of taking part?**

The information you give will remain confidential and will only be seen by the research team listed at the start of this letter. Neither you, the children nor the school will be identifiable in any published report resulting from the study. Information about individuals will not be shared with the school.

Participants in similar studies have found it interesting to take part. We anticipate that the findings of the study will be useful for teachers in supporting students in their language learning. An electronic summary of the findings of the study can be made available to you by contacting the Principal Researcher.

**What will happen to the data?**

Any data collected will be held in strict confidence and no real names will be used in this study or in any subsequent publications. The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you, your child or the school to the study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Children will be assigned a number and will be referred to by that number in all records. Research records will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet and on a password-protected computer and only the research team will have access to the records. The data will be destroyed securely once the findings of the study are written up, after five years. The results of the study may be presented at national and international conferences, and in written reports and articles.





**University of  
Reading**

**Researcher:**  
Ms Heike Bruton  
Tel: 0118 3782645  
Email:  
h.bruton@reading.ac.uk

**Supervisor:**  
Prof Suzanne Graham  
Tel: 0118 3782684  
Email: s.j.graham@reading.ac.uk

**Who has reviewed the study?**

This project has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct. The University has the appropriate insurances in place. Full details are available on request.

**What happens if I change my mind?**

You can change your mind at any time without any repercussions. During the research, you can stop completing the activities at any time. If you change your mind after data collection has ended, we will discard your data.

**What happens if something goes wrong?**

In the unlikely case of concern or complaint, you can contact Professor Suzanne Graham at University of Reading by phone on 0118 3782684 or by email on [s.j.graham@reading.ac.uk](mailto:s.j.graham@reading.ac.uk)

**Where can I get more information?**

If you would like more information, please contact Heike Bruton by phone on 0118 3782645 or by email on h.bruton@reading.ac.uk.

**What do I do next?**

We do hope that you will agree to your participation in the study. If you are happy to take part, please return the attached consent form to Heike Bruton as soon as possible.

Thank you for your time.

Yours sincerely,

Ms Heike Bruton





**Researcher:**  
Ms Heike Bruton  
Tel: 0118 3782645  
Email:  
h.bruton@reading.ac.uk

**Supervisor:**  
Prof Suzanne Graham  
Tel: 0118 3782684  
Email: s.j.graham@reading.ac.uk

**Research Project:** Language learning in the UK

Teacher Consent Form

I have read the Information Sheet about the project and received a copy of it.

I understand what the purpose of the project is and what is required of me. All my questions have been answered.

Name of teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Secondary School: \_\_\_\_\_

Please tick as appropriate:

	Yes	No
I consent to participating in an interview	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I consent to the audio-recording of the interview	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in subsequent publications.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_