

Motivation in a French L2 context: Teacher motivational practices and student attitudes in relation to proficiency ———

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Abstract

Adhering to Dörnyei's Extended Motivational Framework, this study investigates the motivation of a fully representative sample of 1650 Grade 8 students learning French in Flanders. It also considers their teachers' motivational practices, and multilevel regression analyses identify correlations with the students' standardized listening, reading and writing scores.

The students' motivation appears to be influenced by a national as well as a global identity. As Belgian citizens, the students have high levels of instrumental motivation related to finding a job, and they want to be good at French given the proximity of a French-speaking community. Both characteristics are positively related to proficiency.

As a world citizen, however, the students prefer everything English. Enjoyment of French media also correlates with French proficiency, but in that respect, many students score low. The study further revealed rather high anxiety levels and low self-efficacy beliefs, which could be improved with teachers communicating more clearly about their expectations. Writing turns out to be the skill that can be influenced the most by motivational class practices. However, teacher reports of these practices are often more positive than student reports. It therefore seems imperative that students become more involved in and aware of their own learning process.

Keywords: French L2; SLA; learner motivation; teaching practices; secondary education

Resumé

Le présente article prend comme point de départ le modèle motivationnel proposé par Dörnyei (« Extended Motivational Framework »). Il porte sur la motivation d'un échantillon entièrement représentatif de 1650 élèves de deuxième année de l'enseignement secondaire (grade 8) apprenant le français en Flandre, tout en abordant aussi les pratiques motivationnelles de leurs enseignants. Des analyses de régression multiniveaux ont permis d'établir des corrélations entre les pratiques des enseignants et les résultats normalisés obtenus par les élèves à des épreuves de compréhension de l'oral et de l'écrit et d'expression écrite.

Il s'est avéré que la motivation des élèves est facteur d'une identité nationale ainsi que mondiale. En tant que citoyens belges, les élèves font preuve d'un haut degré de motivation instrumentale liée à la recherche d'un emploi et ils veulent être forts en français étant donné la proximité de la Communauté française de Belgique. Ces deux éléments sont corrélés positivement à la compétence linguistique. En tant que citoyens du monde, par contre, les élèves ont une préférence très marquée pour tout ce qui est anglais. S'il est vrai que le fait d'aimer les médias francophones est corrélé de façon positive à la compétence en français, un grand nombre d'élèves obtiennent une cote relativement faible à cet égard. L'étude a en outre révélé que les élèves présentent un niveau d'anxiété relativement élevé et une confiance en soi (auto-efficacité) plutôt faible, deux caractéristiques qui pourraient être améliorées par une communication plus explicite de la part des enseignants sur leurs attentes vis-à-vis des élèves. Il est apparu que l'expression écrite est la compétence qui peut être influencée le plus par les pratiques motivationnelles des enseignants. Or, les réponses des enseignants relatives à l'application de ces pratiques sont souvent plus positives que celles des élèves. C'est pourquoi il nous semble indispensable que les élèves soient davantage impliqués dans et rendus conscients de leur propre processus d'apprentissage.

Mots-clés : FL2 ; acquisition d'une langue seconde ; motivation des apprenants ; pratiques didactiques et pédagogiques des enseignants ; enseignement secondaire

1. Purpose

Perhaps one of the most investigated constructs that are relevant to a learner's success in acquiring a second language (L2), is that of motivation. Learner motivation has become "widely accepted [...] as one of the key factors that influence the rate and success of [L2] learning" (Dörnyei, 1998, p. 117). This also holds for language learning in an instructed setting. Or, as Gardner (2010, p. 10) puts it, "language classroom motivation is extremely important". When school-based language learning results are somewhat disappointing, the questions therefore often arise whether the learner is sufficiently motivated and whether there is any room left for improvement in the teacher's motivational class practices.

The issue of classroom motivation is highly relevant to the situation of French L2 in Flanders, the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium. French is the first foreign language that is taught to students in Flemish education, usually starting from Grade 5. Flanders' participation in the 2011 European Survey on Language Competences (ESLC) revealed that the French listening, writing and reading skills of over half of all Grade 8 students do not exceed the A1 level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, see Council of Europe, 2001) (Denies, 2012; Magnus et al., 2013). A rough estimate is that it takes a total of 160 to 200 hours of guided study time to reach the A2 level (Tagliante, 2005). Given that students in Grade 8 in Flanders have generally been taught French at school for over three years – which comes down to about 300 hours of lesson time for most students – many of them seem to be underperforming. One of the many reasons for this may be that the students are insufficiently motivated. With this paper we want to contribute to the discussion of motivation in this French L2 context and in the broader context of L2 learning.

The purpose of the paper is threefold. It first provides an overview of several aspects of Flemish Grade 8 students' motivation for French L2. Secondly, it discusses the teachers' motivational practices as reported by themselves and their students, sometimes revealing contrasts between both sources. Thirdly, the relationship between these indicators of motivation and the students' French listening, reading and writing proficiency is studied based on multilevel regression analyses that control for context and input factors that schools or teachers cannot impact upon. All results are based on data from a representative sample of over 1650 students in Flanders who took standardized French proficiency tests. Hence, this paper provides a comprehensive and

reliable overview of these students' motivation, their teachers' motivational practices, and the relationship of both factors with the students' skills.

2. Literature study

The following sections will refer to the literature for empirical evidence on the importance of L2 motivation (§ 2.1.), to highlight relevant views on language classroom motivation and its subtypes (§ 2.2.), and to identify factors that have been established as aids in motivating language learners (§ 2.3.).

2.1. *The relationship between motivation and proficiency*

Significant, 'more than medium' (Cohen, 1988) correlations have been found between students' self-reported motivation and their L2 achievement. De Bot, Lowie and Verspoor (2005) point out that many studies report correlations of around 0.40. A meta-analysis by Masgoret and Gardner (2003) lists effect sizes of 0.29 to 0.39. In view of studies that have shown that learner motivation can be improved by teacher practices (cfr. *infra*), researchers therefore agree that "teacher skills in motivating learners should be seen as central to teacher effectiveness" (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 116).

2.2. Types of motivation

To be motivated is to be moved to do something (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Although some researchers argue that "what is important is not the type of motivation but rather its strength" (Gardner, 2010, preface), empirical evidence suggests that the learner's motivational quality or the particular type of motivation that drives the learner does play a significant role (Deci and Ryan, 2000, 2008).

Self-determination theory (Deci and Ryan, 2000) distinguishes two main types of motivation by focusing on the degree to which there is a true inner endorsement of a pursued goal (Vansteenkiste, Ryan, and Deci, 2008). It is concerned with whether the student's learning efforts are guided in a *controlled* or in an *autonomous* way (Dörnyei, 2001; Vansteenkiste, Lens, and Deci, 2006). Autonomously motivated individuals experience volition and choice, whereas controlled motivation occurs when an individual experiences pressure (Vansteenkiste, Lens, and Deci, 2006). In other words, the main question is whether the learner *wants to* learn the L2 or whether the learner *has to* learn the L2. Several studies have claimed that autonomous motivation is to be preferred over controlled motivation as it is correlated most strongly with goal progress and with long-term persistence (Deci and Ryan, 2008, 2012; Koestner, Otis,

Powers, Pelletier, and Gagnon, 2008). In view of this preference, our paper will focus on indicators of the autonomous motivation type.

