**In the Shadow of Global English?**

**Comparing Language Learner Motivation in Germany and the United Kingdom**

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**Introduction**

David Wagner grew up in Germany and is the manager of Huddersfield Town Football Club. He has four German players in his squad. He speaks to them in English when in the company of the other English players. Would an English manager working in Germany speak in German to his English players? Probably not. According to the Eurobarometer survey (European Commission, 2012) 39% of Britons are able to hold a conversation in a language other than English - in Germany, 60% can. Furthermore, 86% of Germans agree that everybody should be able to speak another language, compared with 72% in the UK (all data: European Commission, 2012). Monolingual speakers of English may not perceive the need to gain competence in another language (Lanvers, 2017a). For them, encounters with speakers of other languages using English as a *lingua franca* confirm their perception that English is all they need.

In Germany, foreign languages (FLs) are a core subject. The legal requirements for teaching FLs are often spelt out for specific target languages. Progression in education is hampered without good grades in languages (Ellis, Gogolin & Clyne, 2010). Proficiency in at least two languages is needed for anyone aiming for a University-entry qualification (*Abitur*). As a result, all university applicants have basic competencies in two FLs.

Why, then, compare learner motivation in countries with such different starting conditions, language learning traditions and policies? In both countries, the global dominance of English might leave students increasingly demotivated to learn any other languages. In Britain, this might lead to progressive monolingualism, and in Germany, to ‘foreign language monolingualism’(‘*Fremdsprachenmonolingualism*’, Quetz, 2010). Consequently, comparing learner motivation in these different contexts might help us to better understand motivation for learning *languages other than English* (LOTE; c.f., Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017).

In Europe, English is perceived to be the most desirable FL by far. The Eurobarometer survey (European Commission, 2012) reports that 67% of EU citizens agree that English is the most useful language to learn. Seventy-nine per cent of Europeans would choose English as the language for their child to learn. Across Europe, 97% of school students learn English (Eurydice, 2017). The perceived value of English as economic, social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) has been well described in recent works investigating ecological and political contexts of language learning (e.g. Pavlenko & Norton, 2007; van Lier, 2006). The higher desirability of English compared to other languages, may generate bottom-up dynamics not necessarily intended by official language policy. For instance, when FLs were made optional from age 14 onwards in England in 2004, many students chose to discontinue FLs. It remains uncertain to what extent Brexit might change future language requirements of the UK, but it is generally thought that the desirability of skills in other world languages (Chinese, Arabic, Spanish) might increase (Kelly, 2018). In Germany, a similar bottom-up trend can be observed, albeit for English only. French border regions traditionally offer French as first FL, often against parental wishes. In 2007 parents successfully sued the *Land* (region with some administrative autonomy) for the right of their child to learn English as first FL (Quetz, 2010). It is unlikely that Brexit will alter the desirability of English as FL in Germany, as English is likely to remain an important *lingua franca* in a post-Brexit EU (Ginsburgh, Moreno Ternero & Weber, 2017; Modiano, 2017).

Despite different foundations for language education policy, FL trends in both countries are affected by the pervasive influences of English as a *lingua franca*, including the impact on the motivation to learn LOTE and (students’ and parents’) perceptions of the value of language skills. This chapter will present research evidence on FL learner motivation from a social perspective, including the effects of English as a *lingua franca* and educational contexts, and therefore takes a necessarily broad angle. The next section reviews language policies and uptake trends in both countries, followed by a report on empirical studies on learner motivation. The conclusion discusses problems relating to LOTE of relevance beyond the borders of these two countries, and offers some novel answers to the motivational and other challenges for learning LOTE generally.

**Language Policy and Language Uptake Trends in Germany and the UK**

Just as education policies differ between the four nations which make up the UK (England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland), so do the policies of the 16 German *Lȁnder*.

In England, schools are required to teach a FL to pupils aged 7-11 in Primary school and aged 11-14 in Secondary school. The number of hours allocated to languages is not stipulated. In Wales, there is no statutory requirement for the teaching of a FL at Primary school. Welsh is compulsory in the first three years of Secondary school and a FL is encouraged. The aim of the Welsh Government is to achieve ‘Bilingualism (i.e. English and Welsh) plus 1’ by 2020 (Welsh Government, 2015). Scotland is committed to the European Union’s ‘1+2 model’, i.e. aiming for two FLs in addition to their mother tongue, by 2020. In Northern Ireland, there is no statutory requirement to teach a FL in Primary schools; a FL is statutory only at lower Secondary school level.

