

(Trans)formed into the L2 Self? Learner Perceptions in a Vignette-based Study

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
(German)

at the
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON
2023

Date of the final oral examination: 05/08/2023

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*It's almost over
it's just begun*

Bo Burnham, 'Inside' (2021)

Acknowledgements

You know the popular saying, “It takes a village to raise a grad student” – I can fully attest to its truth. I could not be happier about the village who chose to raise me as a grad student, and I want to use this space to acknowledge the community members who have been part of my journey. These past five years have been deeply transformative (ha! I had to say it) for me, not only professionally, but personally as well, and I certainly would not be where I am and who I am now without the amazing people who I was lucky to meet along the way.

First and foremost, I would like to thank my expedition leader, the mayor of my village, and the most wonderful person: Monika Chavez. I deeply appreciate your guidance, your mentoring, your mark-up in my Word documents and your supportive emails, your laughter in the hallway, and your never-ending support, not only regarding the dissertation but also in all other aspects of my professional life. I truly would not have been able to embark on this journey without you and the way you cheered me on the entire way. My deepest gratitude extends to my extraordinary committee as well: Jeanne Schueller, for everything, but especially for being an incredible, kind, and caring human being and an astonishing educator, mentor, and supervisor; Mark Loudon, who always cheered me on from the front row – I deeply admire you for your knowledge, kindness, humor, and ways you supported me when we worked together and far beyond; and Cathy Stafford, for your incredible intelligence, helpful comments and support, and your overall awesomeness. Thank you all for your continuing guidance through the never-ending changes of plans that came with a pandemic dissertation.

Julie Larson-Guenette, my incredible friend and supervisor, mentor, colleague, and everything in between, thank you so, so much. You were the first friendly face that I saw upon arrival in Madison, and you gave me the warmest welcome ever, even on that historical day of the

flood in 2018! You never cease to amaze me with your sharp wit, your wisdom and advice, and your wonderful company. I am incredibly lucky to know you and your family!

Melissa Sheedy, I am so, so incredibly thankful that I got to work with you on 262 and that I was able to get to know you and learn from you that way. You are an absolutely amazing human being, you are so kind, so brilliant, and so funny. I would not be where I am now without your patience for my constant stream of questions (and cat memes).

I also want to express my gratitude to Julia Götze, who is an absolute rockstar and my idol. I am a fan of everything you do, and I am so thankful for the grace you showed me from the very beginning. I will be sad to not be able to work with you anymore, yet I am excited for the future, in no small part thanks to you, your support, and your amazing insights!

Aside from the all the mentors in a village, there are the others who share the same journey. Chen, you are the absolute best travel buddy I could have asked for. The long hours in the library, the hectic scribbles on the white board, the large amounts of chocolate you always had with you for our recruitment sessions, and the Excel TikToks – you are absolutely amazing, and your never wavering positivity on this messy road is one of the main reasons I made it to the end. You are awesome! A big thank you is also in order to Nick, Hadis, Marina, and Patricia as well. Thank you for your amazing support! You are an absolute joy to have in your corner.

Finally, I want to thank my friends, Laura, Sam, and Joey; and all the other wonderful humans that have helped me along the way, especially T. Special thanks goes out to Brenna, who has been there from the beginning and had to endure so many desperate FaceTimes, Steenbock sessions, and practice questionnaires. Because of all of you, I was able to grow far beyond what I thought was possible. Thank you all for everything.

Abstract

Learning an L2 is often said to transform an individual into a new (and improved) version of the self. This mixed-method study investigated (1) whether, and if so, in what way such a transformation occurs within the L2 learner self; and (2) whether current theories of self and motivation in the fields of SLA and psychology adequately address L2 learner selves across the learning trajectory. The study was grounded in and critically examined the L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS) by Dörnyei (2005, 2009) as well as psychological theories of possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986) and of the self and self-concept (Oyserman et al., 2012). Six intermediate-level learners of L2 German at a large Midwestern research university were asked to report their likeness to eight language user profiles (vignettes) across five salient timepoints of reference in a language learner's trajectory. The ratings together with statements from interviews were analyzed in regard to different self-concepts, including the dimensions of ideal self and ought-to self from the L2MSS. Results revealed the need for a holistic understanding of the L2 learner, including the importance of past selves, in order to further understand the on-going motivational processes that guide the L2 self. The dimension of the 'retired self' is introduced, a self-concept that consists of a once possible self that has since been retired in favor of others but that still serves as motivational. Findings further suggest that the learner self is constructed through dynamic and situated fore- or backgrounded self-concepts. On the basis of these findings, an emergent model of the L2 self is proposed that combines the dynamic nature of self-concepts with the continued L2 learner trajectory, which offers one possible explanation for feelings of transformation through L2 learning. Results affirm the need for a continued investigation into the L2 self and the link between self and motivation through the integration of current psychological theory into second language acquisition research.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	ii
Abstract.....	iv
List of Tables and Figures.....	x
List of Abbreviations	xii
1. Rationale	1
2. Literature Review	5
2.1 The Self across the Disciplines	5
2.1.1 Situating Research of the Self	5
2.1.2 The Self, Self-Concept, and <i>Possible Selves</i>	6
2.1.3 The Self and Self-Concept in (Social) Psychology	7
2.1.4 The Self in SLA Research	11
2.2 L2 Motivation.....	14
2.2.1 Integrative and Instrumental Motivation	14
2.2.2 The Self and L2 Motivation	15
2.2.3 The L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS)	16
2.2.3.1 Different Dimensions of the L2 Motivational Self	18
2.3.2 Past Selves	20
2.2.4 Imagination and Vision	21
2.3 The Promise of Transformation and L2 Motivation	23
2.3.1 Transformation through L2 Learning in Popular Opinion	24
2.3.2 L2 Learning as a Selling Point	26
2.3.3 A Multitude of Motivations.....	28

2.4 Transformation and Transformative Experiences	29
2.4.1 Transformation in SLA Research.....	29
2.4.2 Transformation in Psychology	32
2.5 Research Questions	33
3. Methods.....	38
3.1 The Design of the Overarching Study	38
3.2 Research Materials	41
3.2.2 Demographic Information	41
3.2.3 Vignettes.....	42
3.2.3.1 The Use of Vignettes in Research on Perceptions.....	42
3.2.3.2 The Use of Vignettes in this Study	44
3.2.4 Interviews	49
3.3 Study Procedures.....	50
3.3.1 Recruitment	50
3.3.2 Study Participants	52
4. Results	58
4.1 Research Theme 1: Self-Perceived Likeness of six Learners to Each of eight Language User Profiles.....	59
4.1.1 RQ 1.1: How Much Like Each of eight Language User Profiles (Vignettes A-H) Did Each of six Study Participants Recollect They Had Been <i>before</i> Their Formal Studies of German Began?.....	60
4.1.2 RQ 1.2: How Much Like Each of eight Language User Profiles (Vignettes A-H) Did Each of six Study Participants Recollect They Had Been <i>at the Beginning</i> of Their Formal Studies of German?	67
4.1.3 RQ 1.3: How Much Like Each of eight Language User Profiles (Vignettes A-H) Did Each of six Study Participants Report They Are <i>at the Time</i> of Taking this Study?.....	73

4.1.4 RQ 1.4: How Much Like Each of eight Language User Profiles (Vignettes A-H) Did Each of six Study Participants Project They Will Be <i>at the Conclusion</i> of Their Formal German Studies?	79
4.1.5 RQ 1.5: How Much Like Each of eight Language User Profiles (Vignettes A-H) Did Each of six Study Participants Project They Will Be in the Times <i>when They Are No Longer Engaged</i> in Formal Studies of German?	85
4.2 Research Theme 2: Learners' Self-Perceived Likeness to Each of eight Language User Profiles across the Timeline of Reporting (RQs 1.1-1.5)	91
4.2.1 RQ 2.1: What Are the Trajectories of Perceived Self-Likeness to Each of the eight Language User Profiles (Vignettes A-H) across the five Timepoints for Participant <i>The Architect</i> (P1)?	91
4.2.2 RQ 2.2: What are the Trajectories of Perceived Self-Likeness to Each of the eight Language User Profiles (Vignettes A-H) across the five Timepoints for Participant <i>The Connector</i> (P2)?	93
4.2.3 RQ 2.3: What are the Trajectories of Perceived Self-Likeness to Each of the eight Language User Profiles (Vignettes A-H) across the five Timepoints for Participant <i>The Resolute</i> (P3)?	95
4.2.4 RQ 2.4: What are the Trajectories of Perceived Self-Likeness to Each of the eight Language User Profiles (Vignettes A-H) across the five Timepoints for Participant <i>The Pragmatist</i> (P4)?	96
4.2.5 RQ 2.5: What are the Trajectories of Perceived Self-Likeness to Each of the eight Language User Profiles (Vignettes A-H) across the five Timepoints for Participant <i>The Dreamer</i> (P5)?	98
4.2.6 RQ 2.6: What are the Trajectories of Perceived Self-Likeness to Each of the eight Language User Profiles (Vignettes A-H) across the five Timepoints for Participant <i>The Grad</i> (P6)?	100
4.2.7 RQ 2.7 Looking at five Respondents (P1-5), which of the eight Language User Profiles (Vignettes A-H) Was Most Frequently Chosen as, Respectively, the One Most and the One Least Like Respondents at Each of five Timepoints?	102
4.3 Research Theme 3: Individual Learners' (Dis)preferences of the eight Language User Profiles...	105
5. Discussion and Implications.....	110
5.1 A Plethora of Selves	110
5.1.1 <i>Possible Selves</i> – the Fallow Land	111
5.1.1.1 <i>Possible (Future) Selves</i>	111