2.3. Motivational models for L2 learning

Several theoretical models have been proposed to describe how learner motivation arises in the specific context of L2 learning. Such L2 motivation models are rarely contradictory (Dörnyei, 1998; Gardner, 2010), but they do highlight different processes or factors. All of them, however, acknowledge the crucial importance of teachers in shaping students' motivation. Rather than providing a comprehensive overview of all models (see Dörnyei, 2001; MacIntyre, 2002; Ushioda, 2012), we focus on one model that resulted from what is often referred to as an "education-friendly turn" in L2 motivation theory. The emergence of an educational orientation in the 1990s was brought about by the desire to make motivation theory more suitable for immediate classroom application. It followed calls by Crookes and Schmidt (1991) and several other scholars who wondered "without knowing where the roots of motivation lie, how can teachers water those roots?" (Oxford and Shearin, 1994, p. 15).

Table 1: Dörnyei's Extended Motivational Framework

Level	Components
Language level	Integrative Motivational Subsystem Instrumental Motivational Subsystem
Learner level	Need for Achievement Self-Confidence Language Use Anxiety Perceived L2 Competence Causal Attributions Self-Efficacy
Learning situation level	Interest Relevance Expectancy Satisfaction
Course-Specific Motivational Components	

Teacher-Specific Motivational Components	Affiliative Motive Authority Type Direct Socialisation of Motivation Modelling Task Presentation Feedback
Group-Specific Motivational Components	Goal-orientedness Norm and Reward System Group Cohesion Classrooms Goal Structure

Dörnyei’s Extended Motivational Framework (Dörnyei, 1994, 2001) is an education-friendly model that attempts to identify those roots of motivation. This framework (see Table 1) conceptualises L2 motivation in terms of three levels that each contribute to the students’ total L2 motivation: the language level, the learner level, and the learning situation level. The language level encompasses two broad components that are central in Gardner’s socio-educational model (Gardner, 1985; Gardner, 2010): the integrative motivational subsystem and the instrumental motivational subsystem. The former was originally described as “reflecting a sincere and personal interest in the people and culture represented by the other group” while the latter is fuelled by “the practical value and advantages of learning a new language” (Gardner and Lambert, 1972, p. 193). The learner level involves individual characteristics, such as the learner’s need for achievement, self-efficacy, perceived competence, and L2 use anxiety. At the learning situation level, three sublevels can be distinguished: course-specific components, teacher-specific components, and group-specific components.

Although the Extended Motivational Framework is not among the most recent L2 motivation theories, the aforementioned overviews of motivation theory indicate that its value is still widely recognized. The model remains especially relevant and suitable for classroom research. We have therefore used it as a framework for the current paper.

2.4. Motivating factors in L2 learning

Frameworks such as Dörnyei’s are shaped by empirical studies that have “attempted to answer *why* students are motivated to learn; however, there are few that have investigated *how* and to what extent learners can be motivated to learn in classrooms” (Crisfield and White, 2012, p. 213; see also Dörnyei, 2001; Guilloteaux and Dörnyei, 2008; Papi and Abdollahzadeh, 2012). In other words, many references

tell teachers which factors can feed into autonomous motivation, but there is a lack of empirical research on specific tools that can give these factors the most favourable loading.

The few studies that did investigate motivational practices generally conclude that language teachers can make a real difference in boosting their students' motivation (Bernaus and Gardner, 2008; Cheng and Dörnyei, 2007; Crisfield and White, 2012; Dörnyei and Csizér, 1998; Guilloteaux and Dörnyei, 2008; Madrid, 2002; Papi and Abdollahzadeh, 2012). For example, in Guilloteaux and Dörnyei's (2008) study with classroom observations (N = 1381, South-Korea), 37% of the variance in the students' motivated learning behaviour was explained by the teachers' motivational practice. The teachers' motivational practice was treated as a compound variable that contains the teacher's creativity, likeability, linguistic competence, task-orientation, encouragement of positive self-evaluation, activity design (interesting, challenging, personalized), implementation of pair or group work, and discourse (incl. establishing relevance, promoting cooperation, and promoting language-specific values). Papi and Abdollahzadeh (2012) (student N = 741, Iran) used the same conceptualisation and also found a significant relation with the students' motivated behaviour. Moskovky, Alrabai, Paolini and Ratcheva (2013) (student N = 296, Saudi Arabia) conducted a longitudinal study and found a significant increase in the motivation of learners that were part of a treatment group that received instruction with learning tasks that were varied, attractive, and related to everyday experiences of the students, from an encouraging teacher who showed care and appreciation, who was available to fulfil the students' academic needs and who consistently pointed out the usefulness of the L2. Bernaus and Gardner (2008) (student N = 694, Spain) established significant, positive relations between the students' self-reported motivation and their reports of how often their teacher implemented a group of innovative and a group of traditional motivational practices. The innovative practices were letting the students participate in project work, group or pair work, self-evaluation and co-evaluation; introducing surprising new activities, other materials than only the textbook, internet-based research and games in class; and emphasizing communicative competence. Among the more traditional activities were the use of audio or video materials, dictionary use in class, story reading and letter writing. Madrid (2002) concluded from his study (student N = 319, Spain) that the most powerful motivational strategies are setting up group work, using new technologies and audio-visual materials, satisfying the students' needs and interests, letting them participate in class and offering different kinds of rewards.

Many of these motivational elements are investigated in our study, often through reports from the students as well as reports from their teachers or schools. This is important because it has been reported for many motivational class practices that the

students' or the class groups' *perception* of the frequency with which they are used is often more important than the teacher's reported use of them (Bernaus and Gardner, 2008). It is therefore crucial that students notice and appreciate it when their teacher applies certain motivating strategies.

3. Method

3.1. Data source

This study is based on ESLC data. The ESLC was initiated by the European Commission to acquire comparable data on second language competences and information about language learning and teaching methods (European Commission, 2012), in the light of the European Council's call for teaching at least two foreign languages from an early age (European Commission, 2005). Fourteen countries participated in the ESLC, assessing secondary school students' reading, listening and writing skills in two European languages. All language test results were linked to the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001), which was also used for test development.

3.2. Sample

Flanders took part in the ESLC for French and English. For French, students in Grade 8 participated. The study did not use convenience samples but participants were selected using a two-stage stratified sample design. First, a representative sample of 70 schools was drawn from the entire group of schools offering French in Grade 8. The stratification variables used in Flanders were school net (private or public), school type (based on the tracks offered by the school) and region. Within each sampled school, about 25 students were then randomly selected for participation. A final sample size of 1661 students was obtained.