England experienced a brief phase of high FL learner engagement for students aged 11-16; from 1998 to 2004 languages were compulsory for students in this phase of education. In 2004 FLs were made optional for students aged 14+ and the number of students taking a FL exam age 16 (GCSE) went into a steep decline, from 76% in 2002, to 25% in 2011 (Board & Tinsley, 2015; Tinsley & Han, 2012).

In 2014, the provision of languages in Primary schools was made statutory, and the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) was introduced. This qualification consists of five core subject areas, one of them a FL. Neither of these reforms have made much impact on languages uptake. Entries for A-level French have declined by a third, and numbers for German have nearly halved. The statistics for Spanish show modest growth, but not to the extent of making up for the shortfall in French and German (Tinsley & Board, 2016).

Beyond school, the numbers studying languages at university are also in decline. Entrants for modern FL degree courses fell by 16% between 2007/08 and 2013/14 (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2015). Since 1998 40% of university languages departments in the UK have closed (Lanvers, 2017b). Among adults, FL competencies in the UK are judged to be amongst the lowest in Europe (European Commission 2012a, 2012b).

The decline in languages uptake interacts with an ever-increasing social divide. Independent schools tend to teach more languages, to a greater percentage of their cohort, and for longer, than schools in the state sector. Within the state sector, students from economically disadvantaged background (measured by their entitlement to receive free school meals) are under-represented in FL study (Board & Tinsley, 2015). At Higher Education, this social divide is exacerbated further. Nearly a third of those studying languages at university come from independent schools (Tinsley, 2013).

The 16 German *Länder* have sovereignty over certain issues, such as education and culture. In addition, there is a national body overseeing the coordination of education policies, the *Ständige Konferenz der Kultusminister der Länder in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (KMK). In every *Land*, all pupils receive some tuition in English, and many learn two FLs. In Primary schools, languages are taught from year 1 or year 3, a second and third FL are introduced later.

At Primary level, English is the dominant FL but pupils in regions close to France are often offered French as first FL. Only 66% of *Länder* offer Primary FL from year 1, which This is below the EU average of 82% (Eurostat, 2015). Nearly all (95%) Primary school children who do receive FL teaching are taught English (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2010) and at Secondary level 87% of FL tuition is English (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2016).

After Primary school, most *Länder* offer a 3-tier system, with students attending different schools according to ability. The *Hauptschule* offers a first compulsory FL, a second is rarely offered. In the *Realschule*, a first FL is compulsory, and a second is often offered. In the *Gymnasium*, two FLs are compulsory. One FL must be taught from year 7 to 9 or 10, in all school types. In practice, nearly all schools teach a FL from year 5. Lessons must be a minimum of 3 x 45 minutes per week. A second FL is compulsory at *Gymnasien* (secondary schools for the more able students; roughly equivalent to the ‘grammar school’ in the UK). A third FL is always offered at *Gymnasien*, but compulsory only in specialist (e.g. humanistic) *Gymnasien*. Many *Länder* also have Comprehensive schools, which combine at least two of the above types. In all school types, FLs are a core subject. This means that, in order to be promoted to the next school year, a student must achieve a pass in their language(s). Thus, language tests (multiple assessments by teachers) constitute high stake exams, in all school forms.

As early as 1971 the KMK agreed on encouraging Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL; see Lasagabaster, this volume). Germany has rapidly increased CLIL provision over the last decades, first in *Gymnasien*, and now in other school forms, including Primary schools. The KMK acknowledges the dominance of English in CLIL but stresses the importance of developing variety in the offering (KMK, 2013). A recent overview of CLIL provision demonstrates that, despite strong English dominance, CLIL is offered in many languages. Geography and/or history are most frequently taught via the FL at Secondary level, and music, art and PE at Primary level (KMK, 2013). Students following a CLIL rather than a traditional FL pathway tend to outperform other learners in their language development; they show higher motivation (Abendroth-Timmer, 2007; Dallinger, Jonkmann, & Hollm, 2018), fulfil their language requirements and gain a further subject qualification. Thus, the popularity of CLIL in Germany is both due motivational benefits, enhanced learning outcomes, as well as pragmatic advantages. However, the ‘enhanced learning outcomes’ need to be interpreted with caution, as CLIL students tend to self-select from higher achieving and higher socioeconomic status (SES) background than those following traditional FL lessons; nevertheless, even when adjusting for these variables, slight differences in outcome remain (Dallinger, Jonkmann, & Hollm, 2018).

