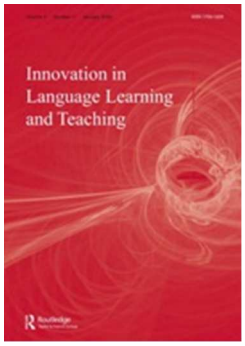

Pupils' Reflections on the Primary to Secondary School Transition with Reference to Modern Language Learning: a Motivational Self-System Perspective.

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Abstract

Points of transition in life are accepted as times which impact greatly on aspects of the individual's psyche, including motivation to learn. In spite of this, pupils' views are rarely heard in discussions of transition from primary to secondary school in general and in relation to modern languages in particular. This exploratory study investigated the motivation of young learners of foreign languages in one region of the UK at time of transitioning from primary school to secondary school. Ten to 12 year olds shared their views of the experience of transition and provided motivational insights which test the applicability of Dőrnyei's L2 'motivational self system' (2005) for learners in this age group. Eighteen students were interviewed in their final year of primary school and again one year later in their first year of secondary school. Pupils identified foreign language learning as a generally a positive experience but one which could include, in the primary school, a higher level of challenge, more 'real' work and evidence to facilitate a feeling of making progress. This provided the background for consideration of whether these experiences contributed to focal pupils' vision of self. The pupils' messages resonate beyond the confines of foreign languages to other subjects and other transition experienced by young people around this age.

Keywords: primary modern foreign languages; secondary modern foreign languages; transition**;** motivation; L2 motivational self system

Background

Transition represents a crossing-point in the life of an individual. There are many transitions: childhood to adolescence; adolescence to adulthood; school to university; university to work. Transition poses challenges. Briggs et al (2012) address those faced by students making the transition between school and university; issues relating to feeling informed, valued and a sense of belonging. Carroll et al (2015) suggest that the transition from secondary to upper secondary school is a key point in life when revisions of possible selves are likely. Burns et al (2013) identify that the transition between primary and secondary school poses a threat to the stability of motivation.

The 'transition years' have been a source of interest to many MFL researchers in the UK context. These apply to Year 6, the final year of primary school and the KS2 experience, and Year 7, the first year in secondary school and of Key Stage 3 (KS3, i.e. secondary school Years 7-9, students aged 11-14). Burstall, Jamieson, Cohen and Hargreaves, as far back as 1974, reporting on the *Primary French* initiative in the 1960s, for example, and more recently Bolster (2009), Hunt, Barnes, Powell and Martin (2008) and McLachlan (2009) raise the same issues (see below) which cause the transitional experience in MFL to be less positive than it might be.

Successful transition underpins successful learning beyond primary school. If managed well, pupils' enjoyment of languages and motivation to learn are likely to continue (Jones et al., 2017); if not, there is the possibility that the time spent learning languages at primary school will have had little purpose and will be perceived by students as a waste, with the concomitant implications for motivation and future learning (Bolster, 2009). Burstall et al. (1974) identified that most pupils re-started their MFL experience in the secondary school, with no recognition given to what they had learnt at primary school. More recent research

(Bolster, 2009; Driscoll, Jones and Macrory, 2004; Hunt et al., 2008; McLachlan, 2009; Tierney, 2009) suggests that little has been learned from this. Whilst areas of good practice exist, they tend to be the exception rather than the rule: there is little communication and collaboration between primary and secondary schools; where information is exchanged, it is often not relied upon as a basis for work in the first year of secondary school (Tinsley and Board, 2016). Most studies on transition reflect schools' policy and teachers' practice. What sets this study apart is that it gives pupils a voice. Who better to give insights into the experience of transition and its impact on their motivation, than the end-users and key-stakeholders in the PFML endeavour, that is the pupils themselves?

Dörnyei's (2005) 'L2 Motivational Self System': is it applicable?

Dörnyei's (2005) 'L2 motivational self system' model has dominated motivation research for the last decade. Its application to younger learners (in the case of this study, 10-12 years old), is generally unsupported but at the same time untested. The model has been discussed in detail in many other publications (e.g. Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2009) and so will be described only briefly here.

Harter (2005) traces interest in self-processes as far back as James (1890). Dörnyei's (2005) model is influenced by Higgins's (1987) and Markus and Nurius's (1986) Self Discrepancy Theory, which states that learning is motivated by the individual's striving to bridge the gap between his/her actual self and the self s/he would ideally like to be. They identify two possible selves: the *ideal self* (what the individual would like to be) and the *ought self* (the image and expectations the individual believes others have of her/him). Dörnyei developed this further to include three dimensions: the ideal L2 self, the ought-to L2 self, both broadly defined as for Markus and Nurius, and the L2 learning experience. This third

dimension is associated with the learning environment, the nature of the classroom, the learner's perception of the teacher and her/his teaching, and how s/he fits in with and relates to the group of learners.