3.3. Instruments

The ESLC used listening, reading and writing tests that were developed centrally (Perlmann-Balme, 2013; Robinson, 2013) based on the CEFR. Each student was assessed on two out of three skills. The listening and reading tests were administered using a computer. They contained multiple choice, multiple choice gap fill and matching exercises. The paper-and-pen writing tests consisted of open, extended response tasks. Per student and skill, a distribution of proficiency values was estimated based on a Partial Credit Model (Masters, 1982). The students were characterised

by five plausible proficiency values drawn from that distribution, rather than by one point estimate. This is an approach that is commonly used in large scale educational effectiveness studies in order to deal appropriately with relatively high degrees of measurement error (see Wu, 2005, for more information about plausible proficiency values).

In addition, all participating students filled out a background questionnaire which took about 45 minutes to complete. It gathered information about the students' school career, socio-economic background, and opinion about and attitude towards French. Students were also asked to report on practices in their current French class. The questionnaire consisted of a main part that was the same in all countries (fully available online, see CRELL, 2015), and an additional set of questions designed only for Flemish students. This additional part contained questions about French, but also about English (see Appendix A). Within each participating school, all teachers teaching French at the lower secondary level were also asked to fill out a questionnaire about their language background, their view of language teaching, and their teaching practices. A questionnaire for the school principals gathered information about the schools' approach to language education. In both the teacher and the principal group, the obtained participation rates were 80%. Note that the questionnaires were developed to obtain a wide array of information. Because of time constraints, most variables were therefore measured using one item rather than item scales. It is therefore not possible to calculate measures of internal reliability.

3.4. Analyses

Descriptive statistics were calculated using the final student weights that were provided in the database. These weights compensate for any non-response that may have made the sample slightly less representative of the population. In other words, the descriptive results are representative of all Grade 8 students in Flemish education.

The relationship between motivation and proficiency is revealed using multilevel multiple regression analyses (Gelman and Hill, 2007) which make use of the five plausible proficiency values that are provided in the database, and to which bootstrapping is applied. Regression analyses are a way to model the relationship between a dependent variable (in this case: French proficiency) and one or more explanatory variables. The present analyses are called "multiple" regression analyses because multiple explanatory variables are combined in one model. Each time, one explanatory variable which is under explicit investigation is added to what can be called a "net model" that contains a fixed set of other variables. This net model (Appendix B) isolates the effect of the explanatory variable under investigation from the effect of the following correlates

that teachers and schools can hardly impact upon: the school's socio-economic composition, size, degree of urbanization, authority, type (offering mainly general education or mainly vocational and technical education), and region; the student's gender, field of study, mother tongue, grade retention status, origins, cultural capital (operationalised as the number of books at home) and socio-economic background (operationalised as a combination of the parents' education, the parents' employment, and the student's status as a beneficiary of government schooling support). The analyses are called multilevel because they nest pupils within schools. Such nesting is necessary to acknowledge a possible effect of the fact that students are part of a group of students that all go to the same school.

This study will discuss the relationship between proficiency and the presumed explanatory variables in terms of the coefficients that the regression analyses have calculated for them. Regression coefficients represent the mean change in the students' proficiency value given an increase of one unit in the explanatory variable's value (in the case of continuous variables, such as age) or given a shift from one category to another in the explanatory variable (in the case of categorical variables, such as gender). Positive coefficients mean that the students' proficiency increases, whereas negative coefficients indicate a decrease in proficiency. The regression coefficients cannot be compared across skills, given that each skill was assessed on a different proficiency scale. Furthermore, multilevel regression analyses can only establish a correlation. They do not allow for any statements about causality.

Note that, since the ESLC did not register by whom exactly students were taught, the teachers' reports were not related to their students' proficiency directly. Instead, the teachers' reports are aggregated to the school level. It is the average report of all French teachers in Grade 7 and 8 of the same school, then, that is linked to the performance of that schools' students. This strategy is appropriate for two reasons. For one, motivation is not completely reset every school year. It is also shaped by the students' previous years of learning French. Given that most students remain in the same school for Grade 7 and 8, for most students, our analyses also include the reports of their Grade 7 French teacher, who has also contributed to their current motivation levels. Secondly, 88% of the teachers reported that they actively cooperate with their colleagues in order to streamline the French classes of all Grade 8 students in their school. This can reduce the within-school variability in motivational practices.

4. Results and discussion

The first part of the results section (§ 4.1.) discusses the study's descriptive results. It follows the structure of Dörnyei's (1994) Extended Motivational Framework, i.e.,

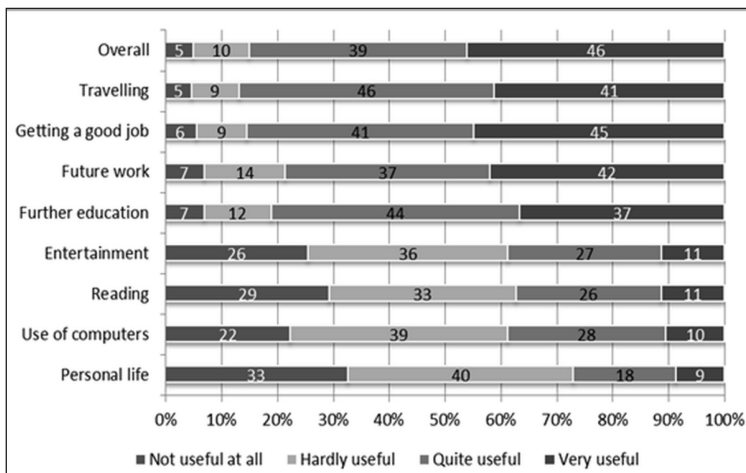
it first describes the situation at the language level, then at the learner level and finally at the language learning situation level. Within each level, we first discuss the students' reports, followed by an account of relevant information that was provided by the teachers. In the second part of this section (§ 4.2.), we discuss the results of the multilevel analyses that establish the relationship between the students' proficiency and the factors explored in section

