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**Motivation and Demotivation of French Beginner University Learners
in Australia**

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the motivation and demotivation of students of French at Australian universities. Quantitative and qualitative data analysis was performed to identify which factors motivate and demotivate 199 students who learn French at beginner level. Classical theories of motivation in second language (L2) learning are integrated with more recent theories on the 'L2 Motivational Self System' (Dörnyei, 2005; 2009a; 2020a) and positive emotions (Dewaele, 2010; 2011). Factors and categories of motivators and demotivators are structured in three levels of analysis – micro, meso and macro, drawing upon Gruba and colleagues' (2016) model. It is argued here that motivators and demotivators belonging to different levels of analysis are closely interrelated. These concurrently influence students' motivation as well as demotivation, but in different ways and stages. Pedagogical implications are listed to shed light on French learners' goals and expectations at tertiary level within the Australian socio-cultural environment.

Key Words: L2 learning motivation; French learning motivation; three-level model; multilingualism; Australian universities.

1. Introduction

This article introduces the findings from the first phase of a study on motivation and demotivation of students learning French at Australian universities (see D'Orazzi, 2020a). It is intended to better understand what motivated beginner students to continue or discontinue learning French at Australian universities after one semester of studies. Motivation is here defined as 'responsible for determining human behaviour by energising and giving it direction' (Dörnyei, 1998, p. 117), while 'demotivation is the negative process that pulls learners back' (Kikuchi, 2015, p.1).

Quantitative methods have been utilised to identify which factors mostly influence students' interests towards French language learning at tertiary level based on the current literature (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Dörnyei, 2020b). Qualitative methods were chosen to allow students to express their thoughts and opinions on their learning motivation (Dörnyei, 2007). Reasons behind students' decisions to

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discontinue learning French are explored drawing upon recent studies on attrition rates in learning L2s at Australian universities (cf. Martín, Jansen & Beckmann, 2016; Nettelbeck et al., 2007).

2. Literature Review

Motivation and demotivation in studying L2s is a field of research which has expanded in the last decades (Boo, Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; Dörnyei, 2020a). The first studies on motivation in learning L2s were carried out by Gardner and Lambert (1959) who theorised two different motivation patterns, which were later identified as orientations in learning L2s (Gardner, 2001) – instrumental and integrative. Integrative orientation encompasses students' interest in immersing themselves in a foreign culture, where they would speak the local language. Instrumental orientation refers to the practical benefits that learners obtain, such as increasing their job availability.

More variables have emerged as crucial in increasing or decreasing students' interest in learning an L2 at tertiary level. Clément and Kruidenier (1985) underline the importance of attitude which complements students' learning processes. As a result, the perception of the French language, as the expression of a culture or more cultures, affects students during their whole learning process (Doucet & Kuuse, 2017; Hajek & Warren, 1996). Deci and Ryan (1985) make clear how intrinsic as well as extrinsic factors, might change students' motivation in learning an L2 as discovered by Amorati (2019) for learners of German, Italian and English in similar settings. On the one hand, intrinsic motivation is linked to internal psychological reactions and events comprising students' emotions (Feldman Barrett, 2017; Teimouri, 2017) and individual differences (Dewaele, 2011; Dörnyei, 2020b; Dörnyei & Ryan, 2016). On the other hand, intrinsic motivation is closely related to enjoyment 'as a complex emotion, capturing interacting dimensions of challenge and perceived ability' (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2016, p. 216).

Students' psychology has been further explored with the 'L2 Motivational Self System' (L2MSS) (Dörnyei, 2005; 2009a; 2020a; Markus & Nurius, 1986). Studies on L2 learning motivation have mainly focused on the 'ideal L2 self' and 'ought-to L2 self' (see also Boo et al., 2015; Oakes & Howard, 2019). The 'ideal L2 self' is the vision that a student endeavours to become a fluent speaker of an L2, while the 'ought-to L2 self' represents the attributes that people around the learner would like him or her to possess, i.e. L2 fluency.

A third component of the L2MSS is the 'L2 learning experience' which 'involves situated motives that relate to the immediate learning environment, and includes attitudes towards classroom processes' (Csizér, 2020, p 73). Students' psychology and cognitive abilities are strongly impacted by dynamics experienced at the classroom level (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991). As a result, teachers' approaches and relationship with students – 'teacher-specific motivational components', and the impact of learning and teaching activities, topics and materials on L2 learning – 'course-specific motivational components', are explored (Dörnyei, 1994). 'Course-specific motivational components' also encompass 'group-specific motivational components' to understand the role of classmate relationships and group communication. At the same level, the 'university context' – Dörnyei (2019) explores the concept of 'school context', enables the analysis of students' exposure to cultural events and enriching learning opportunities at university. All three components – teachers, course design and university policies, were considered main demotivators in previous studies on L2 learning demotivation (cf. D'Orazzi, 2020b; Thorner & Kikuchi, 2020).

When Deci and Ryan (1985) proposed the 'extrinsic motivation' construct, they incorporated influential variables external to the learner belonging not only to the class environment, but also to their society. Learners may also be under pressure from the so-called significant others (Chartrand, Dalton & Fitzsimons, 2007; Williams & Burden, 1997). 'Contextual components' directly or indirectly change L2 learners' views and opinions (see also Dörnyei, 2020b). Therefore, Ushioda (2009) proposed the 'person-in-context' construct and Lave and Wenger (1991) the 'person-in-the world' construct as learners are influenced by the society where they invest their self-image and identity (Norton Peirce, 1995; Norton & McKinney, 2011). The socio-cultural context (Lantolf, 2006; Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008) unevenly and constantly exposes students to trends, events, fashions and social narratives (McNamara, 2011). Research participants in this study are embedded in an English-speaking country (see also Oakes & Howard, 2019; Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2017) such as Australia where a 'monolingual mindset' (Clyne, 1991; Scarino, 2014; Lo Bianco & Slaughter, 2009) is supposed to influence L2 learners in multiple and contradictory ways (Lo Bianco & Aliani, 2013).

In another English-speaking country such as the UK, Oakes (2013) challenges the 'monoglot culture' by discovering that UK born students retained the same motivation of students born in other parts of the world. They displayed a strong interest in the French language and culture(s) and country(ies) where French is spoken. Therefore, Willis's (2004) 'image of insularity' and monolingual identity of English people appear not to mirror current social trends among younger generations. In Australia, Hajek and Slaughter (2014) challenge the 'monolingual mindset', which has recently experienced structural changes through L2 policies (Lo Bianco, 2016). Indeed, Sharifian (2014) argues that 'the heightened degree of contact between people from around the globe, as part of the process of globalisation, has led to an increase in multilingualism' (p. 59).