5.1.1.2 <i>Ideal</i> (Future) Selves	113
5.1.1.3 <i>Feared</i> (Future) Selves.....	114
5.1.1.4 A Range of (Future) Selves	116
5.1.2 Back to the Future: The <i>Retired Self</i> as a Bi-Directional Motivator	118
5.1.3 The Interconnected Nature of L2 Self-Concepts	120
5.2 Toward an Expanded L2 Self System	125
5.2.1 Addition of the Time-Transcending Aspect to L2 Motivation.....	125
5.2.2 The Self is Situated.....	125
5.2.3 Networked Self-Concepts.....	126
5.2.4 Fore- and Backgrounding of Different Self-Concepts	127
5.2.5 An Expanded Model of the L2 Self.....	128
5.3 L2 Learning as a Catalyst for Transformation?.....	130
5.3.1 Drastic Changes across Learner Timelines	131
5.3.2 Drastic Changes happen with your ‘First’ L2	132
5.3.3 Study Abroad as a Potential Catalyst for Foregrounding of Different Selves.....	132
5.3.4 Transformation and the L2 Self System	133
5.4 Implications	135
6. Conclusion	141
6.1 Limitations.....	141
6.1.1 Limitations Related to the Participant Sample	141
6.1.2 Limitations Related to the Study Design and Data Analysis	142
6.2 Future Research.....	144
6.2.1 Motivation and the L2 Self.....	144
6.2.2 The Role of Time and Foregrounded Selves	145
6.2.3 Future Research Based on Unreported Data.....	146
6.3 Final Remarks.....	148

7. References	150
Appendix A: IRB Approval	164
Appendix B: Questionnaire Part I.....	165
Appendix C: Questionnaire Part 2	197
Appendix D: Interview Protocol.....	201

List of Tables and Figures

Table 1: Overview of the three different instruments and their components employed in the study	40
Table 2: Vignette descriptions as presented to the participants in the study	45
Table 3: Distribution of criteria across the eight vignettes	47
Table 4: Key-word designations of eight learner profiles (vignettes)	48
Table 5: Participants per instrument across six semesters of data collection	53
Table 6: Participants enrolled in undergraduate German courses by gender, citizenship, and status.	54
Table 7: Participants enrolled in undergraduate German courses by gender, citizenship, and status.	55
Table 8: Select background information of the participants in the dissertation study	56
Table 9: Verbal participant descriptors	57
Table 10: Ratings of likeness-to-profiles before the beginning of formal German studies as given by the six study participants.....	62
Table 11: Ratings of likeness-to-profiles before the beginning of formal German studies as given by the six study participants with an emphasis on by-participant patterns.....	65
Table 12: Ratings of likeness-to-profiles at the beginning of formal German studies as given by the six study participants.....	68
Table 13: Ratings of likeness-to-profiles at the beginning of formal German studies as given by the six study participants with an emphasis on by-participant patterns.....	71
Table 14: Ratings of likeness-to-profiles at the time of taking this study as given by the six study participants	74
Table 15: Ratings of likeness-to-profiles at the time of taking this study as given by the six study participants with an emphasis on by-participant patterns	77
Table 16: Ratings of likeness-to-profiles at the conclusion of formal German studies as given by the six study participants.....	80
Table 17: Ratings of likeness-to-profiles at the conclusion of formal German studies as given by the six study participants with an emphasis on by-participant patterns	83

Table 18: Ratings of likeness-to-profiles after the end of formal German studies as given by the six study participants.....	86
Table 19: Ratings of likeness-to-profiles after the end of formal German studies as given by the six study participants with an emphasis on by-participant patterns.....	89
Table 20: Average likeness ratings of five study participants (P1-5) to eight language profiles across all five timepoints	103
Table 21: (Dis)preferences for and likeness to the eight profiles at the time of the interview and projected likeness to the eight profiles at T5	106
Figure 1: Questions on Quora related to feeling different in a foreign language	25
Figure 2: Trajectories of perceived self-likeness to each of the eight language user profiles across the five timepoints reported by participant The Architect	92
Figure 3: Trajectories of perceived self-likeness to each of the eight language user profiles across the five timepoints reported by participant The Connector	94
Figure 4: Trajectories of perceived self-likeness to each of the eight language user profiles across the five timepoints reported by participant The Resolute	96
Figure 5: Trajectories of perceived self-likeness to each of the eight language user profiles across the five timepoints reported by participant The Pragmatist.....	97
Figure 6: Trajectories of perceived self-likeness to each of the eight language user profiles across the five timepoints reported by participant The Dreamer	99
Figure 7: Trajectories of perceived self-likeness to each of the eight language user profiles across the three timepoints reported by participant The Grad	101
Figure 8: Time of interviews in relation to the five timepoints of reference	105
Figure 9: The different selves as they manifest in the results for The Dreamer	122
Figure 10: Model of the self-concepts of the L2 self	123
Figure 11: Expanded model of the L2 self.....	129

List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Meaning
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
L2MSS	L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei 2005, 2009)
NS	Native Speaker
RQ	Research Question
RT	Research Theme
SLA	Second Language Acquisition

1. Rationale

Ever since what Block (2003) called ‘the social turn’ in Second Language Acquisition (SLA), the learner has emerged as a person of interest, and a social one at that. Shifting the focus from the psycholinguistic work of researchers such as Susan M. Gass (e.g., 1997) to research that includes an interdisciplinary, socially focused emphasis (Rampton, 1997), the field has moved towards the investigation of socially-driven aspects of the second language (L2) learner, including attitudes and motivations (Dörnyei, 2009; Gardner, 2001; Ushioda, 1998) and identity-based research (e.g., Kanno & Norton, 2003; Norton Peirce, 1995; Norton & McKinney, 2011).

Motivation, specifically, has been identified as a “major determinant of language achievement” (Gardner, 2001, p. 12). Dörnyei and Ryan (2015, p. 72) further emphasize the importance of motivation for successful L2 learning: “It provides the primary impetus to initiate L2 learning and later the driving force to sustain the long, often tedious learning process; indeed, all the other factors involved in SLA presuppose motivation to some extent.”

Inspired by the socio-educational model by Gardner (1985) and integrative and instrumental orientations, the *possible selves*¹ theory by Markus and Nurius (1986); as well as Higgin’s self-discrepancy theory (1987); the L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS) proposed by Dörnyei (2005, 2009) combines these different psychological theories in a framework that aims to explain L2 motivation. The L2MSS describes that motivation is derived from a discrepancy between the current L2 self and two future self-guides, the *ideal* and the *ought-to self*. The L2MSS also takes into account the L2 learning experience. Dörnyei’s research into the impact of future self guides and vision for the learner self specifically has sparked great interest in the field in all aspects that influence a learner’s motivation and, in turn, the learner’s self. A multitude of studies

¹ Officially coined terms in the literature, such as *possible selves*, will be italicized in the dissertation. Others, such as ‘past selves,’ e.g., will not.

have since investigated the different dimensions of the L2MSS and their impact on different learners in a variety of L2 acquisition settings (e.g., Li & Zhang, 2021; Moskovsky et al., 2016; Thompson & Vásquez, 2015). According to Dörnyei and Ryan (2015, p. 91), the L2MSS was met with “an exceptional wave of interest with literally hundreds of studies appearing worldwide.” The L2MSS is, in fact, the dominating theoretical framework in the field (Boo et al., 2015). However, Dörnyei’s work has also been criticized to not fully explain the L2 learning experience. A variety of other dimensions (or *selves*) have since been proposed to be added to the motivational model (e.g., Chavez, 2020; MacIntyre et al. (2017); Thompson & Vásquez, 2015; Yu et al., 2018).

What is more, while Dörnyei draws on psychological definitions and self guideposts, the framework does not take into account a learner’s past and their language learning timeline as a whole; specifically, changes in motivation and potential changes in these guiding selves across an L2 learner’s trajectory are not addressed. The *possible selves* theory that inspired the L2MSS (Markus & Nurius, 1986) already raises the issue of ‘past selves’ and their importance for the orientation and positioning of the self across time.

The make-up of an L2 learner’s self lies at the heart of a learner’s motivation. While the motivation that is derived from the difference between one’s *ideal self* and the current state of the self has garnered much research interest, the actual formation processes of the motivating selves are still in need of further investigation. Specifically, the formation of selves across the L2 learner’s language learning career in accordance with psychological research into the importance of past, present, and future selves has been underresearched.

The notion that the discrepancy between one’s *ideal self* and current self generates motivation also implies that an L2 learner’s self is changeable – or, at least, dynamic in nature. Namely, in order to generate motivation, the *ideal self* has to be sufficiently different from the

current self (Oyserman et al., 2012). Therefore, reaching the *ideal self* implies a (perceived) change from the current self.