At the core of Dörnyei's ideal self and its power to motivate is 'vision'. If the individual does not have a vision for language learning which is convincing and realisable, s/he does not have an ideal self. Dörnyei (2015, 9-10) lists nine conditions which have to be met:

(1) the learner should have a 'desired future self-image';
it should be -
(2) 'sufficiently different from the current self';
(3) 'elaborate and vivid';
(4) 'perceived as plausible';
(5) challenging to reach;
(6) 'in harmony - or at least not clashing - with other parts of the individual's self-concept';
(7) 'accompanied by relevant and effective procedural strategy'
(8) 'regularly activated in the learner's working self-concept' and
(9) 'offset by a counteracting feared possible self in the same domain'.

In summary, the learner has to have a clear and vivid vision of the future reality s/he wants or indeed may not want (as applies to a vivid *feared* self).

Almost all of the studies conducted so far, relating to Dörnyei's model, have used older language learners as their sample (Csizér and Kormos, 2009; Taguchi, Magid and Papi, 2009; Ryan, 2009; Lamb, 2012). The work of Zentner and Renaud (2007) suggest that young learners, not yet in adolescence, are unlikely to identify future possible selves in a way that

directs behaviour. Harter (2005) proposes that this may only come later, as late as 17 years of age. Only in late adolescence, she suggests, is the individual capable of constructing her/his own standards to inform the creation of a consistent vision of self. Higgins (1991), however, maintains that, in relation to the 'ought' self, children aged 8-11 have the capacity to be influenced by their perception of the type of person others expect them to be. Thorsen, Henry, and Cliffordson (2017) get closest to the focal age group in this study. Using structural equation modelling they compared the current and the ideal L2 self of Swedish pupils in year 7 and year 9. They found that the discrepancy between the ideal L2 self and the current L2 self, and the impact on the 'intended effort' criterion was greater for the grade 7 cohort than for the older pupils.

Given the position of 10-12 year olds as the end-users of the PFML endeavour and of the transitional process, it is perhaps strange that their voices have been largely unheard on PMFL matters, transition and its impact. The work of Jones et al. (2016), is one exception. They maintain that: 'If given the opportunity, pupils can provide insightful views on the subject of their learning and express their own, sometimes strong, views about their experiences of MFL learning' (p.153). Greig et al. (2012) agree that the words used by children 'can enrich research' (p.138). With this in mind, this study aimed to access the views of the focal 10-12 year olds to inform the answers to the following transitional-motivational research questions:

- What perceptions do the focal pupils have of their language learning experience at primary and secondary school?

- Do pupils' perceptions of MFL change in the course of years 6 (final year of primary school) and 7 (first year of secondary school)? What are the factors impacting on any change?

- What insights do they provide of the way in which transition is managed in relation to languages?

- Do pupils aged 10-12 provide evidence to support the conclusion that they possess a vision of self?

Research Design and Methodology

Conducting research with children demands a plethora of methodological and ethical considerations (Greig et al., 2012). Tisdall et al. (2009) review approaches to tackling the challenge, by means of case studies on diverse topics in differing contexts. These considerations were at the core of decisions made in realtion to research design and the data collection instruments used for this study.

A qualitative design was judged to be appropriate for research involving children and the topic under investigation. Holloway (1997) describes qualitative research as 'a form of social enquiry that focuses on the way people interpret and make sense of their experiences and the world in which they live' (p.1). Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) agree that quantitative approaches can be restrictive especially when applied to a construct as complex and dynamic as motivation. At a time when quantitative approaches dominated motivation research, Ushioda (1994, 1996) was one of those who bucked the trend and advocated qualitative approaches.

Having considered the advantages and disadvantages of the range of qualitative tools available (Bryman, 2008), it was concluded that face-to-face interview was the most

appropriate data collection instrument. Different types of interviews (see Punch, 2009) were then evaluated and a semi-structured model selected, not least for the opportunity it gives for follow-up and elaboration (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011). The interviewer would also have flexibility (Wilson, 2009) to adapt the order of questions/prompts to meet the needs of the individual child, whilst, at the same time, ensuring that all the pre-considered issues were covered.

The identification and appointment of the research assistant (RA) to conduct the interviews were key to the success of the project. S/he would have to demonstrate an ability to establish quickly a warm, communicative relationship with 10-12 year old children (see Punch, 2009, 152 on 'the art of asking questions and listening') to help them feel comfortable and relaxed in the interview context and to maximise the provision of target information. At the end of a challenging appointment process, a recently retired teacher of MFL from a local secondary school, with additional experience of teaching in the primary context, met these criteria.

Kellett (2010) analyses how location and context can impact on the relationship between the interviewer and interviewees and, especially in the case of children, issues of power. It was decided, therefore, to conduct interviews in a room in the school attended by the child to help the sample interviewees feel completely at ease in a familiar environment. In an attempt to address any perception of the unequal relationship between the researcher and the researched, the RA dressed casually and introduced himself using his first name only. Each interview was prefaced by informal, 'getting-to-know-each-other' conversation and the creation of a relaxed atmosphere..