Motivation in learning French in Australia

In regard to French, Martín et al.'s (2016) questionnaire was completed by 182 students of French in 2009. Martín et al. (2016) discovered that students from multiple L2s started to learn an L2 because they liked to 'travel or live or work in a country where the language they are studying is spoken' (p. 109).

Nettelbeck et al. (2007) administered a questionnaire to 635 students of French at ten Australian universities. As was the case with students of other L2s, the main motivating factors for students were 'a desire to travel to the country (or countries) where the language is spoken; enjoyment of language learning; the belief that a language will be useful for future employment; and interest in the history and culture accessed through the language' (p. 14).

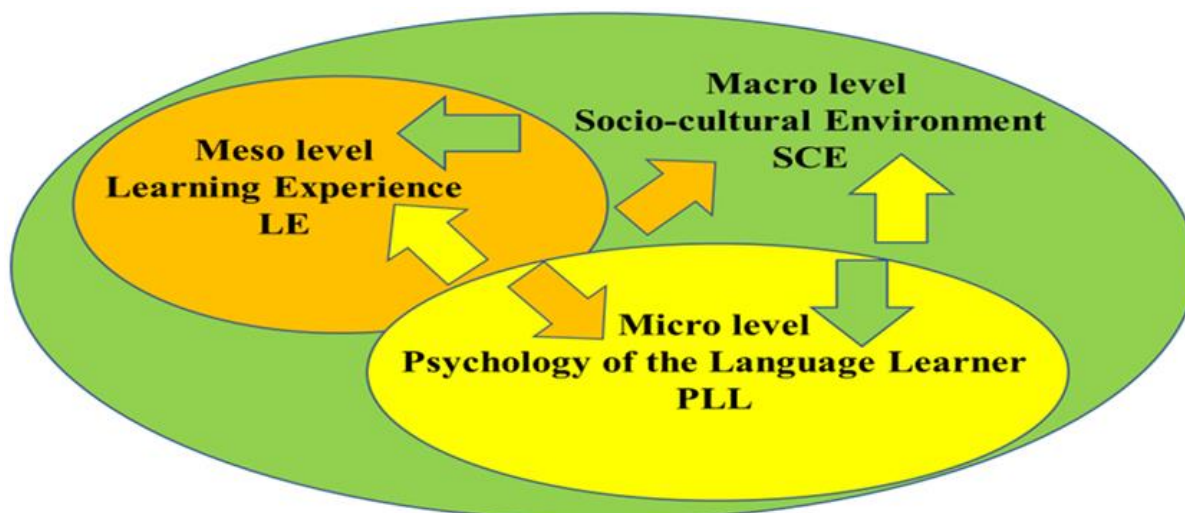
Studies exclusively devoted to motivation and/or demotivation in learning French at tertiary level are rare in Australia. The most recent research in this field has been undertaken by Doucet and Kuuse (2017) who analysed enjoyment in learning French. De Saint Léger and Storch (2009) analysed students' willingness to communicate in French in a one-year longitudinal study. An earlier study was carried out by Hajek and Warren (1996) on the reasons why students learn French. Students liked the challenge of learning French and they aimed to communicate with French-speaking people. All three studies emphasise the role of willingness to communicate (MacIntyre et al., 1998; Yashima, 2020). French learners experienced enjoyment when exposed to French cultural products and people (a) in the formal learning environment, (b) in their own communities and (c) in France on holiday or in working/studying situations.

Furthermore, Doucet and Cowan (2015) indirectly dealt with motivation in learning French at the Alliance Française in Perth, specifically asking students to describe the reasons why they learnt French. Menglet and Nettelbeck (2011) explored the role of the Alliance Française in the promotion of the language. In addition to this, Rolin-Ianziti and Varshney (2008) asked students to reflect on the benefits and/or disadvantages of using the target language in a French class. Overall, student participants claimed to be particularly motivated when their teachers spoke French in class, which was linked to a deeper appreciation of the French culture.

A three-level model

The analysis of the numerous factors involved in the phenomena of motivation and demotivation is structured into micro, meso and macro levels of analysis. This structure is inspired by Gruba and colleagues (2016) (cf. Gayton, 2018; the Douglas Fir Group, 2016), who structured their studies in three levels of analysis which are interconnected and not isolated from each other as in complex dynamic systems (see also Hiver & Papi, 2020). This three-level model allows the researcher to clearly and consistently analyse student motivation and demotivation when learning French (see also D'Orazzi [2020b] specifically on student demotivation), as shown in figure one.

Figure 1. A three-level model



For the purpose of this article, the micro level is defined as the French learner's sphere of emotions and psychological and cognitive reactions to the L2 learning process – the Psychology of the Language Learner (PLL) factor (Dewaele, 2010; 2011; Dörnyei, 2005; 2009b; 2020b; Dörnyei & Ryan, 2016; MacIntyre, Ross & Clément, 2020). The meso level is characterised by the dynamics experienced by students in the formal learning environment (Dörnyei, 2019; Fukada et al., 2020; Kikuchi, 2015; 2019) where teachers and L2 departments model students' learning processes – the Learning Experience (LE) factor. Both PLL and LE factors are strongly influenced by the context and the environment where the L2 learner lives. This is the macro level, which is also defined as the social 'milieu' (Dörnyei, Csizér & Németh, 2006) drawing upon the socio-cultural theory (Lantolf, 2006; Swain, Kinneer & Steinman, 2011) – the Socio-cultural Environment (SCE) factor. Dörnyei and Al-Hoorie (2017) also probe the existence of a similar construct with three levels of analysis – 'the learner's internal desire to become an effective

L2 user; social pressures coming from the learner's environment to master the L2; and the actual experience of being engaged in the L2 learning process' (p. 457). All three factors are intended to influence each other and dynamically interact in multidirectional trajectories as represented by the arrows in figure one above.

3. Research questions

The purpose of this article is to answer two main research questions (RQs):

1. What influences beginner students' decision to continue learning French after a semester at university in Australia?
2. What affects beginner students' process of learning French during their first semester of studies at university in Australia?

These RQs contribute to investigating what fosters French learners' motivation and what disrupts French learners from continuing on their learning path in Australian universities.