These changes in a learner through L2 learning have so far only been documented in study abroad research (e.g., Ellwood, 2011; Fryer & Roger, 2017, 2018; Milstein, 2005; Yu et al., 2018). In his study of identity transformation through study abroad experiences, Capobianco (2017) calls for an in-depth inquiry into the development of a learner's identity or possibly a subsequent transformation: "[...] because identity transformations have been documented, and because this study suggests that these transformations happen at disparate stages, researchers and teachers can dedicate more attention to understanding the nature of these transformative processes" (p. 24). Transformative processes that happen at disparate stages once more imply the need for an investigation into the timeline of changes (or transformations) within a learner, caused by L2 learning.

The aim of this dissertation is, then, to investigate potential changes in an L2 learner self while taking into account these disparate stages across an L2 learner's career, especially the potential interplay between past, current, and future selves in terms of motivation. Further, the dissertation's objective includes an investigation of the processes involved in formation and potential transformation of the L2 self. The dissertation project was largely inspired by a student's response to a first-day questionnaire in my Fall 2019 intermediate German course in which the question was asked: "Why are you learning German?" One of the students answered: "Learning German is not so much about fluency, it's more like a state of mind." The idea that L2 learning could affect not only one's language level, but rather one's mind was the first step in an emerging interest in the fundamentals of a language learner's self and everything that can be affected, or changed, by the act of L2 learning.

Further, transformation has been a buzzword in popular culture for quite some time. Millions of videos, blog entries, and websites speak to the fundamental power of L2 learning in terms of a positive transformation, and some educational courses use it to motivate learners to take their course. Yet, little research has been conducted into the transformative aspects or processes of L2 learning outside of study abroad experiences.

In summary, the dissertation study was inspired by the need for a deeper understanding of the formation and reformation (or potential transformation) of the L2 learner self throughout one's language learning career outside of impactful experiences such as study abroad. The dissertation aims to employ an interdisciplinary approach to investigate the L2 learner's self and learner motivation.

2. Literature Review

This study investigates perceived potential changes in the learner self both from a psychological and from an SLA perspective. Specifically, future visions of oneself and the potential motivating power of these visions to take action towards a better future (self) – a transformation – are of main interest in this dissertation.

This literature review offers an overview of the theoretical framework in which this dissertation is situated; specifically, research on the self (Subchapter 2.1) and motivation (Subchapter 2.2). The chapter also examines the topic of transformation, both how language learning as a transformative experience has been circulated in popular opinion (Subchapter 2.3.1) and how the topic has been addressed in research in SLA (Subchapter 2.4.1) and in psychology (Subchapter 2.4.2). The final subchapter (2.5) presents the research questions for the dissertation study.

2.1 The Self across the Disciplines

The dissertation at its core investigates the learner's self and the notion that a self can change if motivated to do so. This subchapter summarizes research on the theories of self across the two disciplines, SLA and psychology.

2.1.1 Situating Research of the Self

Two theoretical terms, taken from psychology, will guide this study, self-concept(s), and self. Foundational to theories that were later developed in both psychology and SLA – and to the focus of this dissertation – is the concept of multiple selves or a multi-faceted self. Higgins' (1987) Self-Discrepancy Theory relied on the key concepts of the *actual self*, or what one believes one actually

is; and the two self-guides, the *ideal self*, or one's self that one would like to be; and the *ought self*, or one's beliefs as to what one should be like. The discrepancy between the actual self and the two self-guides causes emotions that affect the current self to take action towards the *ideal* or *ought self* (Taylor, 2014). Markus and Nurius' (1986) concept of *possible selves* addresses the gap between *current* and *future selves*. Markus and Nurius explain that, "[p]ossible selves derive from representations of the self in the past and they include representations of the self in the future. They are different and separable from the current or now selves yet are intimately connected to them" (p. 954).

The currently most influential theory of motivation in SLA, the L2MSS (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009), directly references the seminal work of Higgins (1987) and Markus and Nurius (1986). Dörnyei's theoretical framework will be later discussed in greater detail. At present, it needs to be observed that although the field of psychology subsequently developed much more detailed theorizations of the concept of self (e.g., Oyserman and collaborators), theorization in SLA has persisted with the conceptions that were originally imported by Dörnyei, with only minor adjustments and no recourse to more recent work in psychology.

2.1.2 The Self, Self-Concept, and *Possible Selves*

The notion of 'change' or 'transformation' in a language learner lies at the core of this study. The persistent sense of a personal self (or self-concept or identity) that travels through time even as the self undergoes changes, has engaged researchers in a variety of fields, including theologians, philosophers, neuroscientists, psychologists, and language scientists. Change or transformation, i.e., the relative instability of the self (used as an umbrella term), have been cast as beneficial (e.g., as shown in terms such as 'self-improvement', 'growth', etc.) or threatening (e.g., as shown in

terms such as ‘self-alienation’, ‘losing oneself’, etc.). As will be shown, in the context of SLA, the series of imagined past, present, and future selves has often been positioned along a positive trajectory; each successive version of self has been taken to represent an L2-enhanced (better) version of the previous one. Typically, the relationships between different versions of self remain unexplored, with each conceptualized as a discrete unit with distinct labels, such as *ideal self* or *ought-to self* (e.g., Dörnyei, 2005). However, any claims about change or transformation need to attend to exactly the relationships that connect different versions of the self into a (more or less) coherent whole, i.e., a person. Whereas SLA has relied on psychological theories to capture transformative processes in L2 learning, it has done so only sporadically. The occasional borrowings that SLA has made from psychology frequently were followed by periods of little to no contact between the fields. As part of this study, I hope to reconcile the exploration of the L2 self with more recent work in psychology. To that end, I will examine concepts related to the self first from a psychological (2.1.3), and then, a second language acquisitional (2.1.4) perspective.

2.1.3 The Self and Self-Concept in (Social) Psychology

The ability to imagine different versions of one’s self and project them into the future is a hallmark of human development. As early as the onset of adolescence, the idea of *possible selves*, or different ideas about possible futures, starts to take place within a person, and individuals begin to try out different *possible selves* (Oyserman et al., 2004; Taylor, 2014). Teenagers voice different self-representations depending on different interpersonal contexts or roles (Harter et al., 1997). In fact, the notion of ‘feeling different’ depending on context may suggest that there are multiple self-representations at play that shift context-dependently (McConnell, 2011; Swann & Bosson, 2010). Together, the developmental aspects and the context-dependency of the emergence of multiple

self-representations suggest that multiple selves play a role in L2 acquisition, which corresponds with both a developmental process and new referential contexts.

In the field of psychology, the terms ‘self,’ ‘self-concept,’ and ‘identity’ can be kept separate or used interchangeably (Oyserman et al., 2012; Swann & Bosson, 2010). According to Oyserman et al. (2012) the self, self-concept, and identity should be thought of as,

“[...] a series of nested constructs, with self as the most encompassing term, self-concepts being embedded within the self, and identities being embedded within self-concepts. The self has a reflexive capacity, the ability to consider oneself as an object and to become aware that one is doing so.” (p. 94)

The self as the broadest term encompasses the ““me” at the center of experience [...]” (Markus & Kitayama, 2010, p. 421), the “I” that is aware of the self and continues to develop awareness, that thinks and reflects about the “me.” Self-concepts, then, as embedded within the self, are “cognitive structures that can include content, attitudes, or evaluative judgments and are used to make sense of the world, focus attention on one’s goals, and protect one’s sense of basic worth” (Oyserman et al., 2012, p. 72). Self-concepts are the concepts that one thinks of the “me” throughout time (Oyserman & Markus, 1998). The self-concept “[...] functions as a repository of autobiographical memories, as an organizer of experience, and as an emotional buffer and motivational resource [...]” (Oyserman & James, 2011, p. 500). These self-concepts, in turn, are made up of identities:

“Identities are the traits and characteristics, social relations, roles, and social group memberships that define who one is. Identities can be focused on the past-what used to be true of one, the present-what is true of one now, or the future-the person one expects or wishes to become, the person one feels obligated to try to become, or the person one fears

one may become. Identities are orienting, they provide a meaning-making lens [...]” (Oyserman et al., 2012, p. 69).

The self can therefore be made up of multiple self-concepts that in turn are made up of multiple identities. These identities are developed through different contexts and contain concepts of the current self as well as the past and ideas of the *future self* (Frazier & Hooker, 2005; Markus & Kitayama, 2010; Oyserman et al., 2012; Oyserman & Markus, 1998). Similar to self-concepts, *possible selves* exist in multiple versions that yet differ from each other in terms of how developed and how salient they are (Oyserman & James, 2009).