4.1. The learners' motivation and the teachers' motivational practices

4.1.1. Language level

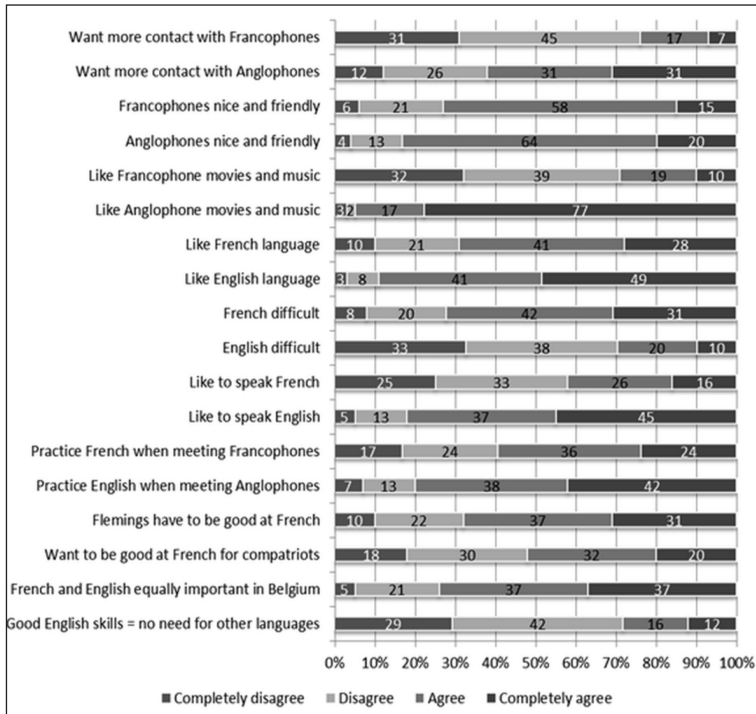
Flemish eight-graders have a high degree of overall *instrumental orientation* (see Figure 1). Eighty-five percent feels that French is a useful or a very useful language. The students mainly find French useful for occasional events such as travelling (87%) and for future plans, such as further education (81%), finding a job (86%) and executing that job (79%). About 60% even believes that proficiency in French is not only useful, but a necessity for finding employment. The relevance of French in the students' current, everyday life, however, is far less evident: 73% does not find French useful in their personal life, and over 60% does not consider French useful for entertainment purposes such as reading books and magazines (63%), using computer applications (62%) or enjoying music, TV or movies (62%). It thus seems that the factors that feed into the students' instrumental motivation are not the ones that are of immediate importance to 14-year-olds.

Figure 1: Students' perception of the use of French for different purposes



With regard to the students' *integrative orientation* (see Figure 2), only a quarter of the respondents desires more contact with Francophones, even though three quarters believe that the French are nice and friendly people. In contrast, most eight-graders desire more contact with Anglophones (62%), who are also slightly more often perceived as nice and friendly (84%). A similar contrast is apparent with regard to both language groups' culture: 94% of the students likes Anglophone films and music, whereas Francophone films and music are only liked by 29%. Flemish 14-year-olds who dislike Francophone media are thus unlikely to be motivated to learn French to enjoy these media. The respondents' dislike of Francophone movies and music is probably related to their lower appreciation of the French language in itself (69% likes French vs. 90% English). French is also perceived as difficult to learn (73% finds French difficult vs. 30% English) and more than half of the students do not like to speak it (42% likes to speak French vs. 82% English). Still, when Flemish eight-graders meet Francophones, 60% practises their skills by communicating in French, for instance on holiday: 83% has gone on a family holiday in a French-speaking region at least once in the past three years. However, many students are also likely to meet Francophones without having to travel long distances since both in the Brussels Capital Region and in the Walloon region (the southern half of Belgium) French is an official language. Most Flemish respondents (68%) therefore believe that as a matter of principle, all Dutch-speaking Belgians should be good at French. Being proficient in English only will not suffice, 71% says. In fact, three quarters of the students believe that in Belgium, French proficiency is just as important as English proficiency. However, only about half of the students (52%) actually has the desire to be good at French in order to communicate with their fellow countrymen. In summary, while Flemish students show strong signs of integrative motivation and feel that as Belgian citizens they have to learn French, this does not encourage them to seek out more communicative opportunities, nor does it make them like the French culture, language and people as much as they appreciate everything English.

Figure 2: Students' attitude towards French in comparison to English



One of the things that *teachers* could do to increase the students' motivation through factors at the language level, is to arouse their interest in the French culture and literature. This, Gardner's socio-educational model suggests, could stimulate their integrative motivation. Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, however, it turns out that on average, French teachers consider French culture and literature the least important element of their classes. They feel that it is much more important for their students to be taught skills, grammar and vocabulary. In this respect it is not surprising that half of the teachers spends time on teaching culture and literature in class only a few times a year at best. 76% of the principals that were questioned said that their school organises school trips related to foreign languages, while 55% claims that they encourage correspondence with students speaking other languages. Interestingly, these figures are different from what students themselves said: only a small minority of them reported having been involved in visits by students from a French-speaking school (25%), in school trips related to foreign languages (30%), in correspondence with speakers of other languages (24%), or in other language-related activities at school during the past three years. This discrepancy may suggest that schools organise such activities for older students only, or it could point to the fact that these activities are not obligatory and that only few students grasp the opportunities that are given

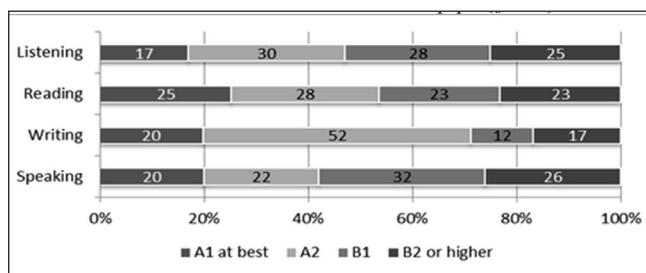
to them. In any case, it seems that many schools and teachers can still improve on engaging all their students in activities that may make them want to learn French in order to interact with speakers of French or to enjoy French culture.

When it comes to the teachers' impact on instrumental motivation, about half of the French teachers (47%) feels that not all of their students have to be good at French to find a job. A substantial group of teachers (59%) in fact reports that for some of their students the need to improve their Dutch language skills is far more urgent. The question remains of course whether these teachers actually voice their opinion to the students, and whether they explicitly point out the instrumental uses of good French skills to their other students.

4.1.2. Learner level

At the learner level, Dörnyei's framework lists the students' *perceived L2 competences* and their *self-efficacy beliefs* as influential factors. Our results show that a considerable part of the Flemish 14-year-olds does not have an optimistic view of their own skills: 35% does not yet feel sufficiently proficient in French to get a basic message across comprehensibly. Figure 3 ranks the students according to the CEFR-level that they place themselves at based on their endorsement of can-do statements that go up to the B2 level. Roughly summarized, for reading, listening and speaking, about half of the students do not yet consider themselves independent (B-level) users of French. For writing, this even holds true for about three quarters of the respondents. The students, in other words, feel that they still have a long way to go to become proficient in French. About 17% attributes this in part to a lack of effective instruction time, given that they are taking or have taken remedial lessons for French. Such lessons are offered by 90% of the Flemish schools. Other possible *causal attributions* that were measured in the survey are also related to the learning situation level, and they will therefore be discussed in the next section of this paper (§ 4.1.3).

Figure 3: Students' self-assessments for the four French skills using CEFR-based can-do statements



The students' somewhat negative view of their own skills is accompanied by quite some *language use anxiety*. Over half of the students (55%) say that they avoid speaking French because they feel they make too many mistakes. Still, they report a minimum of 1 hour per week studying French. Half of these respondents even state that they spend over two hours of free time studying French each week. Such considerable effort may be an indicator of a considerable personal *need for achievement*. However, some youngsters may rather be pressured into spending this much time learning French by their parents or by the threat of failing French, which would mean that they are motivated in a controlled rather than an autonomous way. A more direct measure of need for achievement is, however, unavailable.