The interview schedule (Appendix 1) accessed a) pupils' perceptions of their experience of transition in languages and b) indicators of any perception of 'self'. In relation

to a) separate schedules were developed for each of the primary and secondary school contexts. This was not applied to b) to allow for the identification of any changes or development in the students' views over the two rounds of data collection.

Key areas for discussion on the transition experience were based on issues raised in the review of earlier research and PMFL-specific publications, such as Kirsch (2008). They were also informed by the outcomes of the earlier study on teachers' perspectives (Author, 2014). The following were the headings for primary, for example:

- Languages provision (i.e. languages taught; number of lessons); lesson content (i.e. activities and tasks).
- Teaching of MFL (i.e. who taught the lessons; use of target language etc).
- Assessment; attainment; recording (including whether pupils were conscious of their attainment and how they were progressing).
- Pupils' enjoyment of languages lessons and factors impacting on this.
- Preparation for transfer to secondary school (i.e. what transitional links did the primary school have with the secondary school; whether Open Evenings were offered; whether MFL-specific information and activities were provided).

Under each heading were possible follow-up prompts, in the event of these being needed.

In relation to children's perception of 'self', the areas for discussion (Appendix 1) (but not the quantitative approach adopted) were informed by the work of Dörnyei and Taguchi (2009). The interview had broadly two parts within a flexible framework:

(1) Pupils' perceptions which might be indicative of an ideal self (e.g. thoughts on working abroad in future; visions of their future selves as fluent speakers and writers of the foreign language);

(2) Perceptions which might be symptomatic of an ought-to self (e.g. feeling obliged to learn a foreign language because they need it for their future advancement in education and/or their chosen career; perceived pressure from parents).

The RA piloted the interviews involving three students in his former school to evaluate whether the language to be used was accessible to students in the 10-12 age range. Following this, some minor changes were made to four of the prompts to help with clarity.

Data were collected in two rounds. In preparation for round one, September 2012, the headteachers of seven state primary schools were invited to serve as research collaborators. Five accepted the invitation (Appendix 2). The headteachers identified year 6 students to take part in the interview process. Interviewees were selected depending on their willingness to participate and their capacity to deal with the interview context. This approach was not problem-free. Some children might have difficulty in saying 'No' to an adult, especially a headteacher (Kellett, 2010). On balance, however, this was judged to be the best available, if not perfect, option. This produced a purposive sample (Bryman, 2008) of 18 students: 11 girls; 7 boys; 14 white British; one British Asian; one Pole; one Iraqi; one Zimbabwean.

The research team informed the parents of these students, in writing, about the purpose of the research and how, subject to parental approval, their children would be involved. All of the parents responded positively. The RA then visited the children in their schools and provided all the detail they needed to inform their decision on whether or not to participate in the research. All 18 pupils gave their informed consent (Kellett, 2010), in the knowledge that they could withdraw from the interview process at any point without providing

an explanation for this. In advance of each of the two rounds of data collection, the RA again met the children in groups in their schools, briefed them thoroughly and answered their questions. They were reminded that any information they provided would remain anonymous and would be used only for the purpose of this research project. Their right to withdraw at any time was re-stated.

Round 1 (R1) interviews took place in October / November 2012 in primary schools and round two (R2) one year later in the secondary schools (Appendix 2) to which the same 18 students had transferred.

The interviews lasted between 15 and 20 minutes in each of the two rounds of data collection. All interview data were recorded and transcribed. The names of all focal pupils were removed and replaced with numbers (see Appendix 2).

Analysis of the Data

The interview transcriptions were read through a number of times leading to the identification of themes (Wilson, 2009). Further data trawls led to the creation of a coding framework (Bryman, 2008; Heigham and Croker, 2009). MAXQDA (2010) was employed to facilitate organisation of categories and identification of relevant evidence.

The data relating to 'ideal self' and 'ought-to self' were closely examined to ascertain whether students' responses might provide evidence of possible selves. To facilitate detailed interrogation of these data, positivist answers (Punch, 2009) which could be reduced to 'yes' / 'no', were entered into SPSS and tested (McNemar-Bowker test) to identify any changes in a) students' views in the interim one year period between the first and second interview, b) their possible selves and c) differences relating to gender. Two academic colleagues were enlisted

to blind-check the judgements made by the research team. In the case of only one student was there disagreement between colleagues in relation to what the data were telling us.

Findings

Pupils' reported Experience of (P)MFL

Across the primary schools in the sample, French and German were taught: 11/18 of the pupils took French; 4/18 German; 3/18 French and German. Those taking French were taught by their class teacher who had French competence (5/11) or by a teacher from the local secondary school (3/11) or by a foreign languages assistant (3/11). Those taking German were taught by a teacher from the local secondary school. Following the move to secondary school, 15 of the 18 pupils continued with at least one of the languages learnt at primary school.

All of the sample primary schools had timetabled MFL allocation each week: 4/5 one lesson a week of one hour's duration for each language taught; 1/5 one lesson @ 45 minutes.