Available contexts and concepts differ from person to person and thereby account for the individuality of each person’s unique self. According to Oyserman et al. (2012), the self is relatively stable over time. Nevertheless, these researchers raise the point that despite its overarching stability, the self is also dynamically constructed, with different contexts making particular aspects of the self, or self-concepts, salient (McGuire & McGuire, 1988; Oyserman & James, 2011). The self is created through reflexive capacity as well as social experiences and contexts (Oyserman, 2001; Oyserman & James, 1998; Slotter et al., 2015), and is therefore a social product that is created by the moment (Oyserman et al., 2012). Self-concepts can be changed (Markus & Nurius, 1986), and the salience of a self-concept can fluctuate, depending on the situation (Cho, 2015). Because of the fluctuating aspect of self-concepts, researchers have proposed the ‘working self-concept’ as a construct to describe the self-concepts that are available, activated, or accessed in a given moment: The working self-concept is “[...] an integrated subset of all the available self-representations” (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 98).

It can be inferred, then, that the self as a construct is temporal (Frazier & Hooker, 2005; Oyserman, 2008), and transcends time in the sense that it is constant yet changing. *Possible selves*

are shaped through the interaction of past and current self-concepts (Cho, 2015). Even our memories are influenced by our self-concepts as they make meaning of these past experiences (Oyserman, 2001; Ryan & Irie, 2014).

The self plays a central role in meaning-making and motivated action. Self-concepts and *possible selves* have been theorized to drive motivated actions. According to Oyserman (2001, p. 500), self-concepts “promote persistent striving versus disengagement, sense of general contentment or incipient despair.” Motivation and demotivation go hand in hand when it comes to self-concepts, as they “represent the individual’s goals, motives, fears, and anxieties” (Oyserman & Markus, 1990, p. 113). Norman and Aron (2003) demonstrated a stronger link between *possible selves* and action depending on the availability, accessibility, or perceived control of a *possible self*. *Possible selves* can act as agents of change (Frazier & Hooker, 2005). For example, notions of *possible selves* “can produce current behavior in pursuit of becoming like one’s positive future selves and avoiding becoming like one’s negative future selves” (Oyserman & James, 2009, p. 376). They provide orientation for the future and implications for the present as they either are what a person hopes for or fears (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Oyserman, 2001, 2008; Oyserman & James, 2009), depending on their centrality, or salience, of this particular self for the individual (Cho, 2015).

However, *possible selves* only motivate to action if there is a sufficient degree of perceived discrepancy between the present selves and the *possible selves* (Carver, 2001), and if *possible selves* are relevant to the individual’s current situation (Oyserman et al., 2014) or important to the individual (Bak, 2015). Dunkel et al. (2006) expand on the connection between *possible selves* and motivational process through two studies with a focus on psychotherapy. According to Dunkel et al., there are four stages that lead to change:

“(1) as individuals contemplate change they generate possible selves,
 (2) as they decide to pursue change they begin to try and validate their chosen possible selves,
 (3) as they pursue some possible selves they also eliminate other possible selves, and
 (4) when the possible selves are achieved they are integrated into the current self-concept.” (p. 187)

To summarize, the self encompasses self-concepts and identities, is stable yet dynamic, and plays a role in motivated action. These selves, then, may play a pivotal role in motivation research in SLA.

2.1.4 The Self in SLA Research

In the last two decades, there has been a surge of research interested in the L2 learner as a social being and who the L2 learner is, including interest in a learner’s identity and its correlation with (second) language learning (e.g., Dewaele, 2014; Diao, 2017; Kinginger, 2004, 2015; Ricento, 2005).

Research into the role of the self specifically within SLA has been consistently increasing over the last two decades (Mercer, 2011; Taylor, 2014; Rubio, 2014; Williams & Mercer, 2014). While research in psychology has been dealing with both stable and dynamic self-concepts, SLA research has mostly approached the self as a static construct (Chan 2016). What is more, in SLA research, terms such as self, self-concept, identity, and self-identity have not been consistently theorized or distinguished from each other.

Specifically, research in SLA has focused on the link between the self and motivation (Boo et al., 2015; Ushioda, 2012; Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2009), especially in academic learning (Pajares

& Schunk, 2002). In fact, self-concept is a driving force behind L2 motivation (Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei, 2005), or as Cho (2015) explained:

“One underlying assumption of viewing self-concept as an integral motivational source is that learners, as active agents of their behavior, are able to regulate their behaviors in response to current situations and desired goals, expectations, and futures [...]. In other words, learner motivation can be enhanced or manipulated via self-concept” (p. 1100).

Motivation can be induced through different causes that relate to the self, namely (1) the expression of agency; (2) self-concept protection or enhancement; and (3) perceptions or beliefs about the self throughout time (Ushioda, 2014).

Hence, motivation plays an important role in the building and maintenance of an L2 self across a temporal trajectory. Ushioda developed a framework regarding the temporal L2 self (1998, p. 82). The framework, represented in a graph, shows a diagonal arrow that represents the learning trajectory of an L2 learner, with two circles A and B positioned alongside the arrow that represent learners at different stages of their language learning career (or the same learner at different stages of their career). There are two dimensions; one that is forward-oriented and includes long- and short-term goals; and one that is historically-oriented and includes past experiences both of language learning and the language learning context. Depending on the orientation of the L2 learner circles in the model, learner motivation is derived more from either of these dimensions and can vary from stage to stage and from learner to learner; it is therefore dynamic. According to Ushioda, this variation is dependent on “the extent to which its goal-focused and experience-related processes are internalized and integrated within the self or not” (Ushioda, 2014, p. 130).

While a learner's experience has been acknowledged as an important factor when it comes to L2 motivation (Dörnyei 2005, 2009), the effect of past selves on motivation has been underresearched. In a study on the effect of activating mental imagery (e.g., *possible selves*) on immediate task performance, Cho (2015) hypothesized that positive *possible selves*, in comparison to negative *possible selves*, increase effort and persistence during an L2 task. In the study, participants were asked to activate one of four mental images (successful future self; successful past self; successful future self of others; unsuccessful future self) while completing a writing task. Surprisingly, and different from a previous study that had employed a similar research design (Ruvolo & Markus, 1992), it was not the successful future self-group that outperformed the others, but rather, the successful past selves that showed increased persistence. An individual's own past selves, then, may function as a motivator for current action (Karniol & Ross, 1996) and, potentially, influence the working self-concept as well as *future selves*.

The connection between the self and motivation, and the three domains 'about the self' as mentioned above by Ushioda, have been investigated in SLA in different frameworks. For the purpose of this study, the L2MSS as well as the concept of vision are of relevance and will be discussed in the next subchapter.

2.2 L2 Motivation

In SLA research, the work of Dörnyei (2005, 2009) on learner motivation has been highly influential. Dörnyei developed his holistic motivational model, the L2MSS, through connecting L2 learning motivation and the self-framework. As the L2MSS is the main framework used in this dissertation, this subchapter will first concentrate on Gardner's socio-educational model (Subchapter 2.2.1) and the self-framework (Subchapter 2.2.2). Then, the L2MSS will be discussed (Subchapter 2.2.3) as well subsequent proposed additions to the model (Subchapter 2.2.3.1) and dimensions not mentioned in the L2MSS (Subchapter 2.2.3.2). Finally, Subchapter 2.2.4 will briefly expand on the notion of imagination and vision in relation to L2 motivation.

2.2.1 Integrative and Instrumental Motivation

One of the fundamental theories in L2 motivational research, the socio-educational model, was proposed by psychologist Robert C. Gardner (and his colleague, Wallace E. Lambert). Gardner's socio-educational model (initially proposed in 1975 and since revised multiple times), "provides a fundamental research paradigm to investigate the role of attitudes and motivation in learning another language" (Gardner, 2006, p. 237). The theoretical model is concerned with motivation specifically in the L2 learning context. Gardner and Lambert (1972) distinguished the motivation to learn another language from other learning motivation, "[...] since L2 learners are expected not simply to acquire knowledge of the target language but to identify with its speakers and adopt their distinctive speech patterns and styles" (Ushioda, 2011, p. 200). L2 motivation can be characterized by two distinct motivational orientations: 1) instrumental orientation; and 2) integrative orientation.

Instrumental orientation features the “utilitarian value of linguistic achievement” (Gardner & Lambert, 1972, p. 3). Instrumental motivation, then, refers to the motivation to receive concrete benefits through L2 proficiency, such as a specific type of job or salary (Dörnyei & Muir, 2016).

Integrative motivation, in turn, features “a sincere and personal interest in the people and culture represented by the other language group” (Lambert, 1974, p. 98). Integrativeness “refers to an openness to identify, at least in part, with another language community” (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003, p. 126). It therefore includes an affective component in relation to the L2 community. However, it does not necessarily signify that a learner wants to be part of an L2 community (Gardner, 2006). It has been hypothesized that the openness of an L2 learner more strongly motivates them to learn an L2 compared to a non-integratively-motivated individual.

It is important to note that there is a difference between a reason to learn an L2 and L2 motivation: “If one is motivated, he/she has reasons (motives) for engaging in the relevant activities, expends effort, persists in the activities, attends to the tasks, shows desire to achieve the goal, enjoys the activities, etc. A ‘reason’ is not motivation” (Gardner, 2006, p. 243). Reasons to learn a language alone do not inspire action from an individual unless motivation is involved.