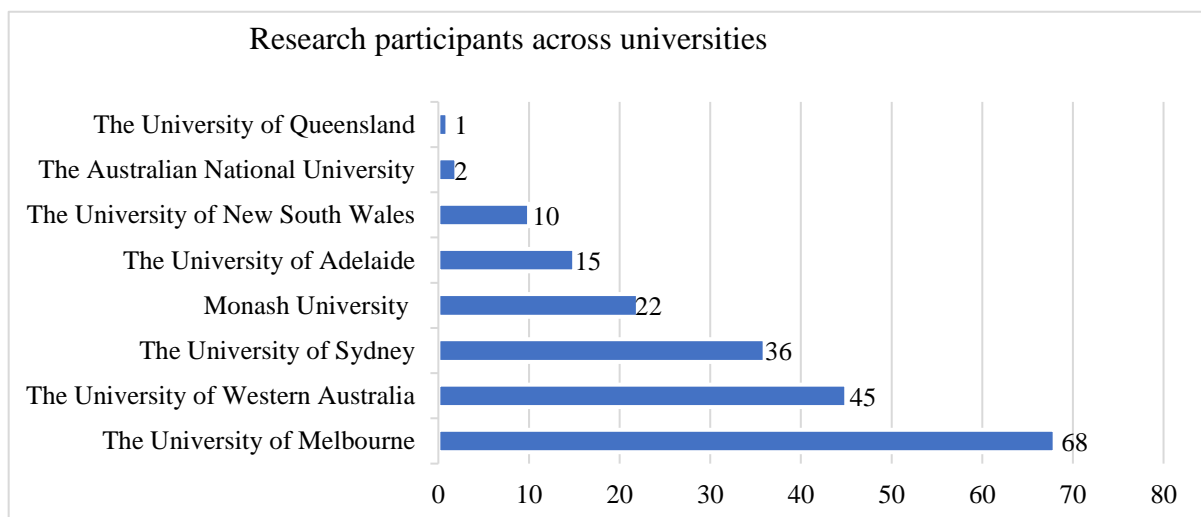
4. Methods

Participants

This article benefits from the extensive participation of 199 students who completed an online questionnaire and ten students who were subsequently interviewed. All survey participants studied beginner level French at the Group of Eight (Go8) Australian universities which offered French subjects for beginners in 2018. This provided consistency in the data collection echoing what Oashi and Oashi (2019) found when analysing Japanese cultural studies in Australia. In addition to this, Go8 universities are well known to direct special attention to the teaching and learning of L2s (cf. Go8, 2014; Molla, Harvey & Sellar, 2019; Nettelbeck, Hajek & Wood, 2012). Due to the fact that this research was based in Melbourne, interviews to ten students were conducted at the University of Melbourne. Hence, an opportunistic sampling strategy was put in place (Patton, 1990).

The highest number of responses to an online questionnaire was registered at the University of Melbourne (34.2%) (figure two).

Figure 2. Survey participants.



Female participants were much more numerous than male participants ($n = 145$ vs. 53 respectively – one student preferred not to identify their gender). 151 students were English native speakers. Asian languages represented the largest group of first languages spoken by almost one quarter of the participants.

Although 75.9% of participants declared to speak English as their L1 or one of their L1s, only 59.3% of them spoke English at home. None of them spoke French at home. 107 participants had an Australian cultural background and 87 had foreign cultural heritage. Only five students had a cultural background from a French-speaking country. This is, however, indirectly linked to the low percentage of immigrants from French-speaking countries in Australia (ABS, 2017).

20.6% of research participants were learning a language other than French – besides French. 74.4% of students had learnt an L2 – including English for some international students, before they had started to learn French at university.

72.4% of participants were domestic students, while 27.6% were international students. It is also interesting to observe that some of the students possessed a very basic prior knowledge of French acquired at primary or secondary school ($n = 25$).

A very important aspect coming from participants' experiences was the diversity in students' year of enrolment. Most of the participants were first year undergraduate students (63.3%). 21 students out of 36 who discontinued studying French after one semester were in their second, third or fourth undergraduate year. Among them, only 11.10% of first year students intended not to continue learning French for a second semester.

71.4% of the research participants placed French as their optional/elective subject² (table 1). As a result, most students did not give as much attention to French as they would give to their core subjects.

Table 1. *Integration of French in students' degree structure.*

French within students' degree structure	Number	Percentage
Optional/elective subject within a degree	142	71.4%
Minor within a degree	29	14.6%
Major within a degree	14	7%
Other	9	4.5%
Core subject in a diploma of languages	5	2.5%
Total	199	100%

Instruments and procedures

A mixed methods research approach is utilised to analyse quantitative and qualitative data. This methodology allows the researcher to deliver some statistical outcomes and triangulate them with the auxiliary of interviews and open-ended survey questions (SQs) proposed in an online questionnaire (Dörnyei, 2007). An 'outsider view' – with the quantitative analysis, and an 'insider view', with the qualitative analysis (Edwards, 2010) support the analysis of motivators and demotivators.

² Including 'breadth subjects' at the University of Melbourne and 'broadening units' at the University of Western Australia.

All participants were first contacted via beginner level French subject coordinators from their universities. Students received a link to the online questionnaire designed with the online survey software *Qualtrics*.

The self-reported questionnaire consists of four SQs useful for facilitating students to freely express their thoughts and ideas. For the purpose of this article, only two SQs³ are taken into consideration. They focus on the factors which motivate and demotivate students to continue learning French. 24 multiple-choice questions were designed to collect biographical data. One multiple-choice question provided the reasons why students intended not to continue learning French in a second semester. In addition to this, 51 five-point Likert scale items were utilised drawing upon Oakes's (2013) questionnaire on motivation, and Sakai and Kikuchi's (2009) questionnaire on demotivation. Some new items were introduced by the researcher to include contextual variables.

Questionnaires were completed from week seven to week ten of the first semester (12 weeks) in 2018. A value of 1 is given when students strongly agreed with a Likert scale item, 2 when they agreed, 3 when they neither agreed nor disagreed, 4 when they disagreed and 5 when they strongly disagreed. A Principal Components Analysis (PCA), which cut off six five-point Likert scale items, was conducted to reduce the amount of variables, as also suggested by Dörnyei (2003) and Gómez (2013), using the statistical analysis software *SPSS*. Four factors were detected (see appendix one). Two of the four factors were subsequently merged together given their strong relation to external motivators and demotivators (see D'Orazi, 2020a).