Lessons in the primary school were reported to include games, quizzes, DVDs and songs. In one school, pupils had the opportunity to cook and taste French food.

Primary pupils reported variability across schools in teachers' use of the target language**.** Where teachers from local secondary schools taught the lesson substantially more French/German was used than was the case when the class teacher was in charge. Having a teacher who was a specialist languages teacher was seen as significant (Nikolov and Djigunović, 2006):

> Yes, they are a lot better [*ie MFL in secondary school*] because the teachers are better at teaching them….and the teachers are like they've been trained properly to teach that exact language. (12, R2)

None of the primary school pupils gave any impression of awareness of their MFL attainment level or of progress they had made. They had not taken any form of MFL assessment on which this might be based. Feedback was limited to oral praise for individual or whole-class contributions in lessons:

> No, we don't really know how we're doing because Mr C sometimes says that we're doing well and that was really good. But we don't get reports or anything on how our German is doing. (12, R1).

In terms of gaining familiarity with the secondary schools they would be attending , the primary school pupils attended Open Evenings. Taster activities were offered in science and food technology. No MFL-specific experiences were provided.

Having made the transition to secondary schools, interviewees had not had any experiences which might suggest that liaison had taken place between the two learning contexts in preparation for transition. Sixteen of the 18 focal pupils reported starting MFL afresh, an approach which they seemed to understand and appreciate:

> No, she's kind of started us all again because she obviously didn't teach some people in their primary schools and they aren't as progressed as some of the other people in our form. (9, R2)

Focal pupils report enjoying language learning at both primary and secondary school (contrary to the findings of Carreira (2006) in Japan). Girls tended to be more enthusiastic and positive than boys. The pupils interviewed in primary school 4 were markedly less enthusiastic than in the other schools. Various factors contributed to this. Two pupils' (4 and 12) indifference mirrored that of their parents, it seems. They also reported their teacher's low level competence: 'She's not very good' (4, R1). This replicated the findings of other studies (see Lamb, 2017; Nikolov and Djigunović, 2006) that the teacher plays a major role in shaping pupils' attitudes. In secondary school low motivation related to subject difficulty: 'I find it quite complicated to learn because some of the words there are feminine and masculine and ….. I just get mixed up and it's just hard' (4, R2).

Sense of progress was also a factor impacting on pupils' perception of MFL at primary school. They reported a certain frustration at limited progress which tainted their positivity: 'We don't do much. We only do a little bit. We've only learned how to say our names and things' (12, R1). They reported having no awareness of their attainment.

At secondary school their perception of MFL seemed more positive, certainly in the case of 16/18 interviewees. They judged secondary school language learning to more serious and this was a good thing. There was more emphasis on 'more challenging stuff' (9, R2), writing and using textbooks: 'We don't have to sing cheesy songs' (11, R2). Pupils

appreciated the feeling of making progress: 'Here we've learnt quite a lot and we get a lot more done in one lesson' (1, R2).

In summary, provision of MFL in focal primary schools was generally consistent but very limited. Time allocated compared unfavourably with most other European countries (European Commission, 2012). The majority of pupils saw the point of learning foreign languages and enjoyed the learning experience both at primary and secondary school. Pupils reported on two factors which stood out as impacting negatively on their motivation: the foreign language competence of their teacher; their feeling of making progress (more the case as they reflected on the primary than the secondary school experience). There is also evidence to suggest that family and friends influence pupils' attitudinal perspectives on languages and their importance.

Year 6 and Year 7 Pupils' Responses to Prompts relating to Ideal Self

It was hypothesised that pupils' positive view of languages and an appreciation of their importance might help shape a perception of ideal self, that is, the ideal image they had of themselves for as future language users. (See appendix 3.)

Most pupils saw the point of learning foreign languages and their place as part of 'a good education'. They appreciated its vocational value. Pupil 15 believed it would be useful as he travelled the world pursuing his career as an engineer. Pupil 13 would need it to discuss business deals in German and France. Those without a vision of a career including travel struggled to see the relevance of MFL: 'If you have don't have contact or with anyone in France, then there isn't much point' (4, R1). The three students from Poland, Iraq and

Zimbabwe were in no doubt as to MFL importance, given that they had had to learn English to cope with the challenge of their move to the UK.

Most students (12/18 in primary; 16/18 in secondary) felt that those with a foreign language were held in higher regard in society than those without (P.12) and had enhanced life-chances in the future (P.13) (13/18 in primary; 14/18 in secondary): 'Our life skills teacher told us that you usually can't get into a good university without having a language' (1, R2).

Just over half secondary pupils (10/18) could imagine themselves living and working in the target language country (P.1). The others saw it as a challenge too far: 'Because I couldn't imagine speaking French all of the time' (1, R2).