Teachers tend to show a clear interest in making sure that the students become aware of their own progress: Half of the French teachers in lower secondary education have recently (i.e. in the past five years) chosen to follow a course about working with language portfolios. French teachers in Flanders also express a wish to make their students overcome their language use anxiety. The majority of teachers (83%) feel that it is more important for their students to be willing to communicate than for them to use correct forms. This preference is, for instance, reflected in their evaluation practices. For the average teacher, fluent speaking skills and vocabulary knowledge are the two most important determinants of the students' grades, with grammar being less important. This is not clear to the students, however. When asked how much they think that the different knowledge areas and skills weigh in when their teacher determines their final grade for French, grammar and vocabulary are deemed most important of all, while spoken fluency is perceived as having the lowest impact. It seems that if teachers were to state their preference for fluency over accuracy more clearly in class, explaining to their students in greater detail how they are actually evaluated, this could potentially lower the students' language use anxiety.

4.1.3. *Learning situation level*

Dörnyei's framework classifies components of motivation that operate at the learning situation level as teacher-specific, course-specific, or group-specific. The majority of students perceives their French *teacher* as a good teacher (77%) who is helpful (69%) and kind (71%) and whom they get along with well (77%) but who is sometimes strict (50%). Many students feel that their teacher makes an effort to render the French classes interesting (63%). Still, their general evaluation of their French *courses* is not very good. Only 43% says that they like French as a school subject, which comes down to only 29% liking their French classes more than average (i.e., more than the degree to which they appreciate their other courses on average). The students' intrinsic interest in their course is also quite low. Half of the Flemish

14-year-olds call their French lessons uninteresting (51%) and boring (54%). However, the relevance of the lessons is estimated higher: three-quarters says that they are being taught French that they can use in real life. The French classes are therefore not often perceived as a waste of time (29%), but rather as useful (83%) and even more useful than the average other course (75%). This contrast between the students' interest in the courses and their perceived relevance confirms the conclusions that we previously drew about the French language itself: Flemish 14-year-olds generally do not like it, but they do find it important. The students' expectancy of success seems to be mixed: 35% confirms that they find their French lessons easy, while 23% strongly disagrees with this statement. A substantial number of students (41%) are being taught French in a large *group* of over 20 students, with groups of 10 students or less being rare. The respondents feel that learning French is quite easy (46%) for their classmates about as often as it is thought to be quite difficult (42%) for them. On average, however, students have good faith in their peers and believe that it is slightly easier for their classmates to learn French than it is for speakers of Dutch in general.

Factors at the learning situation level are particularly suitable for schools and teachers to impact upon. The literature review above (§ 2.3.) mentioned several possible points of action. Although most students label their French classes as "good" (69%), their replies also indicate that some of the motivating factors mentioned in the literature are only rarely implemented in them. 46% of the students, for instance, point out that pair or group work are never or hardly ever made use of, individual work being the usual work form according to 79%. The students say that their teacher usually addresses the whole class group (90%), and 30% reports that their teacher never or hardly ever interacts with smaller groups or individuals in class. Interestingly, these findings are contradicted by a considerable group of teachers. Only 18% (which is 28% less than what the students' reports suggest) say they never or hardly ever implement pair or group work, 66% of the teachers (or -13% compared to the students' results) say that the students work individually most of the time, and 67% (-23%) say that they usually address the class group as a whole. In fact, the teachers say they implement group work in a variety of ways: 74% sometimes puts students of different ability levels at work together, 81% does the same with students of equal ability, and 57% lets a group of students address their peers. In addition to ability grouping within one class, Flemish schools only very rarely form entire class groups for one subject based on the students' ability. This could be explained in part because a considerable degree of ability grouping is automatically achieved because of the Flemish school systems' tracking. Students choose a study programme in either general secondary education (preparing them for higher education), art secondary education, technical secondary education or vocational secondary education (preparing them for a job) and this choice impacts upon the level of their French classes. The more accomplished

students generally opt for general secondary education, where the attainment targets for French are more demanding, while lessons in vocational secondary education are aimed at less demanding attainment targets.

The students report infrequent use of several materials that could be motivating to them. Only 16% says that authentic texts are used at least monthly. Internet materials (11%), software (11%), audio-visual materials (17%) or materials that the teachers prepared themselves (33%) are not common components of French classes in Grade 8 either. Again, the teachers provide more favourable reports of their own motivational practices: 53% (+37%) says they introduce authentic texts at least monthly. In addition, they say that they regularly make use of the internet (29%; +18%), software (22%; +11%), audio-visual materials (36%; +19%), and own lesson materials (63%; +30%). Four out of ten teachers actually received in-service training in developing their own teaching materials in the past five years. To cater even more effectively for their students, several teachers (36%) let their students come up with materials to be included in the lessons themselves. A considerable number of teachers add that they regularly use audio materials (90%), a computer (45%) or a projector (43%) while teaching. However, they rarely report monthly use of digital whiteboards (14%), virtual learning environments (6%), or multimedia classrooms (10%), often because, they say, these materials are not available to them. It thus appears that many French teachers in Grade 8 do not gain access to tools that are, in fact, available to other teachers in their school. Six out of ten principals say that their school has purchased a virtual learning environment, and the same proportion declares that a digital whiteboard is installed in some classrooms. A majority of principals also believe that their school disposes of enough authentic texts (89%) and audio-visual materials (89%) to support proper French teaching. Nine out of ten schools have classrooms that are equipped with a computer for the teacher, and all schools offer internet access and have computer rooms available for their students. Still, few teachers report regular use of online sources such as news websites (8%), online dictionaries (17%), or communication tools such as blogs, e-mail or chatting (4%) in class. Finally, even though almost all students have a computer at home, only about one third of the teachers expect their students to make use of a computer for assignments at least once a month, for example for typing homework (34%), for looking up information (28%), or for studying vocabulary (36%) or grammar (30%).

Feedback has been identified as another important determinant of student motivation. The majority of teachers say that they give spoken or written comments (rather than only a grade) on their students' tasks (78%) or tests (94%) several times per month. Again, however, the students themselves indicate otherwise: about one-third of the students say that they get feedback on tasks or tests combined once a month at best, with 13% saying that they never get any feedback at all. It thus appears that as

many as 40% of the students have different perceptions of what qualifies as “feedback” than their teachers do. Interestingly, when students do well for French, most schools do not offer further instruction. Only 17% of the schools offers additional, enriching lessons to students who are particularly skilled in French or who desire to learn more.

4.2. Relationships between learner motivation and proficiency

The previous sections gave an overview of the status of the students’ motivation and their teachers’ motivational practices. In this section we investigate the relationship between these factors and the students’ proficiency in more detail.