The PCA was not conducted only with the responses provided by French students to 51 five-point Likert scale items ($n = 199$), but also with the responses provided by students of other L2s (German, Italian and Spanish) ($n = 719$) as reported in D'Orazi's (2020a) study on motivation and demotivation in learning L2s at Australian universities. For the PCA, it was indeed necessary to utilise more research participants' responses to provide stronger internal consistency to the data set analysis (Dunteman, 1989; Jolliffe, 2002).

Ten semi-structured interviews were run to understand more about students' common patterns of motivation and demotivation with the final aim to comment on the questionnaire outcomes as outlined by Schmidt (2014) for her qualitative data analysis of German students' motivation at Australian universities. Students' interview narratives and responses to SQs were coded with the qualitative analysis software *NVivo 12* which helped to structure the most frequently recurrent themes (Bazeley & Kristi, 2013), based on the factors and categories of motivators and demotivators detected with quantitative data analysis tools.

5. Results

A three-level model

As previously mentioned, the analysis of the factors which influenced student participants' motivation in continuing or discontinuing learning French is structured into three levels (see also Gayton, 2018; Gruba et al., 2016; the Douglas Fir Group, 2016). A PCA validated the hypothesis that three factors influenced students' motivation and demotivation in learning French.

³ (SQ1) Please list the three main reasons why you wish to continue learning French at university in the future.
(SQ2) Please list the three main negative aspects of learning French at university.

The Psychology of the Language Learner (PLL) at the micro level

'Intrinsic motivation', 'integrative orientation', the 'ideal L2 self' and 'student's performance' are the four categories of motivators situated at the micro level grouped together by the PCA (see appendix one). Motivators belonging to these four categories were discovered to be strongly connected to each other, as well as to the other two levels of analysis.

Table 2. Means, standard deviations and Cronbach's Alpha values of the PLL factor components.

Categories of the PLL	Mean	SD	Cronbach's Alpha
Intrinsic motivation	2.00	0.59	.74
Integrative orientation	2.16	0.63	.69
Ideal L2 self	2.20	0.70	.63
Student's performance	2.43	0.62	.58

Students' responses provided to 14 five-point Likert scale items – ranging from "strongly agree" (value = 1) to "strongly disagree" (value = 5), were analysed at the micro level. 'Intrinsic motivation' was the strongest motivator at the micro level while the category 'student's performance' registered the highest mean (table two above). A relatively high coefficient of internal reliability was detected for 'intrinsic motivation', 'integrative orientation' and 'ideal L2 self' ($\alpha = .74, .69$ and $.63$) in contrast to 'student's performance' which includes very different variables belonging both to students' psychology and learning abilities. These results partially echo Oakes's (2013) results where 'intrinsic motivation' ($M = 1.77$), and 'ideal L2 self' ($M = 1.88$) strongly motivated students of French and Spanish in the UK, while 'integrative orientation' ($M = 2.38$) did not motivate these students as strongly as French students in Australia.

The thematic content analysis of responses to SQ one and interviews confirmed that one of the most frequently recurring themes was students' enjoyment. This is particularly relevant for interviewees like Nick, who:

"Really enjoyed learning French. It was a good experience because of the nature of the rest of [his] subjects. French was social as you had to interact with other people".

Survey participants also emphasised their 'intrinsic motivation' at the micro level which was discovered to be linked to the LE factor at the meso level of analysis as asserted by this survey participant:

"Although it is a little early to say, as I am studying the beginner course, at the current stage, it is very interesting and challenging enough to the point where it's not difficult, but spurs me to keep at it" SQ1-712-M⁴.

Students who did not enjoy the French learning process felt negative emotions such as anxiety. Anxiety was fostered by the large volume of work for the French course as survey participants explained:

"May get lost and stressed when facing this extra heavy working load" SQ2-55-F.

'Integrative orientation' obtained the second lowest mean. Most of the students agreed that they learnt French because they wanted to use the language to travel, to meet native speakers and to be part of a French-speaking community. Oswine emphasised that French:

⁴ Responses to SQs are coded with the number of the SQ, a random number given to survey participants and their gender.

"Maybe might encourage me to take more initiative and be in a French speaking country because I like the culture."

At the same level, the goal to meet French-speaking people increased students' motivation and willingness to communicate. Previous experiences changed students' perception of French-speaking countries and people so that they wanted to fully immerse themselves in the French culture.

A third strong motivator at the micro level of analysis was the 'ideal L2 self'. Students developed an image of themselves as fluent speakers of French. They constructed 'a multilingual- and multicultural-self'. This is the case of Tiffany who explored the role of French in her life:

"When I was a child, I saw some hosts in some programs where they could speak 8 languages. I really want the same for me with maybe French, Chinese and English".

Only very few students were demotivated by their inability to reach the 'ideal L2 self' that they envisaged when they started to learn French. Course components affected students' 'ideal L2 self' when they did not support them in acquiring fluency as one survey participant asserted:

"It follows a rubric and will unlikely lead to near native fluency like learning it from parents" SQ2-802-M.

'Student's performance' registered the lowest level of agreement ($M = 2.43$). Even though not all students agreed that they felt comfortable learning French and that they were good at it, psychological and cognitive variables played a positive role for a large portion of students as confirmed by the relatively high standard deviation for this category of motivators ($SD = 0.62$).

Qualitative data confirmed that some students obtained very high marks because they found the learning process easy and they were satisfied with their progress. Nevertheless, some other students were strongly demotivated by their academic performance. They received very low marks due to their struggle in remembering rules and words and they felt uncomfortable when speaking. These dynamics overwhelmed students who felt frustrated with their slow progress. Oswine stressed that French:

"Is not easy to grasp because it has so many rules and on top of that so many exceptions to remember".

Difficulties were also caused by students' inability to manage time and work as French was for most of them an elective/optional subject (71.4% – see table one above). As a consequence, demotivated students lost their interest in learning French and they needed to prioritise their core subjects as reported by survey participants:

"Sometimes it is difficult to manage studying for a French test when an assignment is around the corner. As an elective I have to prioritise" SQ2-816-F.

Overall, the PLL factor at the micro level was a motivator for those students who:

- Enjoyed the French language process and the challenge of it;
- Desired to immerse themselves in French-speaking countries;
- Constructed an image of themselves as fluent multilingual speakers; and
- Observed encouraging and rewarding academic performances.

On the negative side, the PLL factor was a demotivator for students who:

- Lost interest in learning French;
- Found the language process too difficult;

- Received bad marks and were frustrated by their slow progress; and
- Experienced negative emotions, e.g. anxiety.