An appreciation of a foreign language as something of importance seemed to increase over the year. Eight (n=18) primary students in the sample had ambitions to be a fluent speaker of the foreign language (P.5) and 12 imagined themselves as having French friends in the future (P.4). These numbers increased to 13/18 and 13/18 respectively in the secondary school. Students responded with particular enthusiasm to the prompt relating to texting, writing emails and exploiting other forms of written on-line communications in the foreign language (P.6).

The students identified a wide range of jobs (P.2) which they were interested in doing in the future, from vets (the most popular choice: 5/18) to teachers, actors and lego designer, amongst others. There were few students (4/18) who changed their minds between the two interviews. The choice of occupation had some bearing on their perceived need of foreign language competence. One boy (16), for example, wanted to join the navy and so thought competence in one or more foreign languages would be useful.

There was a suggestion that family links with the target language country might have had a positive bearing on students' appreciation of the usefulness of that language (Djigunović, 2012). One interviewee commented that he had family contacts in Germany and was in email communication with them: 'I've got a German penpal. It's my mother's Godson, so I write to him. He's 8 but he lives in Germany so he speaks fluent German, so I like writing to him to test out my German stuff' (9, R1). His mother thought that it was important to speak a foreign language and so did he.

When the McNemar-Bowker test was applied, no significant differences between students' answers in the two rounds of interviews were identified. There was also little evidence to suggest differences between genders.

Year 6 and Year 7 Pupils' Responses to Prompts relating to Ought-to Self

The students' responses to prompt 8, 'Do you learn French/German because you have to?' in rounds 1 and 2 of the interview are difficult to interpret (Appendix 4). Given that enjoyment of languages was common across primary and secondary school, one might have expected most pupils to confirm that they did not learn the foreign language because they had to but rather because they wanted to. This, however, was not the case. This may be the result of the framing of the prompt. Even those respondents who were keen to learn the foreign language might have responded in the affirmative, given that it appeared on their timetable and so had to be taken. This lack of clarity was not identified in the pilot.

Students clearly perceived that their parents attached importance to foreign language competence (P.9 and 10) and felt supported by them in their learning. In the secondary school this was the case for 15/18 respondents. Pupil 16 was positively influenced by his mother's

and grandfather's French competence. Whether students' recognition of their parents' positive perception of language learning translated into a feeling of pressure to learn is not identifiable from the data. Two students who did not feel supported, simply reiterated the parental indifference shared earlier in the interview: 'They don't care' (4, R2).

Although no statistical differences could be identified, across the 'ought-to self' prompts, girls tended to respond in the affirmative (indicating they may belong to the 'ought-to self' category) more than boys. Whether this reflects that girls' awareness of external pressures, for example from parents, was greater than that of boys remains open to question

At the end of the two rounds of data collection, interviewees' responses were analysed firstly to identify a 'self' and then in relation to Dörnyei's (2015) nine conditions for a stable vision. In the first analysis, most students had a combination of an ideal and and ought-to self, rather than one or the other (Appendix 5). Four students identified as potentially having an ideal self in round one (admittedly two of these were 'borderline ideal'), seemed to change over the course of the year. One made a considerable swing from ideal to ought-to; the others from ideal to both. One can only speculate whether this may have been the result of rational reflection born of the greater maturity that one year might bring at this age. No significant differences between female and male respondents can be identified except in relation to the number of females judged to have an ought-to self in round 1.

When Dörnyei's (2015) nine conditions for a stable vision of self were considered, none could be judged to have been met. There was no identifiable 'future self-image'which was 'elaborate and vivid', for example; no 'relevant and effective procedural strategy'; no 'feared possible self' (p9-10).

Discussion

The 10-12 year olds' answers raise important themes in relation to transition and how this experience influences their motivation in relation to language learning: communication and collaboration; attainment; enjoyment and perception of (P)MFL; continuity. Each of these themes is examined below.

The pupils' responses provided little evidence to suggest much, if any, **communication and collaboration** between primary and secondary schools. When the pupils moved to secondary school, there appeared to be little recognition of what they had learnt and attained in primary. Some pupils simply started again (also the case in Hungary: Nikolov, 2001); others, whilst not starting from scratch, spent some time going over old ground before moving onto the new. Jones et al. (2017) stress the importance of dialogue in bringing important benefits for the primary and secondary schools and the pupils transitioning. Secondary schools would know the teaching content and methods on which they are building. The primary schools would know the schemes of work for which their pupils need to be prepared. The primary schools would be aware of what it is the secondary schools need to know about groups of pupils and individuals especially in terms of attainment; what comes across as a certain lack of trust harboured by secondary schools in relation to the work done in primaries (Tinsley and Board, 2016) is less likely to exist, thus lessening the need for a fresh start for pupils and/or an intensive programme of diagnostic tests in term 1 of the first year at secondary school.

It is recognised that whilst such dialogue is highly desirable, makes perfect sense and ought to be taken for granted, it is not logistically straightforward. It is difficult for teachers to be released from their duties, including after-school meetings, to operationalise the communication, collaboration and exchange of information referred to above.