2.2.2 The Self and L2 Motivation

As mentioned above, the L2MSS by Dörnyei (2005, 2009) was influenced by the work of Robert Gardner (1985). In his work that introduces the L2MSS, Dörnyei (2005) indicates that he was inspired by Gardner’s socio-educational model as follows:

“I have been intrigued by Robert Gardner’s concept of ‘integrativeness’ throughout my whole research career. Although Gardner’s conceptualization of the concept makes sense in the multicultural context of Montreal, where it originated from, extending the relevance

of integrativeness to learning environments that are significantly different from his context (because, e.g., there is no real contact with L2 speakers available for the learners) has not always been straightforward. Thus, I have been trying to find a broader interpretation of the notion than was originally offered by Gardner—the new paradigm I propose builds on the robust body of past research but reinterprets the concept in a way that it goes beyond the literal meaning of the verb ‘integrate.’” (p. 94)

Dörnyei suggests the broadening or reinterpretation of the concept of ‘integrativeness’ to be more inclusive of learning contexts such as the language classroom. As Dörnyei points out, the socio-educational model underlines the importance of attitudes toward L2 communities, with the underlying research set in the multilingual and multicultural context of Canada. Therefore, a broadening of the concept to encompass all types of L2 acquisition was needed. What is more, Dörnyei combined the notion of integrativeness with the concept of *possible selves* as motivators, which will be described in more detail in the next subchapter.

2.2.3 The L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS)

The L2MSS has been the dominant theory in motivational research in SLA. This subchapter will briefly outline the different aspects and functions of this model.

Dörnyei acknowledged the influence of Gardner’s concept of integrative motivation (Gardner, 1985). However, he developed his motivational model primarily through connecting second language learning motivation and the self-framework pioneered in psychology (see Subchapter 2.1.3). Regarding this connection, Dörnyei states that “[...] a foreign language is more than a mere communication code that can be learnt similarly to other academic subjects; instead,

it is also part of the individual's personal 'core,' involved in most mental activities and forming an important part of one's identity" (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 94).

The L2MSS was largely inspired by the future-oriented *possible selves* theory by Markus and Nurius (1986), especially since the relevance of *possible selves* in an academic context had previously been researched and documented (e.g., Oyserman et al., 2002; Oyserman et al., 2004). What is more, Higgins' (1987) self-discrepancy theory and the self-guides, *ideal self*, and *ought self*, informed the L2MSS. The model therefore combines the self-concept of an L2 learner with mental future images that create motivation through the discrepancy between the current and future, desired self-states (Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017).

The L2MSS is composed of three major components (Dörnyei 2005, 2009):

1. the *ideal L2 self*, the learner's *ideal self* specifically relating to their L2 learning experience;
2. the *ought-to L2 self*, which encompasses the learner's attributes they ought-to possess to either meet expectations or to avoid repercussions; and
3. the L2 learning experience, which concerns the general learning environment and learning experience of the learner.

The third dimension, the L2 learning experience, deviates from the psychological theories previously cited and connects the model to the L2 learning context. This dimension differs from the two self-guide inspired dimensions as it concerns itself with the aspects of the language learning process, rather than self-images (Dörnyei, 2019b). However, it is considered to be a strong predictor when it comes to language learning achievement and motivation (Al-Hoorie, 2018; Teimouri, 2017).

2.2.3.1 Different Dimensions of the L2 Motivational Self

In the years following the inception of the L2MSS, various studies have used and built upon the framework, including Dörnyei's own subsequent work (e.g.; Boo et al., 2015; Cho, 2015; Dörnyei, 2019a, 2019b; Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017; Dörnyei & Chan, 2013; Ushioda, 2011). Multiple studies have since suggested modifications to the L2MSS, especially regarding other dimensions of the self that may motivate an L2 learner in their language learning.

For instance, Thompson and her colleagues (e.g., Thompson & Vásquez, 2015; Thompson, 2017) proposed the addition of the *anti-ought-to self*, in direct opposition to the *ought-to self* in the L2MSS. The learner, instead of being the “submissive” actor who is motivated by what they are supposed to be, can also be the “dominant” actor – motivated by their resistance against what society tells them to be or what language to learn: “Incorporating the *anti-ought-to self* into the L2MSS would allow for the type of *future self* that defines the learner as the prevailing force in the language learning process” (Thompson 2017, p. 39).

In a similar counter-concept fashion, Yu et al. (2018) investigated the *dreaded self* in the SLA context through Chinese PhD students' self-identity histories by means of retrospective case studies. The *dreaded self* is operationalized in regard to the L2 learner as follows:

“The dreaded L2 self refers to a future-oriented imagined person with lower L2 competence whom learners might fear or dread becoming (e.g., a person who fails in a study programme). Hence, the dreaded self is derived from negative external consequences (e.g., school failure) that can be internalized because of its relation to personal future development.” (Yu et al., 2018, pp. 124–125).

The study showed that the *dreaded self* was as important as the *ideal self* when it came to the participants' motivation. However, there are arguments that the *dreaded self* is the same as the

feared self – the opposite of the *ideal self* (Dörnyei, 2009). Dörnyei did not address the omission of the *feared* (or *dreaded*) *self* in the L2MSS (Yu et al., 2018).

Further, Chavez (2020) explored the dimension of the *(im)plausible foreign-language self*, adding the component of possibility and reality to the system. In her study, Chavez connects the *(im)plausible self* to learners' perceptions of their target cultural group:

“The plausible or implausible FL (= foreign language) self represents a learner's self-concept in terms of whether the learner's personal and dispositional characteristics (such as ethnicity, gender, socio-economic position, political views, etc.) suggest to the learner that membership in a specific foreign language community [...] is feasible” (p. 7).

Another self-dimension that is oriented towards community is the *rooted L2 self*, coined by MacIntyre et al. (2017). MacIntyre et al. investigated the community-level motivational power of cultural practices such as music and dance in the Gaelic context of Nova Scotia, with particular focus on heritage language speakers. The *rooted self*, then, is,

“[...] a heritage-oriented concept defined by strong feelings of connection to speakers of the language, which can be tied to specific individuals [...] but more generally a defined community [...]. The sense of connection appears to emerge from factors closely associated with the language—such as place, shared history, and cultural practices [...]” (MacIntyre et al., 2017, p. 512).

An addition to the *ideal self*-domain is the *ideal multilingual self*, introduced by Henry (2017), that describes a learner's hopes to become or to be multilingual. Busse (2017) and Ushioda (2017) describe similar *multi-* or *plurilingual future selves*.

While the L2MSS works with the terms ‘dimension,’ ‘self,’ and ‘aspect’ to denote the different activated and potentially motivating concepts of the larger learner self, in this dissertation,

in accordance with the definition by Oyserman et al. (2012), the term ‘self-concept’ will be used to describe the parts that make up the self and that are shaped by past, present, and future. However, when discussing the previously proposed different selves, such as the *ideal self*, or when referring to a temporal collection of different self-concepts, such as *possible selves* or *past selves*, the established term, ‘self,’ will be used.

2.3.2 Past Selves

The L2MSS as a system of motivation is inherently future-oriented. However, as language learning motivation is a perpetual process across time, it is important to take past experiences, and similarly, past selves and selves generated through this interplay of past, present, and future into account when discussing the L2 learner’s self-construction and motivation to learn a foreign language at different timepoints across their learner trajectory.

In the field of psychology, Peetz and Wilson (2008) investigated the *temporally extended self*; and Singer and Salovey (1993) pioneered the *(mis)remembered self*. The *temporally extended self* spans the entirety of the self, including the current self, their aspirations, and their past experiences. The reconstruction of past selves and the construction of *future selves* are found to be similar (Strahan & Wilson, 2006). It depends, though, on the subjective temporal distance of the *future self* from the current self how motivating, or influential, the *future self* is (Peetz et al., 2009).

Similarly, the *(mis)remembered self* describes the connection between self-defining memories and one’s goals. Singer and Salovey (1993) explain as follows:

“[Memories] refer us to what we imagine for the future. If we want to know how the story ends, we have only what we know of the story thus far to inform our speculation. One of

the life's ironies, of course, is that how we interpret the story, how we feel about past incidents of our lives, will influence the story still to come. In the act of looking forward as a means to escape the past, we inevitably run into the past.” (p. 80)

The inevitable connection of one's past to one's future, tied together by emotion and (mis)remembrance, influences one's motivation. In fact, there is some evidence that emotion has an influence on one's information about the self (Palfai & Salovey, 1992). Therefore, what one remembers or misremembers potentially affects one's current self as well as *future* and *possible selves*.

2.2.4 Imagination and Vision

Within the L2MSS framework, motivation is derived from the discrepancy between an L2 learner's *possible self* and their current self. An important key factor for *possible selves* is the ability to imagine one's future, to have a vision from which motivation to action can be generated. These two concepts, vision and imagination, are discussed in this subchapter.

The concept of L2-related vision that was first investigated by Dörnyei and his associates (e.g., Dörnyei & Chan, 2013; Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014; Muir & Dörnyei, 2013) and was deemed to be a powerful motivational force (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014). In their study on *future L2 selves* and mental imagery, Dörnyei and Chan (2013) investigated the relationship between the intensity of a learner's motivation in their L2 and their capability for mental images, such as their own *future selves*. The authors emphasized the connection between vision and *possible selves*:

“This means that, in many ways, possible selves are similar to one's visions about oneself; indeed, Markus and Nurius (1987, p. 159) confirm that “[p]ossible selves encompass within

their scope *visions* of desired and undesired end states” (emphasis added)—thus, possible selves can be seen as the “vision of what might be”” (p. 440).