The Learning Experience (LE) at the meso level

The meso level includes the dynamics undergone by students within their university environment. This factor exercises a strong influence on the PLL factor at the micro level. Students' emotions and cognitive abilities are found to be directly affected by what they experienced in their university classes.

The LE factor consists of three categories: 'Teacher-specific motivational components', 'course-specific motivational components' and the 'university context' which were investigated with the analysis of responses provided to 17 five-point Likert scale items. As table 3 shows, teachers motivated students more than other variables at the meso level ($M = 1.95$).

Table 3. Means, standard deviations and Cronbach's Alpha values of the LE factor components.

Categories of the LE	Mean	SD	Cronbach's Alpha
Teacher-specific motivational components	1.95	0.52	.78
Course-specific motivational components	2.21	0.49	.65
University context	2.47	0.60	.55

The clarity of teachers' explanations and instructions, the opportunity to communicate in French in class and the good relationship between teachers and students benefited students' interest in continuing learning this language.

Qualitative data also confirmed that 'teacher-specific motivational components' boosted student motivation. Emily highlighted that her:

"Teacher also explained French culture which made the course funny, interesting and appealing".

Oswine stated that:

"I enjoyed the teaching so I wasn't afraid to go to tutorials every morning".

The lack of fear to talk in class and enjoyment reduced students' anxiety and motivated them to continue learning French. Cultural topics on French-speaking countries taught by native speakers also triggered students' enthusiasm. Peter declared:

"I was actually taught by a French teacher. She told us things on the French culture to see French as a more interesting class".

Only a few students were demotivated by 'teacher-specific motivational components'. The most recurring themes related to demotivation were specifically about teachers' lack of clarity and sympathy towards students as underlined by the following survey participant:

"It's not like school where if I have a question, I can ask the teacher. If I get stuck on something, it's hard to get help" SQ2-4-M.

'Course-specific motivational components' motivated part of the research participants, albeit not as much as 'teacher-specific motivational components' ($M = 2.21$). Survey participants seemed to appreciate the organisation of their French classes. They agreed that courses were well designed, and

content and topics were appropriate to learn French. Students loved the social and relaxed learning environment created in class as highlighted several times:

"Classes are hands-on and keep you involved" SQ1-619-M.

However, qualitative data suggest that many students struggled with the quick pace of lessons and the large content covered in the course. Ella, as many other research participants, confirmed that:

"For people who have never learnt L2s before, it could feel that you are drowning in new information".

Demotivated students shared the impression that courses were not interactive and communicative enough as one of the survey participants underlined:

"I can read and write but it's hard to speak because we do less talk in actual conversations" SQ2-998-F.

The third category for the LE factor was the 'university context'. Students were motivated by the opportunity to use optional/elective credit points for a French course. In particular, students at the University of Melbourne and at the University of Western Australia could use 'breadth subjects' and 'broadening units' respectively which are subjects different from their core subjects within their degree structure as implied in responses to SQ one:

"It fulfils my broadening unit requirement" SQ1-244-F.

University exchange programs attracted students who desired to spend some time in France and use the language in daily life situations as emphasised by survey participants:

"So I can have the opportunity to study abroad and practice my French in France, which I hope would aid in making my French sound more natural, and perhaps less text-bookish" SQ1-469-F.

A relatively high mean of 2.47 demonstrates that not all students entirely appreciated the decisions made at university level when it comes to language learning. The main issue pointed out by students in the survey was that:

"The classes are often overcrowded meaning that it is impossible to develop your speaking skills" SQ2-205-O,

and *"the classes are way too big for decent learning and they lack the one-on-one attention that a smaller class would have"* SQ2-302-M.

This would result in:

"Limited one to one interaction" SQ2-680-M.

Emily as well, agreed that:

"In some occasions it is not the teacher's fault because in the class we had too many students".

A second demotivator connected to the 'university context' was related to the scarce availability of extra-curricular activities and/or cultural events organised by universities and French departments. Nevertheless, qualitative data confirms that not all students were aware of the programs and cultural events organised at their institutions.

Factors at the meso level of analysis became even more influential in students' decision to discontinue learning French. Students who stated to discontinue learning French after their first semester of French studies ($n = 36$) were asked to answer a multiple-choice question about the reason(s) why they decided

to quit a French subject for beginners (table four). 52% of the students who dropped their French subject did so for reasons related to the LE factor at the meso level.

Table 4. *Students' reasons to discontinue learning French.*

Factors	Number	Percentage
LE	19	52.8%
LE/PLL	8	22.2%
PLL	4	11.1%
Personal circumstances	5	13.9%
Total	36	100%

Ten students exclusively indicated that they did not have enough credit points to include French in their study plans for a second semester, while eight students did not have any space in their study plan in addition to other reasons such as negative emotions and frustration for their slow progress. Only four students were exclusively demotivated by their psychological reactions to the French learning process.

For the analysis of factors that contribute to the reasons why students quit French, an extra category was added to include students who discontinued learning French for reasons which were not related to the three levels of analysis. This category was labelled as 'personal circumstances' in order to include variables not under students' and university control, e.g. the end of their degree or a break from university studies.

Overall, the LE factor at the meso level was a motivator for those students who:

- Enjoyed instructors' quality of teaching and their relationship with teachers;
- Were motivated by cultural topics taught by French native speakers;
- Found the class learning dynamics stimulating and very engaging;
- Were encouraged to use optional/elective subjects credit points to learn French;
- Had the goal of applying for exchange programs overseas.

This factor was a demotivator for research participants who:

- Considered classes too grammar-based and not communicative enough;
- Wished to benefit from more extra-curricular cultural events;
- Could not keep up with the course pace and the heavy workload;
- Considered classes too large.

The Socio-cultural Environment (SCE) at the macro level

The macro level of analysis consists of the influence of external variables stemming from society on students' motivation and demotivation in learning French. The SCE includes 14 variables structured into three categories of motivators: 'Instrumental orientation', 'contextual components' and 'ought-to L2 self', based on the mentioned-above PCA results (see appendix one).

Compared to the other levels of analysis, the SCE factor at the macro level does not represent a strong motivator for all students (table five). On the contrary, relatively higher means and standard deviations suggest that the SCE was a demotivator for a large number of student participants.

Table 5. Means, standard deviations and Cronbach's Alpha values of the SCE factor components.