If all FLs stand ‘in the shadow of English’ (Dörnyei & Al‐Hoorie, 2017), which will always attract the highest incentives to both teach and learn, the question arises what incentives students in Anglophone countries -such as the UK- might have to study a FL. Judging by those who opt to learn languages today in the UK, competence in other languages is considered a desirable skill only by and for a minority of learners, most commonly those from advantaged backgrounds (Lanvers, 2017b). Rationales for FLs in the UK seem to be lacking direction (Pachler, 2007), despite ample evidence of the economic and societal benefits of improving language skills. Poor language skills are estimated by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, to cost the UK economy in excess of £48 billion (Foreman-Peck, 2007). According to the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (2014), employers said that they found it difficult to fill 17% of their vacancies because of lack of FL competence.

By contrast, in Germany, the KMK puts forward clear political rationales for FLs, and anchors language education and plurilingualism into both education for European citizenship and integration (KMK, 2013), and the principles of peace and international concord (Council of Europe (2007). These rationales are unequivocally echoed by academics and language pedagogues (e.g. Busse, 2017b; Jakisch, 2012). The KMK (2011:2) state the following four objectives of FL education:

* to deepen language competencies and multilingualism;
* to strengthen cultural diversity within Europe;
* to foster mobility and integration;
* to prepare for an increasingly internationally competitive economic environment.

Having described the stark politico-educational differences of the language learning in both countries, the next section discusses empirical studies on language learner motivation from each context.

**Motivation Studies in Germany and the UK**

The focus of FL motivation studies is rather different in the UK and in Germany - hardly surprising given the contextual differences outlined above. In UK studies, the focus tends to be on (de)motivation on the level of the individual learner and interventions to increase both motivation and uptake. FL motivation tends to be conceptualized as a learner characteristic applicable to all FLs, rather than relate to specific target languages (exceptions exist, e.g., Williams, Burden & Lanvers, 2002). German empirical studies on FL motivation, on the other hand, tend to conceptualize motivation as language-specific (Riemer, 2006). Overall, there are fewer studies on FL motivation in Germany, where there is more focus on methods, especially for Primary teaching and CLIL, learning outcomes, and computer-assisted language learning (see e.g., Finkbeiner, Olsen & Friedrich, 2013). Less attention afforded to motivation might be explained by FL policy: as language study is compulsory to a much greater extent than in the UK, there is little need to incentivise uptake via positive learner motivation.

In the UK, a recurrent theme is students’ low self-efficacy (Graham, 2003; Williams, Burden and Lanvers, 2002). Although this is generally felt to be more apparent at Secondary than Primary level, Courtney, Graham, Tonkyn and Marinis (2017) provide evidence to suggest that a significant minority of younger learners also hold negative views about their current and future language learning ability. Other studies report that in the early stages of language learning, up to the first year of Secondary school, learner attitudes tend to be positive, but deteriorate with age (Cable et al., 2010; Enever & Watts, 2009; Hunt, 2009). The transition phase from Primary to Secondary school is acknowledged as important for students’ motivation in FL (e.g., Courtney, 2014). When students enter Secondary school, a ‘sense of making progress’ is key to maintaining motivation (Chambers, 2016b; Erler & Macaro, 2011; Graham, Courtney, Tonkyn & Marinis, 2016), but Secondary schools tend to take little account of students’ Primary school FL experience (Bolster, Balandrier-Brown & Rea-Dickins, 2004; Chambers, 2016a, Fisher & Evans, 2009). This can lead to a lack of continuity in the FL learning experience and is often reported to have a demotivational effect on learners (Bolster, Balandrier-Brown & Rea-Dickins, 2004; Graham, Courtney, Tonkyn & Marinis, 2016). Others (e.g. Chambers, 2016a) report that students enjoy the more serious approach to work in Secondary schools, including being taught by specialist teachers, and receiving feedback based on regular assessment.