Central to the information exchanged should be data and commentary relating to **attainment**. Rather than obviating assessment because of fear of negative impact on pupils' motivation (Djigunović, 2012), primary teachers should exploit a programme of appropriately timed 'quizzes' which might then feed into an MFL portfolio for each individual which can then be taken into secondary school. *The Languages Ladder* (Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007) and *The European Languages Portfolio* (ELP) (Council of Europe, 2011) could inform such an approach. This would also have the advantage of not only furnishing the secondary school with what it needs to know but would also, as the Year 6 pupils' answers suggest, enhance pupils' **enjoyment and perception of PMFL**. They want to feel that they are progressing; they want to know what they have achieved (Carreira, 2012; Djigunović, 2012).

Ten year olds want, need and expect their teachers to be appropriately trained and to possess the required MFL competence. The current model existing in many primary schools, where languages are taught by a visiting secondary school teacher or a foreign language assistant or their current class teacher with only limited MFL competence, is not producing the outcomes needed. This is an issue which goes beyond the boundaries of schools, however, into the sphere of responsibility of policy-makers. If PMFL is worth doing, and surely it is, then appropriate resources have to be invested to support it. Teachers need training and PMFL needs appropriate timetable space.

The second key factor suggested by pupils' responses in relation to positive perception and motivation to learn languages is family. Family is a factor impacting on both transition and self (see below). Those few interviewees who responded negatively to the attitudinal, perception and motivation prompts, were those who felt that their parents were indifferent to their learning of a foreign language. Those who came across as very positive were those with family links with the target language country.

The product of the addressing of the above issues is **continuity** of MFL experience between primary and secondary school. Jones et al. (2017) agree that communication, collaboration, continuity and the related issues referred to above are key to motivation to learn: 'it is vital to ensure that the initial interest in and enjoyment of primary MFL is maintained, and that primary and secondary teachers work together to ensure that learning is sequential and coherent' (p.145). Currently continuity is far from guaranteed (see Nikolov and Djigunović, 2006). This leads to an experience of learning which is stop-start.

The research question relating to Dörnyei's (2005) 'L2 motivational self system' and whether it might apply to students in the 10-12 age range remains unanswered. What is striking from the data is the paucity of information provided by the interviewees. The majority of answers are brief ('yes'; 'no'; 'maybe'; see also Djigunović, 2012), in spite of the interviewer's further prompting, re-wording and exemplification. Responses give no indication of any 'elaborate and vivid' (Dörnyei, 2015, 9) vision of a future self but rather more of a focus on the here and now. There is no evidence to suggest that any of Dörnyei's nine conditions (2015) for the identification of an ideal self with motivating influence have been met. The answers they provide do not give an impression of an image of their future selves, of a concrete plan to get to where they want to be, of determination to attain the ideal self.

To expect a child aged 10-12 to have a vision of a future self demands a particular vision of 'future'. An adult may well be capable of looking 5 or 10 years ahead and envisioning an L2 self for that time. 'Future' may well mean something different for a child: the next day; the next play-break; the next hour. This diffence in 'future selves' in terms of distance is supported by Oyserman & James (2011). Had pupils been asked about the more proximal, meaningful and realistic future, then their responses may have been more indicative of a vision of self striving to bridge the gap between their current self and a future self, albeit

a short-term future (Kivetz & Tyler 2007). For them the future starts now. Anything beyond this is vague, too hard to see and lacking in relevance.

The pupils appreciated the importance of foreign language competence for a good education and a good job. As Lamb (2013) found in his study of secondary students (slightly older than the students in this sample) in Indonesia, one could not be sure that the career intentions articulated by the respondents (e.g. in the case of this research: lego designer; vet) were based on realistic, envisioned ambitions or the stuff of fantasy.

Zentner and Renaud (2007) identify support from home as playing an important role in children's perceptions of their future selves. As was also identified in the questions related to transition, the majority of students felt positively supported by their parents in their language learning; only two felt this not to be the case and had negative perceptions of languages, possibly because of this. It comes as no surprise that neither of these students provided any indicators suggesting a positive language learning self.

Beyond parents, a few students enjoyed contact with friends and relations in the target language country and this had a positive impact on their attitude to language learning. In relation to how the influence of parents, family, friends and the 'milieu' (Gardner, 1985) might contribute to the interviewees' ought-to self in particular, pupil responses do not offer a clear picture. Dörnyei, Csizèr and Németh (2006) also struggled to find a significant ought-to factor in Hungarian students' motivation.

In the absence of any identifiable vision of an ideal self or evidence of an ought-to self, 10-12 year olds will not have any perception of a gap they have to bridge between their current self and the self they may wish to become. As a result, motivational drive based on this is absent. Dörnyei's (2005) 'L2 motivational self system', for this age-range, certainly in this research context, does not apply.