Categories of the SCE	Mean	SD	Cronbach's Alpha
Instrumental orientation	2.42	0.58	.77
Contextual components	3.56	0.56	.54
Ought-to L2 self	3.65	0.88	.74

The analysis of reliability for each of the three categories of motivators conducted with the responses provided by French students suggests that 'instrumental orientation' and 'ought-to L2 self' had a strong internal reliability given relatively high Cronbach's alpha values ($\alpha = .77$ and $.74$ respectively). Conversely, 'contextual components' registered a relatively low Cronbach's alpha value ($\alpha = .54$). Indeed, this category registered a low internal consistency given the heterogeneity of its variables belonging to the context where students live.

The lowest mean at this level was obtained for 'instrumental orientation' ($M = 2.42$). Very similarly, Oakes (2013) obtained a mean of 2.14 for this category of motivators. Qualitative data analysis suggests that students learnt French because they thought that they would be more knowledgeable people at the end of this learning process. Following Busse and Williams's (2010) observations in the UK, students were aware of being different within a monoglot environment.

Some other students aspired to use French for their future career. In line with Hajek and Warren's (1996) results, some research participants were studying French 'to enhance career prospects' (p. 13). Peter asserted that:

"I personally believe that when someone learns a language, it really opens doors. [...] It opens opportunities".

However, some other students were demotivated by the instrumental use of French as it would give them "fewer job opportunities" (SQ2-513-F) compared to other university subjects or languages, e.g. Asian languages, within the Australian SCE.

'Contextual components' recorded a relatively high mean ($M = 3.56$). A large number of students disagreed or even strongly disagreed that the context in which they lived supported them in their learning path. The role of the media in representing French-speaking countries and people was not considered a motivator by research participants. Ella highlighted that:

"The media emphasise that Australians should learn Asian languages".

Ella added that students still:

"Prefer the French language because of cultural and historical factors that people acquire from family and friends rather than the media".

The cultural prestige of French in Australia appears to be more influential than the economic benefits of speaking it within Australia. However, the perception of French as having little instrumental value demotivated some students who did not value the cultural reputation of French.

Drawing upon quantitative and qualitative data results, students were unhappy about the fact that they did not have enough exposure to French-speaking people. The lack of exposure was a strong demotivator as asserted by a survey participant:

"Unless exposed to French-speaking people, learning via a textbook may be out-dated and so without the opportunity to talk to natives, your French (or any language that you are learning) may sound unnatural or dated" SQ2-469-F.

This led to a lack of affinity towards French-speaking people and countries. The absence of affinity boosted by exposure ultimately led to demotivation especially for students with no strong pre-set goals as Chloe stressed:

"There's not much immersion going on outside of the university. If you don't immerse yourself around people that speak to you and you can speak to them, then I might lose my motivation."

Laurie highlighted the need to be in contact with native speakers because:

"Once surrounded by the actual people and their culture, I just picked up a lot."

The sample consulted for this study disagreed that they learnt French because their family members, friends or other people around them expected them to learn French. Indeed, the 'ought-to L2 self' registered a relatively high mean ($M = 3.65$) which was even higher in Oakes's (2013) study ($M = 4.14$). It had the highest level of disagreement across all variables explored for this study. Therefore, a more attentive and detailed analysis of qualitative data was necessary. All interviewees were asked about the role of significant others in their choice to continue or discontinue learning French. A minority of research participants accentuated that they received a positive and/or negative boost but they did not feel that their significant others constructed a real vision of students as future French speakers or directly opposed their decision to learn this language. For instance, Emily was strongly motivated by her friends who were Mauritian, as she could *"speak French with them even if it is very hard as their French is very casual"*. However, her friends did not expect her to learn French.

Some research participants were motivated by a 'desire to communicate with French-speaking family and friends' as discovered by Hajek and Warren (1996, p. 13) but not necessarily by family members' and friends' image of students to become French speakers as postulated by the L2MSS. Chloe's parents learnt Dutch, but she made the decision to learn French. One of Oswine's parents was of French-speaking heritage but this aspect did not influence her choice to drop the subject after one semester because she had different priorities for her degree. As a result, the 'ought-to L2 self' was a neutral element for most of the research participants' motivation and demotivation.

Overall, the SCE factor at the macro level was a motivator for those students who:

- Considered French an asset for future jobs and their cultural integrity;
- Enjoyed exposure to the French culture and people; and
- Recognised the cultural prestige of this language within the Australian society.

This factor was a demotivator for research participants who:

- Did not benefit from opportunities to improve their oral skills outside of university;
- Did not develop an affinity towards French speaking people; and

- Considered it more important to learn Asian languages in terms of better future career opportunities given geographical position of Australia in the Asian-Pacific region (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012).

6. Discussion

The distinction of motivators and demotivators in three interconnected levels of analysis aims to support the researcher to answer the two RQs proposed here.

RQ 1: What influences beginner students' decision to continue learning French after a semester at university in Australia?

Data suggest that beginner students continued to learn French after their first semester of language studies mainly because of 'teacher-specific motivational components' at the meso level of analysis and 'intrinsic motivation' belonging to the micro-level PLL factor. The latter was also a strong motivator in previous studies on motivation in learning L2s in Australia (Amorati, 2019; Doucet & Kuuse, 2017; Hajek & Warren, 1996; Palmieri, 2019; Schmidt, 2011, 2014). 'Intrinsic motivation' was not the main motivator in studies undertaken in the UK, but it was one of the most influential motivators (see also Busse & Williams, 2010; Oakes, 2013). Students experienced enjoyment in learning the language itself with their classmates and teachers in line with current research on L2 learning (cf. Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2016; Doucet & Kuuse, 2017; MacIntyre et al., 2020). Cultural aspects of the language motivated students following previous studies, e.g. Rolin-Ianziti & Varshney (2008) (see also Crozet & Díaz, 2020). Courses appeared to be well structured and offered a wide variety of topics which created an engaging class environment (see Fukada et al., 2020). In addition to this, teachers built rapport with their students who felt their support and empathy when improving their French learning performance (cf. Arnold, 2018; Dewaele, 2011). Indeed, a large portion of research participants obtained excellent results and very high marks.

'Integrative orientation' also strongly drove students to continue learning French, but as for French students in the UK (Oakes, 2013), this category of motivators was less important than 'intrinsic motivation'. Students aimed to meet and communicate with French-speaking people (see also de Saint Léger & Storch, 2009) and use the language with them as it has been found for other L2 students at tertiary level in Australia (Amorati, 2019; Hajek & Warren, 1996; Nettelbeck et al., 2007; Martín et al., 2016). Similarly, the 'ideal L2 self' appeared to be strongly correlated to the enjoyment experienced by students as discovered by Teimouri (2017) and their intention to visit foreign countries. Oakes (2013) found out that the 'ideal L2 self' was the second strongest motivator for his research participants who built new French-speaking and multicultural identities.