Student attitudes to FLs are influenced by numerous factors, including negativity towards target language countries at home and in the media. British parents are reported to be less supportive of FL learning than, for example, Dutch and German parents (Bartram, 2006); parents from poorer socio-economic backgrounds tend to show more negative attitudes to FLs than those from other social strata (Gayton, 2010, 2016). At the lower Secondary age, Chambers (1999) concludes that the ‘liking’ of the FL teacher is a major influence on whether FL learning is viewed positively.

Unstimulating learner experiences are reported by many (e.g., Chambers, 1999; Fisher & Evans, 2009). These may relate to inappropriate level of challenge, students’ lacking a feeling of progress being made and/or teachers’ focus on the examinations and ‘rehearsal’ for these (Gayton, 2010; Graham, 2003; Wingate, 2016). The responsibility for subsequent poor motivation might be laid at the door of teachers (e.g., Mole, 2003), a restrictive and poorly designed curriculum, syllabus and examinations, (e.g. Gruber & Tonkyn, 2017; Macaro, 2008), or outdated pedagogy (Pachler, 2007). Regardless of where to lay such blame, studies on Secondary schools report that students perceive languages to be irrelevant, boring and ‘for the brainy’ (e.g., Board & Tinsley, 2014; Graham, 2003), a reputation that leads students to discontinue the subject when they can (age 14) (Erler & Macaro, 2011; Graham, 2016, 2003).

An important factor contributing to the negative cycle of low self-efficacy and poor learner engagement is the reputation of FL as a ‘hard’ subject (McPake, Johnstone, Low & Lyall, 1999; Myers, 2016), and the severe marking of FL compared to other subjects. At GCSE, students score on average one full grade below results in other subjects (Myers, 2016). This influences not only students’ decisions to continue with languages or not, but also decisions at school management level on the place of languages on the timetable: schools are inclined to limit GCSE in FL to high achievers in order to boost their position in ‘league tables’.

Beyond the age of 16, the low number of students choosing a FL is a major concern. Reasons for this are competition with subjects deemed to be more ‘important’ (science, mathematics), the difficulty in scoring a high grade in comparison to other subjects, poor marketing of languages studies (Fisher, 2001), and poor self-efficacy (Graham, 2004; McPake, Johnstone, Low & Lyall, 1999).

Gender differences in motivation are also frequently reported, with girls showing higher motivation (e.g., Courtney, Graham, Tonkyn and Marinis, 2017; Williams, Burden and Lanvers, 2002) and performing better in examinations, with a widening gap for older Secondary students (Courtney, Graham, Tonkyn and Marinis, 2017).

School policy can make a difference to FL motivation. Parrish (2017) found that students are the least motivated in schools where students are hand-selected for FL study beyond the compulsory phase. Given the difficulty of obtaining good GCSE grades in FL, and the pressures of schools to deliver good results, many schools offer FL GCSE study only to the most academically successful. This FL policy was found to impact negatively on the motivation of all groups (both those selected for further study and not). Making languages compulsory, in comparison, yields motivational benefits. A ‘completely free choice for all students’ policy allows yields better motivational results than a selective policy.

The motivational problem for FLs is well established, but it is not be confused with a disregard for the subject. Several studies (e.g. Krüsemann, 2018; Lanvers, 2016b; Parrish, 2017) report that Secondary students are curious about other people, their languages and cultures. However, the negative learning experiences (see above) tend cancel out such positive stances. Against this backdrop, interventions with a focus on instrumental motivation (e.g., Taylor & Marsden, 2014) do not quite address the actual motivational dilemma the students experience.

Studies have also addressed the question of what factors motivated the (few) learners who then continue with a FL beyond the compulsory phase. As can be expected, these learners generally profess high intrinsic motivation (e.g., Busse & Walter, 2013; Stolte, 2015). Stolte (2015) reports that some students enjoy the academic rigour and ‘rarity’ value associated with FL study, and often persist despite demotivational influences at the level of the learner experience (poor material, poor match to learner ability and needs; see Busse & Walter, 2013). In fact, some, adult or university-level language learners, describe a type of motivation that goes beyond this intrinsic level: a motivation that thrives precisely on rejecting an environment that is perceived to counter the learner’s own openness to other languages and cultures. Such learners are motivated to react against an environment perceived as linguaphobe and see their FL engagement as a deliberate act of rebellion against the dominant culture and have thus been described as adopting a ‘rebellious stance’ (Ferrari, 2013; Lanvers, 2016a); this phenomenon is also observed in other Anglophone countries such as the U.S. (‘anti-ought’, see Thompson, 2017).