Perhaps the focus on the ideal and ought-to self was inappropriate. The third dimension of Dörnyei's (2005) 'L2 motivational self system' the 'language learning experience', might have warranted more detailed investigation. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) report on the impact of the classroom environment on learners' motivation. Lamb (2017) suggests that it is more likely to be this 'immediate classroom practice' (p.334) and the experience it provides that will influence pre- and early adolescent learning behaviour than an as yet unstable, ill-formed perception of self. This ties in with the argument above in relation to the future, for this age group, starting now. Ten to twelve years olds are more likely to be motivated by the prospect of fairly immediate rather than delayed gratification.

Conclusion

Transition and its impact on motivation remains an area of concern. Communication and collaboration between primary and secondary schools are at the heart of improvement. Schools can do much to help themselves and therefore the pupils in transition but they need the support of policy-makers in the form of appropriate training and resourcing.

In relation to the applicability of Dörnyei's (2005) 'L2 motivational self system' to pupils in the transitional age range, I suggest the need for a much more focused, longitudinal (see Hessel, 2015; Enever, 2011), ethnographic approach, which would allow the triangulation of a range of data (Greig et al., 2012), including observational data and the involvement of teachers, parents (see Lamb, 2013) and friends, collected regularly and frequently over a period of time. One would be enabled to get closer to identifying changes in attitudinal and motivational perspectives as the demands of learning, and learners' definition of 'future' alter and their priorities for that future develop in terms of qualifications, career and travel (Ortega & Iberri-Shea, 2005). This would allow clearer insights into whether

younger students can create future selves based on some sort of reality or whether this only comes later with adolescence (Harter, 2005).

Harter (2005) and Zenter and Renaud (2007) may well be right in thinking that only in adolescence are young learners capable of visualising an ideal self. However, a more sound judgement can only be made when appropriate data collection tools are combined to gain a more comprehensive picture giving potential access to evidence to support the view that young adolescents, all or possibly only some, may be capable of visualising a self relating to the more distant as opposed to the very short-term future. If this turns out to be the case, careful consideration will have to be given to the circumstances under which learning behaviour might be motivated.

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Appendix 1

Areas of discussion for the semi-structured interview

The Primary prompts

The headings in italics reflect the main area of discussion. The bullet points are possible stimuli.

Languages provision; lesson content

- Which foreign language are you learning in school?
- How often do you have French/German lessons?
- How long does each lesson last?

Teaching of MFL:

- Who teaches these lessons?
- Do you ever have a teacher from the local secondary school?
- Is it always the same one?
- Do this teacher and your usual teacher ever teach together?
- Describe a normal French/German lesson.
- Does the teacher always speak French/German?
- Do you ever do tests?

Assessment; attainment; recording:

- Do you know how well you are progressing in French/German?
- How do you know?
- Have you ever heard of the Languages Ladder?
- Have you ever heard of the European Language Portfolio?

Preparation for transfer to secondary school:

- Have you visited the secondary school you will be attending in Year 7?
- Did you meet any of the MFL teachers?
- What did they tell you about what you might experience in Year 7?
- Did they ask you about what you are doing at primary school?
- Did you attend a taster French/German lesson?
- Was it different from what you do in primary school?

Likes and dislikes re: MFL

- Are you enjoying your French/German lessons?
- What do you like about them?
- What do you dislike about them?
- Do you look forward to French/German lessons?
- Would you like to continue with French/German in future years at this school? Why / Why not?

The Secondary prompts

Language/s provision at secondary school – smooth transition from primary school?

- What language are you learning at secondary school?
- Is this the same language that you were learning at Primary School?
- Are there different sets for different languages?
- Are sets arranged for other reasons? (Don't want to use 'different levels of ability.)
- How are French/German lessons different in secondary school?
- Have lessons continued from where you left off at primary school?
- Do you think that your French/German teacher knows what you did at primary school and has taken this into consideration in her/his teaching?
- What makes you think this?

Perception of teacher's awareness of attainment at primary school? Assessment, recording and reporting at secondary school?

- Do you think that your French/German teacher knew how well you were doing in French/German at Primary School?
- What makes you think this?
- Do you do tests in French/German lessons?
- Are these similar to tests you may have taken at Primary School?

Likes; dislikes; motivation at secondary school:

- Are you enjoying your French/German lessons?
- What do you like about them?
- What do you dislike about them?

- Are you enjoying them just as much / more / less than you did at Primary School?
- Do you look forward to French/German lessons?
- Would you like to continue with French/German in future years at this school? Why / Why not?

Dörnyei's self-system

Initial prompts (P) relating to Ideal MFL self

P1 Can you imagine yourself living and working abroad some day?

P2 What job would you like to do in the future?

P3 When you think of your future job, do you imagine yourself using French/German?

P4 Can you imagine yourself having French/German friends?

P5 Can you imagine yourself speaking French/German as if you were a native speaker of that language?

P6 Do you imagine yourself writing French/German texts, emails etc easily?

P7 Do you think you will need French/German or another foreign language for your future?

Initial prompts (P) relating to Ought-to MFL self

P8 Are you learning French/German because you have to?

P9 Are you learning French/German because your parents think that it is mportant?