At the macro level, data suggest that students acknowledged that French was a useful language for certain types of jobs. Motivated students perceived French as a strong asset in terms of future job opportunities in international relations as also observed in other English-speaking countries (cf. Ushioda, 2017). This confirmed an increasing desire for multilingualism supported by a globalised society (cf. Sharifian, 2014). In particular, the social and cultural prestige of French was widely recognised by research participants following similar studies in Australia (cf. Cryle, Freadman & Hanna, 1993; Doucet & Cowan, 2015). The macro level motivated those students who developed an interest in this language and its related culture(s) because of the context in which they lived. In this regard, for instance, Menglet and Nettelbeck (2011) shed light on the role of events such as the 'French Film Festival' which expose Australians to the French culture. Significant others also contributed to

generating students' interest in French (see also Chartrand et al., 2007; Dörnyei, 1994; Williams & Burden, 1997). As in the UK, the 'ought-to L2 self was deemed of unimportance' (Oakes, 2013, p. 184) given that research participants were all adult learners who autonomously decided to learn French echoing the result of Oakes and Howard's (2019) research. Students did not feel the pressure of 'gaining the approval and respect of others' as recognised by Papi and associates (2018). Such a result resonates with previous research where the 'ought-to L2 self did not emerge as a significant predictor' of motivation (Papi et al., 2018, p. 5). Data confirm that significant others did not create their own image of the learners as fluent French speakers; their influence was rather implicit than direct and explicit.

Students who liked the language as a cultural asset continued to learn it because French contributed to constructing their multilingual and multicultural identity, as identity is socially constructed (see Al-Hoorie, 2017; Henry, 2015; 2017). In particular, motivated students rejected the image of Australia as an insular society (see also Willis [2004] for the UK context) and acknowledged that they have the advantage of additional knowledge unlike other students from English-speaking countries, as underlined by Busse and Williams's (2010) and Oakes's (2013) research participants.

Exchange programs overseas triggered students' interest in continuing learning French (cf. Yashima, 2002) and willingness to communicate (MacIntyre et al., 1998; Yashima, 2020). The opportunity to use optional/elective subjects credit points to study French increased students' chances to continue learning French especially at the University of Melbourne and at the University of Western Australia where students could choose extra optional subjects not related to their degree, e.g. an L2, 'breadth subjects' and 'broadening units' (see also Brown & Caruso, 2014).

RQ 2: What affects beginner students' process of learning French during their first semester of studies at university in Australia?

Quantitative data show that the macro-level SCE was the most demotivating factor. Qualitative data analysis confirms that students were demotivated by the SCE, but this was not the strongest demotivator. Students' interest in learning French was affected by negative emotions and frustration for their slow and poor progress in learning this language similarly to prior research outcomes (Nettelbeck et al., 2007; Martín et al., 2016; Teimouri, 2017). Furthermore, not all student participants enjoyed their LE at university. Both quantitative and qualitative data demonstrate that students were cotermporally motivated and demotivated by the same categories of motivators and demotivators belonging to the micro-level PLL factor and the meso-level LE factor depending on dynamics experienced at different times and settings during their French learning path, following the dynamic nature of motivation (cf. Hiver & Papi, 2020).

The lack of opportunities to talk with native speakers was a strongly discouraging variable for a large number of students who suffered from the monolingual socio-cultural environment in Australia (cf. Hajek & Slaughter, 2014). In addition, demotivated research participants perceived that learning Asian languages would benefit their career and future financial conditions more than learning French as underlined by Australian government policies, e.g. *Australia in the Asian Century* white paper (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012) and the *National Asian Languages and Studies of Asia Strategy* (Lo Bianco, 2016). Students acknowledged that French is not always considered as an important language in Australia from an economic and strategic point of view compared to Asian languages. Such a result coheres with a larger amount of studies on this topic (cf. Baldwin 2019; Kirkpatrick, 1995; Liddicoat &

Scarino, 2010; Lo Bianco 2016; Mascitelli & O'Mahony, 2014; Ozolins 1993; Smolicz 1991; Slaughter, 2011).

The PLL at the micro level and the LE at the meso level contributed to demotivating students and influencing their decision to continue or discontinue learning French. Negative emotions were strongly related to the dynamics experienced in class as identified by prior studies (e.g. Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986; Gkonou, Daubney & Dewaele, 2017; Teimouri, 2017; Thorner & Kikuchi, 2020) especially when students were required to speak in the class following previous studies in similar settings (cf. de Saint Léger & Storch, 2009). Teachers were also deemed as demotivators for students who did not build a positive relationship and who felt that their teachers did not emphasised with them, as identified by Song & Kim (2017).

Students with weaker L2 aptitude perceived their 'ideal L2 self' not as easily achievable as they had predicted before starting to learn French. Cognitive abilities demotivated students who encountered major difficulties in memorising new words and grammar rules and keeping up with the fast pace and large content of lessons as frequently lamented by L2 learners (see also Falout & Maruyama, 2004). This was particularly relevant for research participants like Ella, who is:

"Someone who tends to be on top of what's going on at university".

Overall, data show that students dropped their French course because they lacked credit points to include French in their study plan. Data demonstrate that 61.1% of students who discontinued learning French were from their second, third and fourth year of university. Students declared that after their first and second undergraduate years, they had used all their elective/optional subject credit points. As a result, they struggled finding strategies to include French for a second semester or more. Indeed, 71.4% of students chose French as an elective/optional subject within their degree and not as a core subject (table one above). Consequently, they did not adequately plan how to include French in their degree because core subjects were to be prioritised.

7. Conclusion

This article focuses on the multiple motivators and demotivators which influenced beginner students' decision(s) to continue or discontinue learning French at university in Australia. Motivators and demotivators were categorised into three levels of analysis which corresponded to three factors detected by a PCA. Data suggest that motivators and demotivators coexisted together during the whole learning process observed for this study.

Students continued learning French because they enjoyed their French learning processes and they loved the language itself. Teachers generally created enjoyable classes where students benefitted from opportunities to communicate in French and were exposed to cultural topics. These dynamics boosted students' intention to communicate with native speakers in French-speaking countries and their image as French fluent speakers.