The UK has seen many initiatives aimed to counter the FL decline, such as the British Academy’s ‘Languages Matter’ (2009) and ‘Languages Matter More and More’ (2011). Such initiatives often highlighted the instrumental benefits of FLs (Taylor & Marsden, 2014); some schools adopted CLIL (Coyle, Hood & Marsh, 2010) to increase language learning. Lanvers, Hultgren & Gayton (2016) offered a different type of intervention which highlighted rather than downplayed English as *lingua franca*, in order to then raise awareness of the ubiquity of multilingualism globally. Motivational effects on FL were positive, suggesting that a focus on multilingual competencies and disadvantages of monolingualism, might offer novel ways to incentivise English FL learners.

The difference in motivation focus in German studies mirrors the difference in policy: in the UK requirements for FL study do not tend to specify a particular target language; most *Länder* in Germany prescribe (at least loosely) which languages are to be learned, and distinguish between FL1, FL2 and FL3 (Finkbeiner, Olsen & Friedrich, 2013). We recall that in Germany, *all* students are required to learn FLs, one reason why empirical motivational studies are relatively scarce compared to the UK. Even if learners might be less than optimally motivated, they cannot ‘vote with their feet’ and discontinue FL altogether, as they can in the UK , although they can, eventually, drop one FL.

There are studies suggesting that German students tend to *value* FLs more highly than in comparative (by GDP measures) European countries – not only higher than the UK, but also the Netherlands (Bartram, 2006). Overall, the literature reports that FL learner experiences are often far from optimal but despite this, students may still show relatively high intrinsic and/or extrinsic motivation(Finkbeiner, Olsen & Friedrich, 2013; Riemer & Schlak, 2004). German students also show great appetite for new pedagogical approaches and innovative practices (Finkbeiner, Olsen & Friedrich, 2013). There seems to be consensus across several studies (Busse, 2017a; Bartram, 2006; Chambers, 1999, 2016a; Meißner, Beckmann & Schröder-Sura, 2008) in two respects: most German students do not question the need to learn English and regard it as a life-skill, and students obliged to study two languages readily accept this obligation.

Nonetheless, the knock-on effect of the popularity of English on the motivation to study other FLs has been a concern for German pedagogues for some time. Meißner, Beckmann & Schröder-Sura’s (2008) study showed motivation scores to be higher for English than for French, a finding corroborated by Busse (2017a), and a British-German comparative study (Gruber & Tonkyn, 2017) found no significant motivational differences for learning French, among similar age and ability cohorts. Thus, for the German students, seemingly unexpected results might be due to the fact that French as FL is linked to low self-efficacy in several studies. Meißner, Beckmann & Schröder-Sura (2008) also found that older students often judged French not to be very useful, unlike English, whereas younger learners had more open attitudes to a variety of languages. Learners of French also suffer from low self-efficacy, which often increases with study time (Feuerhake, Fieseler, Ohntrup & Riemer, 2014). Furthermore, learner effort is observed to be greater for English as a result of higher motivation; nonetheless, learners generally supported the policy of *two* compulsory FLs, if this rule applied to them (Meißner, Beckmann & Schröder-Sura, 2008). Thus, evidence suggests that despite increasing preference of English over other FLs, many German students still tend to subscribe to the notion of developing plurilingual skills.

This attitude to FLs is of interest in the light of Parrish’s (2017) results, if (cautiously) applied to a German context. We recall that Parrish concluded that a comprehensive FL policy (i.e., same obligation for all) carries a motivational advantage. German students do not experience ‘hand-selection’ for FL study; they are enculturated into school systems where not one but two FL competencies are the norm. It remains unknown, however, if the trend observed by Meißner, Beckmann & Schröder-Sura (2008) towards a strong motivational advantage of English suggests a generational shift away from this plurilingual ideal - no cross-sectional or diachronic studies exist on the topic.