In their questionnaire study of teenaged speakers of English and Mandarin, Dörnyei and Chan uncovered a significant link between future self-guides and effort. They also found there to be mental images of the *ideal self* that are L2-specific. Muir and Dörnyei (2013) synthesized motivation and vision into motivational currents, constructs that are “[...] a motivational drive which energizes long-term, sustained behaviour (such as language learning), and through placing vision and goals as critical central components within this construct, it offers real and practical motivational potential” (p. 357). Motivational currents play a role in L2-motivation, future, and potential change for an L2-learner and are therefore relevant constructs for this dissertation.

Imagination is important to create such a vision of the *future self*. In SLA, imagination has mainly been researched in the context of ‘imagined communities,’ a concept that can serve as an explanation for L2 learner identity construction (Ryan & Irie, 2014). The concept was first applied in SLA by Norton (2001), who investigated immigrant learners’ struggles with access to language communities. Imagined communities, according to Norton, are “groups of people, not immediately tangible and accessible, with whom [learners] connect through the power of imagination” (Kanno & Norton, 2003, p. 241). In addition, Norton (2016) later explained the community aspect further: “[...] my use of this expression signals any community of the imagination that is desirable to the language learner, whether a community of professionals, sports fans, or comic book readers” (p. 477). These imagined communities are powerful motivators for the future, as they offer “[...] possibilities for an enhanced range of identity options in the future. An imagined community assumes an imagined identity, and a learner’s investment in the target language can be understood within this context” (Norton & Toohey, 2001, p. 415). The concept was originally conceived by

Anderson (1983) who observed a sense of community, or nation, in people who never met all the members of their nation. Wenger's (1998) notion of imagined communities of practice was a further inspiration for Norton (e.g., Norton & McKinney, 2011). In short, imagined communities are an example of the role that vision plays in an L2 learner's motivation.

2.3 The Promise of Transformation and L2 Motivation

The 2007 MLA report emphasizes the importance of learning a foreign language in a post-9/11 world. However, according to this report, the goals and motivations differ:

“Divergent views concerning language and its many functions are reflected in differing approaches to the study of language. At one end, language is considered to be principally instrumental, a skill to use for communicating thought and information. At the opposite end, language is understood as an essential element of a human being's thought processes, perceptions, and self-expressions; and as such it is considered to be at the core of translingual and transcultural competence. While we use language to communicate our needs to others, language simultaneously reveals us to others and to ourselves. Language is a complex multifunctional phenomenon that links an individual to other individuals, to communities, and to national cultures.”

While this quote captures both instrumental and integrative motivations for language learning, the report also touches on a learner's self and self-expression as well as the process of self-revelation, exploration, and social aspects of language learning. In similar fashion, there have been many personal accounts and online blogs that touch on this self-expression, especially from a perspective of change of self through language learning. In this chapter, I will describe some of these notions

of change as they are reported by language learners in popular opinion (2.3.1) before examining goals and motivations as described on language program websites across the U.S. (2.3.2).

2.3.1 Transformation through L2 Learning in Popular Opinion

The dissertation was conceived because of the prevalence of the buzzword ‘transformation’ in popular culture and in connection with language learning. In fact, the feeling of being different while speaking a foreign language is one that appears in numerous blog entries, online magazines, and anecdotes from foreign language learners who describe having a distinct personality in each of their respective languages. The article, “Feel more fun in French? Your personality can change depending on the language you speak,” by Nicola Prentis published on the internet portal *quartz.com* quotes a learner reporting feeling “guarded, reserved, uncomfortable” when speaking Russian, but “curious, outgoing, and free” when speaking English. Another learner thinks of French people as “smart, elegant, admirable,” and he himself feels “sophisticated, elegant, suave” when speaking in his foreign language of French.²

“Why do I feel I am a different person when I speak another language?”, is just one example of a multitude of similar questions on Quora (see Figure 1), an internet portal where users answer each others’ questions.

² <https://qz.com/925630/feel-more-fun-in-french-your-personality-can-change-depending-on-the-language-you-speak/>, similar questions can be found on Reddit: https://www.reddit.com/r/linguistics/comments/5kz77s/why_do_i_feel_i_am_a_different_person_when_i/ [last accessed 31 March 2023].

Figure 1: Questions on Quora related to feeling different in a foreign language

Related Questions

Why do I have a different personality when I speak a different language?

Why do I feel nervous speaking another language?

It feels as if my personality changes when I speak a different language to my native tongue. Is this common?

Do you feel like another person when speaking in foreign languages?

What do you feel when speaking another language?

Does it feel weird to speak another language?

In his blog post from 2012,³ Josh Plotkin goes so far as to say that one's personality changes in one's foreign language, giving tips on how to further improve one's personality to better fit the target language and culture.

Other posts claim the power of language learning as transformin the learner, including an inquisitive post on *enterenchanted.com* entitled, "Can language transform your life?"⁴; an online article posted to *e-ducation.net* that discusses tools to better learn a language entitled, "How Learning a Language Transforms You Into A New Person"⁵; a blog post on *sms-spanish.com* on the benefits of learning another language in terms of complete life changes, the power of language learning, and the promise of a "[...] completely new way of life"⁶; or an online blog post on *trufluency.com* that promises that language learning makes one a better person based on new perspective-taking that comes with learning a foreign language ("Yes, learning a language makes

³ <https://reallifeglobal.com/how-your-personality-changes-in-a-foreign-language/> [last accessed 31 March 2023].

⁴ <https://enterenchanted.com/can-language-transform-your-life/> [last accessed 31 March 2023].

⁵ <https://e-education.net/how-learning-a-language-transforms-you-into-a-new-person/> [last accessed 31 March 2023].

⁶ <https://sms-spanish.com/learning-language-changes-life/> [last accessed 31 March 2023].

you a better person”).⁷ Lists of reasons why or in what way language learning will change your life are abundant, e.g., a compilation of “20 ways that learning languages changes the world (and transforms your life),” posted to the website of *Education First* (EF), a large international education company.⁸

When it comes to language learning courses, some use the idea of transformation of one’s language skills to sell their courses. In spring 2020, Gareth Popkins from *howtogetfluent.com* sold a German course under the premise of transforming German learners “to power [themselves] up as an “independent user” of the language [...];” not only promising a transformation of German language skills but rather a transformation into an independent language user.⁹

2.3.2 L2 Learning as a Selling Point

Language programs at universities in the US have started to advertise their programs by utilizing hoped-for outcomes of language learning as motivation for prospective students to enroll in their classes as one way of trying to counteract the decline in enrollment in language programs other than English according to a study by the Modern Language Association (Looney & Lusin, 2019). For example, a Google search of reasons to study a foreign language brought attention to a list of 25 reasons to study foreign languages was compiled by Auburn University and has been used on different school websites (e.g., The University of North Georgia) to appeal to prospective students.¹⁰ Among the more salient reasons are the promise of improvement, e.g., improved positive attitudes and respect toward different people; improved analytical and communication

⁷ <https://trufluency.com/learning-a-language-makes-you-better/> [last accessed 31 March 2023].

⁸ <https://www.ef.edu/blog/language/20-ways-that-learning-languages-changes-the-world-and-transforms-your-life/> [last accessed 31 March 2023].

⁹ <https://howtogetfluent.com/transform-your-german-by-easter/> [last accessed 31 March 2023].

¹⁰ <https://cla.auburn.edu/world-languages/future-students/25-reasons-to-study-foreign-languages/> [last accessed 31 March 2023].

skills; increased creativity; increased knowledge of one's L1; or an expansion of one's worldview. There are also added instrumental advantages, e.g., becoming more marketable to an employer and enjoying increased hiring opportunities; international travel is made easier; or being able to participate in foreign trade.

Other programs similarly appeal to the practical side of language study, such as the mention of German being the most widely spoken language in Europe (American University) or that Germany is "Europe's power house" (University of Washington)¹¹. Oftentimes, universities will further mention past cultural achievements or the products of a culture to boost students' interest, such as art, music, or even science and technology inventions from the target culture.

Certain programs appeal to integratively-motivated students, including the University of Louisville, which lists the connection with other cultures and peoples, expanding one's horizons, as well as getting "an insider's view of another culture and a new view of your own" as one of the reasons to study a world language.¹² Similarly, the University of Sheffield lists study abroad as an extension of language classes as an opportunity to expand one's horizon.¹³ One reason that some universities list is past immigration to the United States. The connection to one's heritage, or to the past generation that emigrated from another country to the U.S., can serve as a motivating factor. Auburn University claims that "foreign language study offers a sense of the past culturally and linguistically [...]"¹⁴ and schools like Alfred University or American University both mention heritage when appealing to prospective students.

¹¹ <https://german.washington.edu/languages-matter-why-we-learn-german> [last accessed 31 March 2023].