P10 If you didn't learn French/German, would your parents be disappointed?

P11 Should educated people be able to speak a foreign language?

P12 Will other people respect you more if you speak a foreign language?

P13 Will you be disadvantaged in the future, if you don't have a foreign language?

Appendix 2

The sample schools.

Primary Schools

	Description	**Numerical ID of students interviewed**
1	Community school, situated in well-off commuter village between a small market town and a city. 87 students.	1, 8, 9, 15
2	Inner-city; voluntary aided; mixed ethnicity including Gypsy Roma; 210 students.	2, 11, 18
3	Church of England school; modern and well equipped; in well-off suburb of city; 211 students.	6, 7, 13, 17
4	Small community school; less well off of two primary schools in small market town; located in social housing area; 125 students.	4, 12, 16
5	Community school; rural location within communiting distance of a city. 156 pupils	3, 5, 10, 14,

Secondary Schools

	Description	**Numerical ID of students interviewed**
6	High performing comprehensive; on the edge of the city; 1360 students.	2, 5, 10, 18
7	Rural location outside small market town; 1585 students.	1, 4, 8, 9, 11, 12, 15, 16
8	Large catholic high school; high performing; specialises in languages and performing arts; wide	3, 6, 14

	intake; 1235 students.	
9	Small selective grammar school in average sized market town; 854 students.	7, 13, 17

Appendix 3.

Findings related to 'ideal self' attributes – all students

	Ideal self related prompts (P)	**Primary**	**Secondary**
P1	Can you imagine yourself living and working abroad some day?	Yes 7 No 5	Yes 10 No 3
P2	What job would you like to do in the future?	Various	Various
P3	When you think of your future job, do you imagine yourself using French/German?	Yes 9 No 3	Yes 10 No 6
P4	Can you imagine yourself having French/German friends?	Yes 12 No 1	Yes 13 No 2
P5	Can you imagine yourself speaking French/German as if you were a native speaker of that language?	Yes 8 No 7	Yes 13 No 2
P6	Do you imagine yourself writing French/German texts, emails etc easily?	Yes 14 No 3	Yes 13 No 2
P7	Do you think you will need French/German or another foreign language for your future?	Yes 13 No 2	Yes 10 No 4

Appendix 4.

Finding related to 'ought-to self' attributes – all students

	Prompts (P)	**Primary**	**Secondary**
P8	Are you learning French/German because you have to?	Yes 4 No 14	Yes 8 No 6
P9	Are you learning French/German because your parents and friends think it is important?	Yes 10 No 7	Yes 16 No 1
P10	If you didn't learn French/German, would your parents would be disappointed?	Yes 14 No 4	Yes 17 No 1
P11	Should educated people be able to speak a foreign language?	Yes 15 No 3	Yes 16 No 1
P12	Will other people respect you more if you can speak a foreign language?	Yes 12 No 5	Yes 16 No 0
P13	Will you be disadvantaged in the future if you don't have a foreign language?	Yes 13 No 3	Yes 14 No 1

Appendix 5

		Ideal Self		Ought-to Self				
Student ID	Sex	Round 1 of interviews – yes scores (n=6)	Round 2 of interviews – yes scores (n=6)	Round 1 of interviews – yes scores (n=6)	Round 2 of interviews – yes scores (n=6)	Number of words spoken. Round 1 and 2	Judgement after Round 1	Judgement after Round 2
1	F	1	4	5	5	2812	Ought-to	Ought-to *More ideal over 2 rounds. Consistently ought-to*
2	F	4	4	5	5	2142	Both	Both
3	M	4	3	2	5	1882	Bordeline ideal	Ought-to *Swing over the two rounds*
4	F	5	1	0	6	1614	Ideal - *clearly*	Both – *although massive swing to Ought-to in R2*
5	F	3	3	4	5	2158	Both - *slight leaning towards ought to*	Both – *slight leaning towards ought to*
6	F	3	1	4	5	1768	Both	Both – *less ideal and more ought-to over the two rounds*
7	F	3	5	5	6	1812	Borderline ought-to	Both
8	M	1	4	5	4	2088	Ought-to - *clearly*	Both
9	M	6	5	5	5	2492	Both – *seems to say*	Both –*seems to say yes to*

							yes to everything	*everything*
10	M	5	6	5	5	2216	Both – *seems to say yes to everything*	Both – *seems to say yes to everything*
11	F	1	1	6	6	2682	Ought-to – *very!*	Ought-to – *very!*
12	M	3	5	2	4	1968	Both	Both
13	F	2	4	6	5	1990	Ought-to	More of a dev to both over the two rounds
14	F	5	6	3	5	1994	Borderline - ideal	Both
15	F	3	3	1	4	2556	Neither	Both
16	M	5	6	2	4	2044	Ideal	Both – *slightly more ideal*
17	F	4	6	4	5	1926	Both	Both
18	M	4	2	4	4	2126	Both	Both – *slightly more ought-to*