4.2.1. Language level

Table 2 presents the regression coefficients when factors at the language level are added to the previously explained multilevel regression “net model”. It shows that on average, the more useful the students find French, the better they do for French reading and writing. When considering the use of French for specific purposes, students who feel that being good at French is a necessity for finding a good job attain considerably better writing results. Note that this difference is unrelated to the students’ field of study (with fields of study in certain tracks leading to jobs in which French might be more useful), because field of study is a factor that the net model has already controlled for. The perceived use of French for interpersonal contacts also has a remarkably strong correlation with the students’ reading and writing scores. This important role of the students’ attitude towards interpersonal contacts is further illustrated by other positive correlations: The students’ writing proficiency increases when they agree with the statement that Francophones are friendly people, and when they show a greater desire to be good at French in order to communicate with their compatriots. If students feel that being good at English does not eliminate the need for being proficient in other languages, they are also better at French writing.

Table 2: Regression coefficients of variables at the language level when added to the net model predicting French reading, listening and writing proficiency

Variable	Reading	Listening	Writing
S general use of French	0.33*		1.01***
S use of French for interpersonal contacts	0.09*		0.69***
S use of French for future work/study life			0.50***

S use of French for free time	0.06*		0.50***
S necessity of French for finding job			0.97***
S more desire for contact with Francophones			
S agreement w “Francophones friendly”			0.64*
S agreement w “like Francophone movies and songs”			1.00**
S agreement w “French beautiful language”			1.03***
S agreement w “French difficult to learn”	-0.29*		-0.79**
S agreement w “like to speak French”	0.34**	0.17**	1.28***
S higher tendency to reply in French to Francophone			0.62*
S at least 3 holidays in French-speaking area (vs. 0)		0.24*	0.50**
S agreement w “Dutch speakers should know French”			
S agreement w “Knowing English is enough”			-0.78***
S agreement w “Importance French = English in Belgium”			
S more desire to be good at French for compatriots		0.62***	
S reported frequency of school visits by Francophones			
S reported frequency of language-related projects at school			
T importance attributed to students learning French culture			
T agreement w “some S don’t need French for job”		-0.86*	
T agreement w “some S more need for improving Dutch”	-0.19*		

Note: S: student; T: teacher; *: $p < 0.05$, **: $p < 0.01$, ***: $p < 0.001$

Of the indicators of integrative motivation (or motivation inspired by the learner’s personal interest in the French people and culture), the degree to which students say they like speaking French turns out to have the strongest correlation with all three of the tested skills. There thus seems to be a self-evident reciprocal relationship between whether students are good at French and whether they enjoy speaking it, creating more opportunities for practice and increasing their skill level even more.

Two other indicators of the students' enjoyment of French only correlate with the students' writing proficiency, presumably reflecting the same circular relationship: the students' appreciation of the French language, and whether they enjoy French movies and songs. If students are more inclined to reply in French when spoken to in French, their writing scores are higher – which again is probably due to a cycle of improvement in both factors.

The regression analyses in addition indicate that students who have spent at least three family holidays in a French-speaking region are significantly better at writing in French and understanding spoken French. Given that the students' socio-economic status is part of the net model, it is not possible that we are only measuring an effect of a higher family income that allows for such holidays. It therefore appears to be the case that language practice during holidays does pay off, either because of the increased opportunity to learn, or because students are more motivated to learn in order to communicate in a native French environment. Students who feel that French is a difficult language to learn, are less proficient in writing and reading than their peers who find French easier to learn.

With regard to teacher variables, two significant correlations were found. When teachers in a school are more inclined to say that some of their students do not necessarily need French for finding a job, students in that school are less proficient in French writing. The students' French reading skills are poorer in schools where French teachers agree more with the statement that for some of their students, improving their Dutch skills is more important than improving their French skills. Again, it is important to note that possible effects of factors such as the study tracks offered by the school or the socio-economic group which the student belongs to have been filtered out by the net model. The results therefore make clear that schools where teachers have lower expectations about their students' French level, achieve less with their students than comparable schools where teachers expect more from a similar student population.

4.2.2. Learner level

At the learner level as well (Table 3), several variables correlate significantly with the students' French skills. Anxious students, who avoid communication because they feel they are not good enough at it, score lower on all three of the tested skills. As can be expected, the students' self-concept also correlates significantly with their proficiency. For example, the analyses predict that students' test scores are higher as the students' belief in their own talent for language learning is stronger or as they endorse more can-do statements for speaking. Students who are more confident that they can get their

message across are better at listening and writing. Student beliefs about how much each skill or knowledge area weighs in when their teacher determines their final grade only correlate significantly with the students' reading scores: when students feel that grammar and vocabulary are very important, they attain better average reading scores than students who think that these factors hardly matter. Given that vocabulary and grammar are both knowledge areas, this finding could indicate that students who feel that they are rewarded for studying hard, achieve more.

The students' effort as measured through their time spent on homework has a negative correlation with their reading, listening and writing scores. This seems to confirm our suggestion above that studying time can reflect a need (i.e., controlled motivation) rather than a genuine interest (i.e., autonomous motivation). On average, students who spend more time studying for a test, are the students who truly need this additional study time in order to avoid failure, as evidenced by their lower skill level. Still, students taking remedial lessons for French do not attain significantly better or worse results than their peers who do not take such lessons. This could mean that taking extra lessons is a stronger indicator of motivated effort, or it could imply that assisted additional study time helps more than does individual study time. The beliefs and actions of teachers that are included in Table 3 because they can impact upon motivational components at the learner level show no correlations with their students' proficiency.

Table 3: Regression coefficients of variables at the learner level when added to the net model predicting French reading, listening and writing proficiency

Variable	Reading	Listening	Writing
S stronger belief in own talent for learning foreign languages	0.30*	0.28*	2.21***
S stronger belief in capacities to convey French message	0.36**	0.19*	1.41***
S more speaking can-do statements confirmed	0.24*	0.27*	0.88***
S more writing can-do statements confirmed	0.28*		1.03**
S more listening can-do statements confirmed	0.19*		1.01***
S more reading can-do statements confirmed		0.23*	0.83***
S taking remediating lessons for French			
S higher tendency to avoid communication due to mistakes	-0.29***	-0.16*	-0.51*

S more time spent on studying for one test	-0.39*	-0.25*	-0.96**
S perception of weight of grammar in T determining grade	0.46**		
S perception of weight of vocabulary in T determining grade	0.49*		
S perception of weight of speaking in T determining grade			
T agreement w “willingness to communicate > correct forms”			
T have taken in-service training about portfolios			

Note: S: student; T: teacher; *: $p < 0.05$, **: $p < 0.01$, ***: $p < 0.001$

4.2.3. Learning situation level

The students’ attitude towards the learning situation (Table 4) mainly correlates with their writing skills. The better, easier to get along with, or friendlier they find their teacher, the better their written French is. A similar relationship is found between their writing proficiency and the degree to which they find their French lessons good, interesting, more fun than their average other subject or more useful than their average other subject. If students find their French courses more useful than their average other course, this also has a positive relationship with their reading scores. However, finding French teachers helpful or recognising that they make an effort to render French classes interesting does not seem to help.