Students encountered major difficulties in finding people to talk with. Therefore, lack of exposure to French native speakers was a major demotivator. This influenced students' attitude towards both the French language and the learning process itself. In addition to this, some research participants perceived that learning French was not important in terms of employability compared to Asian languages which were portrayed as more important from an economic and strategic point of view. Students who did not properly plan their university career, did not have enough credit points to include French in their study

plans. Students' negative psychological reactions to the French learning process and limited cognitive abilities also led them to discontinue learning French. A large portion of students felt stressed and anxious when learning French.

This study may inspire French teachers and department coordinators to take into consideration their students' needs and desires. Teachers should include more culture in their syllabi as student participants were strongly motivated by an 'intrinsic motivation' in the language itself and the culture from French-speaking countries (see also Crozet & Díaz, 2020). Communicative strategies and task-based instructions (Ellis et al., 2020; Lambert, 2010), including the use of new technologies (cf. Hanna & de Nooy, 2009), might compensate for the lack of exposure to French-speaking people. Demotivated students highlighted difficulties in learning the language properly. Hence, students need to be instructed on the most effective learning strategies to improve French communicative skills and thus, students may feel less overwhelmed by the large amount of work involved in a French learning process and keep up with the fast course pace. Furthermore, university administrators and French departments are encouraged to guide students in the effective management of credit points to ensure the availability of sufficient points to enable them to undertake their language of interest, in this case, French.

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Appendix 1

Results of a Principal Components Analysis (PCA) and reliability analysis (Cronbach's Alpha) conducted with SPSS using responses to 51 five-point Likert scale items provided by students of French, German, Italian and Spanish as in D'Orazzi (2020a).

Results at the micro level of analysis (IM= Intrinsic motivation; INTO= Integrative Orientation; ILS= Ideal L2 Self; SP= Student's performance).

Likert-scale items belonging to the Psychology of the Language Learner (PLL) factor	Factor loadings	Categories	Cronbach's Alpha
I really enjoy learning French/German/Italian/Spanish.	0.716		.84
I like the intellectual challenge of learning French/German/Italian/Spanish.	0.684	IM	
I find it exciting to be able to communicate in French/German/Italian/Spanish.	0.661		
Being able to converse in French/German/Italian/Spanish is an important part of the person I want to become.	0.601	ILS	
Learning French/German/Italian/Spanish is one of the most important aspects of my life.	0.577	IM	
It would be great to be part of the French-/German-/Italian-/Spanish-speaking community in my city.	0.545		
I like meeting people from French-/German-/Italian-/Spanish-speaking countries.	0.542	INTO	
If my dreams come true, I will use French/German/Italian/Spanish effectively in the future.	0.540	ILS	
I am studying French/German/Italian/Spanish because I want to improve my French/German/Italian/Spanish.	0.527	SP	
I find it easy to memorise words and expressions.	0.496		
I like to spend time in French-/German-/Italian-/Spanish-speaking countries.	0.481	INTO	
I am getting high scores on tests and assessments, e.g. homework, class tests, mid-term assessments.	0.475	SP	
I can imagine myself as someone who is able to use French/German/Italian/Spanish well.	0.451	ILS	
I feel comfortable when I have to speak French/German/Italian/Spanish during lessons.	0.417	SP	

Results at the meso level of analysis (TMCs= Teacher-specific Motivational Components; CMCs= Course-specific Motivational Components; UC= University Context).

Likert-scale items belonging to the Learning Experience (LE) factor	Factor loadings	Categories	Cronbach's Alpha
The facilities in class are perfect to stimulate my learning.	0.681	UC	.86
My teacher makes me feel comfortable during lessons.	0.675	TMCs	
My teacher's explanations are easy to understand.	0.665		
My teacher focuses on all main language abilities (speaking, reading, listening and writing).	0.615		
The material used in class is useful to learn French/German/Italian/Spanish.	0.608	CMCs	
I get along well with my teacher.	0.599	TMCs	
The pace of lessons is appropriate for learning French/German/Italian/Spanish.	0.596	CMCs	
I often have the opportunity to communicate in French /German/Italian/Spanish in class.	0.585	TMCs	
French/German/Italian/Spanish language content we study for the course is easy to interpret.	0.566	CMCs	
The time spent in French/German/Italian/Spanish classes is enough to learn properly.	0.553	UC	
The class size is appropriate to learn the language.	0.521	TMCs	
My teacher focuses on translation.	0.453		
My university organises many activities where I can learn more on the culture of French-/German-/Italian-/Spanish-speaking countries and practise the language.	0.448	UC	
I like my classmates.	0.447	CMCs	
Visual and audio materials (such as videos and DVDs) are used during lessons.	0.447		
The amount of hours I need to study for tests/ assessments and final exams satisfies my initial expectations.	0.443		
Cultural topics covered in lessons are interesting.	0.421		

Results at the macro level of analysis (INSTRO= Instrumental Orientation; CCs= Contextual Components; OLS= Ought-to L2 Self).

Likert-scale items belonging to the Socio-cultural Environment (SCE) factor	Factor loadings	Categories	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha
Likert-scale items belonging to one factor obtained with the PCA				
Knowing French/German/Italian/Spanish will help me to obtain a better job.	0.827			
Studying French/German/Italian/Spanish to a high level of proficiency will allow me to earn more money.	0.802			
I think French/German/Italian/Spanish will help in my future career.	0.765			
The knowledge of French/German/Italian/Spanish would help me finding a job in the public service.	0.657	INSTRO	.78	
I think knowing French/German/Italian/Spanish will help me to become a more knowledgeable person.	0.42			
I would like to become more like people from French-/German-/Italian-/Spanish-speaking countries.	0.415			
Likert-scale items belonging to one factor obtained with the PCA				
I consider learning French/German/Italian/Spanish important because the people I respect think that I should do so.	0.752			0.76
People around me (e.g. family members, partner, friends...) believe that I ought to study French/German/Italian /Spanish.	0.7	OLS		
I often have opportunities to practice French /German/Italian/Spanish with native speakers outside university.	0.565	CCs		
I learn French/German/Italian/Spanish because I want to communicate with my family members.	0.56		.74	
If I fail to learn French/German/Italian/Spanish, I will be letting other people down.	0.535	OLS		
I feel an affinity with people who live in French-/German-/Italian-/Spanish-speaking countries.	0.516			
Speaking French/German/Italian/Spanish is very important in Australia.	0.413	CCs		
The French/German/Italian/Spanish subject was advertised during the orientation sessions before starting university.	0.405			