One might assume that, because English is compulsory for nearly all students in Germany, and because of its perceived high instrumental benefit, motivation for English is always higher, and more extrinsic than motivation for other FLs. No studies exist to test these hypotheses specifically; however, Riemer’s (2003) qualitative study showed that motivation for English is much more of a ‘mixed bag’: some students were demotivated as a result of poor learner experiences (‘boring lessons’); some resented the obligatory nature of the subject. Studies (Cronjäger, Doff & Schmidt, 2007; Riemer 2003) have demonstrated how outside school engagement with English encourages students with hitherto extrinsic motivation towards more intrinsic types of motivation, and lowers learner anxiety. Helmke, Schrader, Wagner, Nold & Schröder (2008) demonstrated a positive effect of foreign travel on motivation, in turn influencing learners’ academic self-image. Given the ubiquity of English, these motivational factors favour English as opposed to other languages.

The overall more positive disposition towards FLs in Germany, and relatively high motivation to learn English, can only partially be explained by the global English phenomenon. Instrumental rationales for learning English do not suffice to engender the positive learner self-images and positive learner attitudes that we observe. Despite a tendential preference for English as FL, students can also be motivated to learn other FLs, and evidence suggests that many learners support the policy of learning more than one FL. Thus, we observe that the rather broad, humanistic and political rationales for teaching FLs seem to echo with student attitudes on FL, which do not foreground instrumental benefits of FL skills. Indeed, Gnutzmann (2001) explicitly warns against using utilitarian rationales to motivate students, precisely because the highly treasured humanistic, political and social rationales for language study would be neglected. Overall, despite the high proportion of German students studying two FLs, and the FL diversity in the education system, we note that for German academics, safeguarding FL diversity is a greater concern than FL motivation (De Florio-Hansen, 2007; Sarter, 2002; Schröder, 2009; Wode, 2001).

The conclusion draws out some key differences between the two countries regarding FL motivation, policy and provision.

**Conclusion**

The ever-increasing dominance of English, forces us to conceptualize motivation for LOTE as ‘in the shadow of English’ (Dörnyei & Al‐Hoorie, 2017). Both countries share this experience: Germany has witnessed parents fighting for their children’s right to learn English as opposed to LOTE; the UK experiences an unprecedented crisis in learner motivation for any language (Lanvers, 2018). Both countries have reason to concern themselves with ways to avoid ‘pure monolingualism’ or ‘FL monolingualism’– a debate well advanced in Germany. Here, academics, language pedagogues and language policy providers share a vision of promoting *plurilingualism*, and education for European citizenship, embedded in European integration and European citizenship. Thus, Germany looks to stand reasonably good chances of achieving these visions and safeguarding FL diversity, given the percentage of multilingual learners (i.e., learning several FLs formally). Both policy and pedagogical directives effectively resist the social, cultural and economic pull of the one globally dominant language, English.

In the UK, FL motivation is characterized by social and educational stratification in several respects: students perceive *the* subject (i.e., all FLs) as difficult, hence only for the ‘nerdy’ and/or those with good grades. Students from a privileged background, who benefit from social and cultural capital (in a Bourdieuian sense) associated with openness towards other cultures, can be motivated more easily for FL study than others. This social divide is often reinforced by school policy: for instance, private schools (demanding high school fees, hence for the advantaged only) tend to make FLs compulsory for longer than state schools, and within state schools, many schools permit only high achieving students to continue language study (Lanvers, 2017b). Furthermore, the UK has concentrated its efforts to incentivise FL learning on utilitarian benefits- a focus which ignores the finding that self-efficacy and enjoyment (e.g. Stolte, 2015; Parrish, 2017) are important factors for deciding to continue with FL study. Besides, a focus on utilitarian types of motivation harbours a Global English- related danger: this motivation is easily undermined by all (be it students or parents) who embrace the ‘English is enough’ mindset, and see little reason to learn the languages of others who also speak English.