Table 4: Regression coefficients of variables at the learning situation level when added to the net model predicting French reading, listening and writing proficiency

Variable	Reading	Listening	Writing
S perception of teacher: good			0.54*
S perception of teacher: friendly			0.45*
S perception of teacher: easy to get along with			0.63**
S perception of teacher: helpful, does effort to raise interest			
S perception of lessons: good			0.51*
S perception of lessons: interesting			0.20*

S perception of lessons: waste of time			-0.55***
S perception of lessons: difficult	-0.20***	-0.12***	-0.88***
S fun attributed to French relative to other courses			0.46***
S use attributed to French relative to other courses	0.10**		0.51***
S reported class size			
S perception of difficulty of French for class mates			
S reported frequency of group work			
S reported frequency of individual work		0.45**	
S reported frequency of teacher addressing whole class			
S reported frequency of teacher interaction w small group			0.54*
T reported frequency of above work forms			
S reported frequency of feedback			
T reported frequency of feedback			
S reported frequency of ICT use in French class	-0.08*		
T reported frequency of ICT use in French class			
T reported frequency of internet use in French class			0.57*
T use of authentic texts			0.71*
T expected frequency of home computer use by students			
P availability of digital whiteboards			
P availability of projector in every classroom		0.14*	
P availability of software for language learning		0.25*	

Note: S: student; T: teacher; P: school principal; *: $p < 0.05$, **: $p < 0.01$, ***: $p < 0.001$

Adverse effects are also found. If students find their French lessons a waste of time or difficult, they are likely to have lower writing scores than their peers with similar background characteristics. In fact, the perceived difficulty of the French classes has a negative impact on both receptive skills as well.

Both class size and the students' perception of their peers' talent for learning French are unrelated to the students' own learning outcomes. The same goes for several class practices: whether it is the students who report them or the teachers, no correlations are found between proficiency and an increased frequency of group work, teaching to the whole class, or giving feedback. Two other class practices only correlate with proficiency scores when the students' reports are taken into account. When students perceive that their teacher interacts more frequently with small groups, their writing scores increase significantly; but when it is the French teachers themselves that claim that they frequently work in small groups, there is no significant correlation with any of the students' proficiency scores. Similarly, student reports of more individual work correlate positively with the students' listening scores, but teacher reports do not show such a correlation. This positive correlation with individual work (as reported by the students) was not necessarily expected given that this work form is not mentioned in the literature as a particularly motivating one. The important question is what kind of work students do while working individually. If, for example, they are using authentic texts or the internet, the literature review above (§ 2.3.) suggests that this could increase their motivation and, in turn, their proficiency level. Indeed, the findings suggest that in schools where teachers make more use of authentic reading materials or of the internet, the students are better French writers. Furthermore, in schools where the principal says that they have projectors in every classroom or that they have purchased software for language learning, students are better at understanding spoken French. Note that it is not necessarily the fact that these specific materials are present that matters. The fact that these schools are well-equipped probably suggests that they pride themselves on introducing modern learning aids in teaching practices. Finally, a negative correlation was found between the students' reading scores and their reports of ICT use in class. Although the effect size is very small, this finding can serve as a reminder: It is not so much the frequency with which such learning materials are used that can be potentially beneficial to the students' achievement; it is rather the way in which these materials are used that is crucial. Only when they are used in an effective way and, preferably, combined with other motivating factors at all three levels, can we reasonably expect an increase in motivation, learner effort and - in the end - in proficiency.

5. Final discussion and conclusion

Many researchers have argued that "keeping students motivated is one of the most important elements of a successful language class" (Crisfield and White, 2012, p. 217). This paper investigated this common belief with Flemish eight graders who are learning French L2. Although it is likely that many of them are at least partially motivated in a controlled way, we focused mostly on indicators of autonomous motivation. They were

investigated within Dörnyei's Extended Motivational Framework, which identifies components of L2 motivation at the language, the learner and the learning situation level.

In his discussion of his Extended Motivational Framework, Dörnyei suggests that “the components listed are quite diverse in nature and thus cannot be easily submitted to empirical testing” (Dörnyei, 1998, p. 126). It is indeed a challenge to fully capture all aspects and correlates of language learning motivation in one study. Still, in this paper we have made an attempt to cover almost all of the model's components. Rather than including extensive test batteries focusing on just one construct, the background questionnaires that we used therefore considered a broad range of individual differences and other background variables. This has inevitably led to some limitations. For example, neither the teachers' nor the students' reports were verified by additional measures such as classroom observations. The step in between motivation and achievement – that of motivated behaviour – has not been measured either. All constructs were measured using only one item. Working with scales with high values of Cronbach's alpha rather than individual items would have been more ideal from a psychometric perspective, but this was not possible within a reasonable total testing time for the students. Also, a prior proficiency score would have helped interpret the contribution of the teaching practices under investigation to the students' current proficiency level. Such a score was unavailable. Our study, however, also has some major strengths. Our quantitative approach allowed for a solid study with multilevel regression analyses that control for possibly confounding variables, thus filtering out the effect size of the measured aspects of motivation more reliably. Partly because we worked with questionnaires, we managed to reach a very large group of students and teachers. The fact that our sample is representative of the entire population of Grade 8 students learning French in Flanders rather than just a convenience sample moreover makes this study an exceptionally good basis for pedagogical conclusions. They are relevant not only to stakeholders within Flanders, but several findings are of interest to teachers of foreign languages in any area of the world.

One finding that is of major interest is that characteristics of the learning situation often correlate with the students' writing skills but not with their listening or reading skills. It thus seems that writing is the skill that is most susceptible to variation in the class environment. This is good news, given the finding that writing is also the skill in which the students are the least proficient. The skill for which the students still have the longest way to go to reach advanced proficiency, is also the skill for which teachers can make the biggest difference.

Our study has also revealed that, at the learning situation level, there is often a gap between what students report and what teachers report, with teachers' reports

being more favourable. Some teachers may have felt inclined to give more desirable answers to our questions despite of our promise of anonymity, but it also seems that students often do not notice their teachers' motivating class practices. The fact that several teacher characteristics did not correlate significantly with learning outcomes therefore is not surprising, although – in the case of information that was reported by the teachers – this may also partly be caused by our need to aggregate their reports to the school level. Nonetheless, it seems necessary that teenagers are made aware of important characteristics of their own learning process, for example when their teacher discusses their evaluation grid with them, or tells them the source of an authentic text to clearly point out that the students are dealing with “real” French. Indeed, teachers should be aware that merely using materials or tactics that have been shown to be motivating is not necessarily enough. It is often not the online exercise or the group work in itself that will motivate the learners. The way in which it is implemented and guided, clearly making the students aware of what is happening and to what purpose, is also expected to play an important role in attaining positive results.