¹² <https://louisville.edu/languages/students> [last accessed 31 March 2023].

¹³ <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/languages/lfa/benefits> [last accessed 31 March 2023].

¹⁴ <https://cla.auburn.edu/world-languages/future-students/25-reasons-to-study-foreign-languages/> [last accessed 31 March 2023].

2.3.3 A Multitude of Motivations

While higher education seems to resort to listing as many reasons as possible to appeal to as many students as possible, there seems to be a lingering promise of the power of positive change that comes with studying a foreign language, whether it be by reconnecting with one's own past or by broadening one's horizon.

In any case, there seem to be two different approaches to appealing to prospective students. For one, programs justify their existence by appealing to a student's instrumental motivation. For example, on the website of the North Dakota State University, Elizabeth Crisp Crawford, professor of communication, asks in relation to language learning: "[...] what is the actual return on investment for modern language study?"¹⁵ The need for justification through (monetary) gain stands in stark contrast to the social, more integratively-oriented reasons that appeal to an *ideal self* in the future. On the same website, Ross Collins, professor of communication, describes integrative reasons to study a language:

"Learning another language does not simply give us an easier way to order from a menu in Paris, or hail a taxi in Tokyo, if we ever even go there. It's not only a way to excel in business or improve memory and critical thinking, though it is that. Beyond practical considerations, language underpins culture. It offers us another way to look at fellow human beings, at our world, and even at ourselves. Learning another language cracks the door into a world that so often seems opaque and closed. Maybe even scary. We understand more about why people may think differently from us. We gain tolerance of other

¹⁵ https://www.ndsu.edu/modernlanguages/about/languages/why_study_languages/ [last accessed 31 March 2023].

viewpoints, respect for other cultures, and insights into ideals of our own that we probably have not examined before.”¹⁶

The juxtaposition of return on investment and a profound reevaluation, transformation, or even expansion of the self stands out in these two contrasting writings. In the end, the tension between the two poles does not get resolved, but is rather left to the student. The student’s motivation is highly personalized.

2.4 Transformation and Transformative Experiences

Transformation, according to the APA Dictionary of Psychology, can be defined as “any change in appearance, form, function, or structure,” and, according to the Cambridge Dictionary, as “a complete change in the appearance or character of something or someone, especially so that that thing or person is improved.” Two aspects are central to the definition: 1) there is a change, and 2) it should be complete. The added component of general improvement as expressed in the Cambridge Dictionary definition seems to be optional. While most transformation studies lack a clear definition of what transformation entails (see below), it can be assumed that they generally follow the notion of complete change.

2.4.1 Transformation in SLA Research

Despite the often-declared positive transformational power of language learning and the idea of language learning as a transformative process (Chavez, 2020; Ushioda, 2016), the research on learner transformation in SLA has been sparse. In fact, there is a wealth of research into the transformative power of education (e.g., Rogoff, 1994), including the theory of transformative

¹⁶ https://www.ndsu.edu/modernlanguages/about/languages/why_study_languages/ [last accessed 31 March 2023].

learning, or transformation theory that focuses on the change in a learner's thinking based on new information (Cranton, 2006; Mezirow, 1975, 1991; Taylor & Cranton, 2012). However, there is little research into the processes of the transformed L2 self in SLA, although both Dörnyei's L2MSS and Gardner's socio-educational model (2006) evoke the possibility of transformation through language learning, especially in connection with motivation (Chavez, 2020).

Instead, the main focus has been on the transformational aspects of study abroad and sojourning, specifically regarding a language learner's self and identity (Barkhuizen, 2017; Dirkx et al., 2010; Ellwood, 2011; Fryer & Roger, 2017, 2018; Grabowski et al., 2017; Hsieh, 2009; Milstein, 2005; Trilokekar & Kukar, 2011; Yu et al., 2018), as well as a sense of identity transformation among bilinguals or advanced learners (e.g., Ramírez-Esparza, 2006). Ellwood (2011), investigating identity transformations among study abroad program participants, directly addresses the need of a holistic, full account of the influence of learning a foreign language on the identity of a learner: "Learning is an investment in what one is to become. A corollary of this is that all second language pedagogy needs to address the issue of identity transformation" (p. 960).

Grabowski et al. (2017) call sojourning a "rite of passage" and a "transformative experience" that can be characterized as a "period of identity formation" for the learners abroad (p. 139). Dewaele (2014) cites the time of study abroad as a time for reflection on their identity for many learners, evoked by being confronted with new communities and social networks, as well as cultural differences and potential culture shock. Milstein (2005) notes regarding this critical period abroad that "some sojourners describe a transformation in their very sense of self, both in how they experience their own cultures and in how they view their life paths" (p. 218).

In their longitudinal study investigating the influence of study abroad experiences on the L2 self and the learning motivation of eight Japanese students, Fryer and Roger (2018) employed

semi-structured interviews and narrative journals to observe short- and long-term changes in the L2MSS of the learners. Their study uncovered three distinct patterns in the change of the learners' L2 selves. The experiences were either empowering and showed the learners that they were moving toward an *ideal L2 self*; there was both an *ideal self* and an *ought-to self* at play; or the *feared self* had the upper hand. While the authors concluded that study abroad helps students envision and experience possible futures, it also shows the diverse transformational power to the learners' perception of their selves.

As one of the only studies that does not ground an identity transformation approach in study abroad or the sojourning experience, Capobianco's ethnographic study (2017) investigated identity transformations in a continued process of language study of Japanese learners of English through analyzing conceptual changes and interactions the learners experience: "[...] the process of learning a language is much more than a unidirectional acquisition of pragmatic skills; it is also a highly personalized process capable of engendering transformations in the ways individual learners' conceptualize their understandings of self-identity" (p. 14). Capobianco underlines the dynamic aspect of identity and describes second language acquisition as not only a linguistic, but also an identity-shaping process that enables students to reevaluate and to reformulate their identities vis-a-vis the target language. The study suggests that there are two discrete processes that influence revelations about identity in L2 learners: studying the language itself and engaging in interactions with a target language community.

2.4.2 Transformation in Psychology

In the field of psychology, research into transformation has been tied to transitions across life phases:

“Transitions are often accompanied by changes in the accessibility of, commitment to, and beliefs about the likelihood of attaining a particular possible identity. These changes may occur slowly as new challenges unfold developmentally, or they can occur relatively quickly as new challenges present themselves due to unforeseen circumstances” (Oyserman & James, 2011, p. 125).

Therefore, the effect of study abroad as a transformative catalyst can be investigated from the perspective of a life transition.

Researchers in narrative studies have suggested a link between narratives and transforming identities, suggesting that identity can be (re)constructed through self-narration (Taniguchi, 2010). Such self-narration underlines the power of language when it comes to identity (trans)formation: “Individuals understand themselves through the medium of language, through talking and writing, and it is through these processes that individuals are constantly engaged in the process of creating themselves” (Crossley, 2000, p. 10). Therefore, language and self-processing seems to be connected.

A study by Hudson and Fraley (2015) investigated whether people can change their personality traits volitionally, pointing out that many people actually do feel the want to change their personalities. Findings suggest that there is a change in the desired direction, especially in people who had higher goals at the beginning of the study. If people can transform their personality, there may be a possible transformation of the self as well.

One issue that has been consistent in both SLA and psychology is the lack of a clear definition of what “transformation” means or entails. While Oyserman and James (2011) speak of transitions and transitional periods, none of the SLA studies give a definitive definition.

In a study by Fortino et al. (2021) that investigated positive psychological transformation in regard to catalysts and processes of said transformation, transformation is defined as “[...] a process of meaningful and lasting change in an individual’s way of being” (p. 96). What Fortino et al. define as “catalysts of transformation” (p. 97), or “destabilizers” (Schlitz et al., 2011, p. 227), are disruptive factors in a person’s life, such as trauma, adaptation, or inspiration. However, the process of transformation was found to be similar yet differing along different sectors of identity, such as ethnicity, age, or gender. What is more, there seems to be an indication that the process of transformation leads to decreased well-being before resulting in elevated well-being (Fortino et al., 2021; Taylor, 2012).

2.5 Research Questions

A review of research to-date suggests a need to examine the L2 self in greater depth and scope, including the formation of the L2 self; motivation that led to potential changes of an L2 self (or *transformation* of the L2 self); and potential changes of the L2 self as they are perceived by learners across time. The latter point also underscores the need to attend to a learner’s past selves. While there have been numerous studies on motivational *future selves*, all built upon Dörnyei’s L2MSS (e.g., Henry, 2017; MacIntyre et al., 2017; Thompson & Vasquez, 2015), there has been little to no investigation into how learners perceive dynamic or static aspects of the L2 self over time. Research in psychology confirms the importance of past selves for motivation (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Peetz & Wilson, 2008; Singer & Salovey, 1993) as well as the degree of complexity

that is inherent in conceptions of self that have not been adequately accounted for in the theorization of the L2 self.

Further, there is little to no research into L2 learning as a catalyst for, or process involved in, transformation, despite ample testimonies in online media about the transformative power of language learning. The few studies that have, in fact, investigated transformation through L2 learning, have been limited to study-abroad contexts and typically have not involved learners' future projections and reflections on the past.