We have reports from both Germany and the UK demonstrating that students may experience less than optimal FL teaching; nonetheless, key differences remain. For instance, the complaint of ‘teaching to exams’ is prominent in the UK only, and the *d*emotivational impact of such negative learner experiences seems much higher than in Germany. In Germany, other types of motivation seem more robust in the face of negative learner experiences than in the UK: the possibility, and necessity, to achieve some FL competency is taken for granted by all, regardless of academic ability. Parrish’s (2017) results underline the importance of inclusive policies to maximise learner motivation: applied to the German context, they suggest that *all* learners are given the opportunity to develop positive self-efficacy. We recall that Germany has a high proportion of students studying more than one FL, in stark contrast to the very low number in the UK (Eurydice, 2017[[1]](#footnote-1)). FL motivation for German students is reported as relatively high, and, unlike in the UK, not associated with (perceived) social or cultural capital, only for the very ‘clever’, or socially advantaged. The expectation is that most students gain FL competency in two FLs, and this expectation leads students to see FL competency as a desirable norm to achieve. There is also indirect evidence that more challenging materials, less chunk learning and less ‘teaching to the exam’ in Germany might incentivise learners more than in the UK (Gruber & Tonkyn, 2017). In this manner, language policy, self-efficacy, and a teaching context that offers more experiences of ‘making progress’, all contribute to a virtuous learner circle.

What could the UK take home from this to address their language learning crisis? Brexit notwithstanding, the demand for skills in European languages is likely to continue to outstrip that of supply (Kelly, 2018). Scotland, for one, having decoupled linguistic educational goals from the Brexit agenda, is pursuing a vision of plurilingual education, and demonstrates that a range of visions and rationales for FLs remain accessible, regardless of EU membership.

One aim of this chapter was to investigate relations between global English and FL motivation in both countries. One outcome deserves further attention. Future UK efforts to incentivise learners might benefit from consideration of the fact that, in Germany, the (overall strong) motivation to learn English is not linear to the perceived instrumental benefit of this language. There is some empirical evidence that increased motivation for English coincides with demotivation for other FLs, notably French; however, there is sufficient evidence to conclude that this is a widespread trend, related to other languages as well, nor that German students prefer to become ‘foreign language monolinguals’. In fact, evidence suggests that high motivation for several FLs simultaneously is possible. Variables of the level of learner experience (lessons, teacher) and individual differences are important factors moderating such relations, but the comprehensive and inclusive nature of FL provision ensures that learners can access positive future visions as FL users.

In contrast, in the UK, many studies point to the fact that students are curious about languages in general, but that poor learner experiences lead to demotivation, leaving them unable to imagine using their FL in practice in the future (Lanvers, 2016b). A majority of students have this curiosity stifled through uninspiring and exam-focused experiences at the classroom level. Teachers and school managers, for their part, are driven to such delivery in order to survive in the competitive world of school league tables, and adopt selective FL policies that further demotivate learners.

This chapter has underlined the interwoven nature of FL policy at school and national level, education policy, societal attitudes to languages, and learner motivation. In the current UK education system, learner motivation tends to flourish only in small pockets of elite education (whether measured by student socio-economic status, or school type). Only policy-driven, concerted efforts to address the above-described systemic disadvantages of FLs could hope to change the motivation and learner experiences of more students. Germany has provided one pathway, of several possible, which could ensure that FL motivation for *all* FLs remains high despite global English. The German example suggests that three conditions for this pathway are a minimal requirement: i) making FL education inclusive; ii) making FL success high-stakes within the education system; iii) a shared understanding of the societal value of FLs. These conditions might yet not be sufficient to safeguard healthy motivation for languages other than English, as the tendential outcomes comparing motivation for different FLs suggest (Busse, 2017a): further (policy-induced) protection of LOTE might bring about the desired motivational attitudes towards LOTE.

It is not totally inconceivable that, in a caustic paradox, Brexit itself might contribute to a shift in the perceived value of languages in the UK and beyond (see e.g., Bolton & Davis, 2017), as the country may need to look further afield than Europe for new trading partners, including threshold countries and economies, countries with much lower English proficiency in the general population than in those trading partner countries used hitherto. When that moment comes, the UK, and other Anglophone countries, might recall the words of the former German Chancellor Willy Brandt: *If I’m buying, dann müssen Sie Deutsch sprechen![then you have to speak German].* - i.e., you must use the language of the people you are selling to.

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1. Brexit notwithstanding, the European Commission data offer the most comprehensive, reliable and up to data statistics on language learning in the two countries. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)