Our findings furthermore suggest that it is imperative that both students and teachers are convinced of the use of French, in particular for interpersonal contacts and for employment. Many students are already aware of the important role of French for those purposes, and on average, those students are considerably better at French. Teachers can easily refer to the Belgian context to further increase their students' motivation by consistently pointing out that the proximity of a Francophone community makes French proficiency a considerable asset in the job market. The Belgian context also makes it easier to set up exchange visits or authentic communicative exercises with Francophone compatriots. It seems that such mutually beneficial activities are currently rarely available to Flemish 14-year-olds but only to their older peers. The teachers' reports of their own class practices revealed that several other motivational class practices are also underrepresented. This is a pity because we believe that schools' and teachers' efforts to make their students associate French with fun, interactive experiences can never start too soon.

It should indeed be noted that enjoyment is also an important aspect of motivation that correlates with the students' proficiency. The relatively small group of students that enjoys Francophone media and appreciates French, has better French proficiency. The reason why the average student does not show much appreciation for French may be related to the dominant position of English in the students' everyday life. The students' evaluation of everything English is much more positive. In this respect, our case study with French L2 in Flanders may exemplify issues resulting from the role of English as a *Lingua Franca* that many teachers of other languages across the globe also deal with. In the specific case of Flanders and of other communities in multilingual countries, it appears that the students' reports reflect two roles: one associated with a

global identity, and another one associated with a national identity. For the students' role as a citizen of the world, English is of crucial importance because it is associated with access to numerous social and cultural resources that are very important in the everyday life of young teenagers. In consequence, other languages such as French are evaluated less positively from a cultural perspective. However, the students' strong awareness of the use of French for finding a job and their desire to learn French because they are a Belgian citizen, demonstrate that the students' national identity also warrants an important position for French, next to English. Our advice, then, would be for teachers to still introduce many authentic Francophone materials such as TV clips, songs or books in their classes. They should do this not with the aim of challenging the role of English as the key to understanding popular media, but in order to keep giving the students the chance to experience a language that they already perceive as "useful", as one that can also be enjoyed.

Several suggestions above are also important with regard to a final point that we would like to highlight, which is the need for teachers to tackle their students' high anxiety levels. Many students feel that they are incapable of communicating in French and they therefore avoid doing so. This unwillingness to communicate may hinder their learning process. Our suggestion of turning the classroom into a place where French is sometimes introduced just to be enjoyed, may help reduce the students' anxiety levels. Secondly, clearer communication about evaluation practices can also be expected to help. Too many students are now unaware of their teachers' preference for courage to speak over accuracy, and of their teachers' tendency to attribute more importance to speaking skills than to knowledge when evaluating their students. Thirdly, if schools set up exchanges with students in the French community, their students get to practice in a relatively reassuring context, given that both parties are in the same boat, as learners of each other's language. Finally, teacher expectations play an important role in the students' achievement. It therefore seems important that teachers keep believing in their students, providing encouragement and support through enriching classes (which are currently only rarely offered) or remedial classes, which seem to help: the starting position of students who take such remedial classes is that they struggle with French so a lower score is to be expected from them, but it turns out that they do not perform significantly worse than their peers.

In conclusion, our study has confirmed that many different aspects of motivation for learning French contribute to better French proficiency. The picture that we painted for Flemish Grade 8 gives reasons for optimism on some points such as the students' instrumental motivation, while there is still much room for improvement in other areas, such as the students' enjoyment of French and their teachers' clear implementation of motivational tools in their classes. Especially in view of the fact

that many Grade 8 students are not performing up to par for French, it is important for teachers and schools to now increase their focus on those aspects of motivation in which students are still lacking, taking care to sustain the students' motivation that is already present on other levels.

Acknowledgements

This study was made possible with contributions made by the Flemish Ministry of Education, the European Commission, and KU Leuven. The authors would also like to thank the teams that developed and administered the European Survey on Language Competences, on which this study is based.

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Appendix

Appendix A: questions answered exclusively by Flemish students

Students were asked to indicate on a Likert scale their agreement with the following statements. All questions were asked in Dutch.

1. English speaking people are usually nice and friendly.
2. French speaking people are usually nice and friendly.
3. German speaking people are usually nice and friendly.
4. English is a beautiful language.
5. French is a beautiful language.
6. German is a beautiful language.
7. English is hard to learn.
8. French is hard to learn.
9. German is hard to learn.
10. English is a useful language.
11. French is a useful language.
12. German is a useful language.
13. In Belgium, being proficient in French is equally as important as being proficient in English.
14. Every Belgian whose mother tongue is Dutch should be good at French.
15. Every Belgian whose mother tongue is French should be good at Dutch.
16. Every Belgian should be good at English.
17. Every Belgian should be good at German.
18. People who speak English, don't need to speak any other languages.

19. It is a good thing that French is the first second language that we learn.
20. I like Francophone movies and music.
21. I like Anglophone movies and music.
22. I wish I had more contact with Francophone people.
23. I wish I had more contact with Anglophone people.
24. I like speaking French.
25. I like speaking English.
26. When I meet people who speak French, I practice my French by responding in French.
27. When I meet people who speak English, I practice my English by responding in English.
28. I often use French outside of school.
29. I often use English outside of school.
30. I can get a message across in French.
31. I can get a message across in English.
32. I sometimes avoid speaking French because I make too many mistakes.
33. I sometimes avoid speaking English because I make too many mistakes.
34. I think I should be good at French to find a good job.
35. I think I should be good at English to find a good job.
36. At school, I am learning French that I can use in real life.
37. At school, I am learning English that I can use in real life.
38. I want to be good at French because I want to be able to communicate with my Francophone compatriots.

Appendix B: Regression coefficients for the net model

Variable	Reading	Listening	Writing
Gender: female			0.65***
Ahead or behind on age group			
Immigration status			
Language spoken at home (reference: only Dutch)			
French	1.48***	0.83***	3.26***
French and Dutch	0.63***	0.43***	1.57***
French and another language	1.43***		2.03*
Recipient of financial government support for schooling			
Mother holds at least certificate of secondary education			
Father holds at least a certificate of secondary education		0.19*	
Job and occupational status of mother and father			
Cultural capital: number of books at home			
Field of study (reference: modern sciences)			
Classical languages (Latin and/or Greek)	0.38***	0.19**	1.39***
Technical options		-0.22**	-0.82***
Vocational options	-0.41***	-0.47***	-1.52***
Tracks on offer at school (reference: mix of all tracks)			
At least 80% technical or vocational			-1.62*
Socio-economic school composition			
School size: only 25-34 students learning French in Grade 8			1.67**
School located in a city (vs. non-urbanized)		0.15*	0.52**
School located in Brussels (vs. rest of Flanders)	0.45**	0.52**	1.75***
School net			

*: $p < 0.05$, **: $p < 0.01$, ***: $p < 0.001$