The dissertation aims to use empirical data to refresh theoretical connections between the fields of SLA and psychology and to document self-perceived trajectories of L2 selves among learners who are studied as individuals with the view to assess static and dynamic components in their self-concepts; to uncover perceived gaps between past, current, and future selves; to hear the learners' views on whether and how these selves develop, which selves they seek out and which they would like to distance themselves from; and ultimately, to understand better the specific motivational L2-self system that each learner experiences.

The specific design of the study will be described in a subsequent chapter. In its essence, eight examples of learner profiles, each composed of a different constellation of variables, such as first language, second language learning and use, academic major, professional standing, or place of residence, were presented to six learners of German in the form of vignettes. In a survey, each study participant described – among other information – their German-learning histories and expected learning trajectory and rated each profile according to the perceived likeness they¹⁷ felt to it at each of five timepoints of reference that spanned the timeframe from before they began their formal studies of German to after their formal studies of German will have been concluded.

¹⁷ Even though all six participants reported to be female-identifying (see Chapter 3), participants were not asked for their preferred pronouns. Therefore, all participants will be referred to as “they/them” in the dissertation.

In face-to-face interviews, participants also explained which of the profiles they would most and least like to resemble.

The study aimed to explore three specific themes, each represented by a set of research questions. The three research themes (RTs) were:

1. Self-perceived likeness of six learners to each of eight language user profiles;
2. Learners' self-perceived likeness to each of eight language user profiles across the five timepoints; and
3. Individual learners' (dis)preferences of the eight language user profiles.

The first RT serves as an umbrella for five research questions (RQs) that correspond to one of five timepoints selected to represent salient timepoints during a language learner's career. The second RT consists of seven RQs, with the first six RQs corresponding to each of the six participants in the study and their overall trajectories, and the seventh RQ investigating a comparison of the participants' answers regarding highest and lowest reported likeness. Finally, the third RT examines most and least preferred profiles among all participants in the study as well as which profiles participants reported to resemble the most at the time of taking the study. All taken together, the RTs and corresponding RQs are as follows:

(1) Research Theme 1: Self-perceived likeness of six learners to each of eight language user profiles

RQ 1.1: How much like each of eight language user profiles (Vignettes A-H) did each of six study participants recollect they had been *before* their formal studies of German began?

RQ 1.2: How much like each of eight language user profiles (Vignettes A-H) did each of six study participants recollect they had been *at the beginning* of their formal studies of German?

RQ 1.3: How much like each of eight language user profiles (vignettes A-H) did each of six study participants report they are *at the time* of taking this study?

RQ 1.4: How much like each of eight language user profiles (Vignettes A-H) did each of six study participants project they will be *at the conclusion* of their formal German studies?

RQ 1.5: How much like each of eight language user profiles (Vignettes A-H) did each of six study participants project they will be in the times *when they are no longer engaged* in formal studies of German?

(2) Research Theme 2: Learners' self-perceived likeness to each of eight language user profiles across the five timepoints (RQs 1.1-1.5)

RQ 2.1: What are the trajectories of perceived self-likeness to each of the eight language user profiles (Vignettes A-H) across the five timepoints for participant *The Architect* (P1)?

RQ 2.2: What are the trajectories of perceived self-likeness to each of the eight language user profiles (Vignettes A-H) across the five timepoints for participant *The Connector* (P2)?

RQ 2.3: What are the trajectories of perceived self-likeness to each of the eight language user profiles (Vignettes A-H) across the five timepoints for participant *The Resolute* (P3)?

RQ 2.4: What are the trajectories of perceived self-likeness to each of the eight language user profiles (Vignettes A-H) across the five timepoints for participant *The Pragmatist* (P4)?

RQ 2.5: What are the trajectories of perceived self-likeness to each of the eight language user profiles (Vignettes A-H) across the five timepoints for participant *The Dreamer* (P5)?

RQ 2.6: What are the trajectories of perceived self-likeness to each of the eight language user profiles (Vignettes A-H) across the five timepoints for participant *The Grad* (P6)?

RQ 2.7 Looking at five respondents (P1-5), which of the eight language user profiles (Vignettes A-H) was most frequently chosen as, respectively, the one most and the one least like respondents at each of five timepoints?

(3) Research Theme 3: Individual learners' (dis)preferences of the eight language user profiles

RQ3.1: Which of eight language user profiles (Vignettes A-H) did each participant P1-6 most like to resemble at the time of their respective interview?

RQ3.2: Which of eight language user profiles (Vignettes A-H) did each participant P1-6 least like to resemble at the time of their respective interview?

RQ3.3: Which of eight language user profiles (Vignettes A-H) did each participant P1-6 report to resemble the most at the time of their respective interview?

3. Methods

This chapter provides an overview of the research design of the overarching study (Subchapter 3.1) from which this dissertation was derived, before describing the research materials utilized in the study (3.2), including the demographic information of the participants (3.2.2); the vignette methodology (3.2.3); and the interviews (3.2.4), as well as the procedures of the study (3.3), including recruitment (3.3.1) and study participants (3.3.2).

3.1 The Design of the Overarching Study

The dissertation study was derived from a larger, overarching research project that set out to investigate two main objectives: (1) whether, in the eyes of learners, SLA has the potential to transform them, and (2) in the parlance of a leading model of L2 motivation (the L2MSS; Dörnyei 2005, 2009; see Subchapter 2.2.3), whether learners possess notions of an *ideal L2 self* and believe that they can or will approximate it in the course of their German studies. The scope of the dissertation study, in turn, includes an examination from a contemporary vantage point of (1) how different learners recall former L2 selves; (2) how these learners project *future L2 selves*; (3) and, further, how these successive L2 selves relate to the given learner's *ideal L2 self*.

The study was approved and deemed exempt by the University of Wisconsin–Madison's Education and Social/Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board (IRB) on November 24, 2020, and has been modified once to include a wider range of subjects. The Notice of Approval for this study (Protocol 2020-1370) is shown in Appendix A.

The overarching study followed a mixed-methods design that comprised a two-part questionnaire and interviews that followed up on the questionnaire's second part. Part I of the questionnaire consisted of six sections that gathered information about (1) the participant's

background information, their experiences with (2) learning German and (3) general language learning, and their thoughts about (4) perfect German, (5) native speakers of German, as well as (6) their goals for learning German. Part II of the questionnaire asked participants to rate their likeness to eight different L2-user profiles across five different timepoints relative to their formal study of German. The eight L2-user profiles were captured in the form of vignettes, an approach that will be explained and described further below (Subchapter 3.2.3).

Further, respondents were asked to imagine that they were writing a pitch for a soap opera focused on the life of a German major ten years past graduation from university. They were asked to imagine this person's (1) current professional and/or personal situation; (2) personal qualities and attitudes; (3) specific skills that distinguish them from their peers; (4) appearance; (5) current or past job(s); (6) influential people in their life; (7) actions that have led to the current situation; as well as the role that German has played or plays in this person's life.

The interviews elicited responses from the participants on their views on whether L2 learning could transform a learner; their ratings from the Questionnaire Part II; as well as explanations of their soap opera pitch. The Questionnaire Part I can be viewed in Appendix B; Questionnaire Part II can be viewed in Appendix C. The interview script can be viewed in Appendix D. The design components that yielded the data analyzed in the dissertation study will be described in greater detail below.

Table 1 (below) illustrates an overview of the three instruments employed successively in this study. Instrument components that provided data for analysis in this study are highlighted in yellow. A detailed description of the participants, components relevant to the dissertation study, and administrative procedures will follow below. An empty row between the instruments symbolizes a separation in time when it comes to administration.

Table 1: Overview of the three different instruments and their components employed in the study

Instrument	Instrument components
Questionnaire Part I	(1) Background information
	(2) Experiences with learning German
	(3) Experiences with general language learning
	(4) Thoughts about perfect German
	(5) Thoughts about native speakers of German
	(6) Goals for learning German
Questionnaire Part II	(1) Likeness ratings to eight different L2-user profiles across five timepoints
	(2) Soap opera pitch
Interview	(1) Self-positioning
	(2) Discussion of the ratings from Questionnaire Part II
	(3) Soap opera pitch about the life of a German major ten years after graduation

Whereas typically participants are described first, it is likely that for the present purposes, the role of participants in the study needs to be considered against the backdrop of materials and administrative procedures. Therefore, I will first describe research materials and discuss participants in the later context of data gathering procedures.

3.2 Research Materials

Three components of the research instrument provided data for this study: Demographic information (see Questionnaire Part I, which was used in the description of participants, described further below, but not considered in analytic procedures); vignettes (described just below); and interviews (described further below).

3.2.2 Demographic Information

The demographic information that was collected as part of the Questionnaire Part I consisted of the participant's current enrollment (first-year; sophomore; junior; senior; graduate student) and student (domestic; international; guest student) status; their intended major/s and certificate/s¹⁸ and whether they had already declared their major/s and certificate/s; as well as their age in years. Participants were further asked to indicate at what level of formal schooling they first had the opportunity to study German (kindergarten; elementary school; middle school; high school; college)¹⁹ and at what level of formal schooling they actually took German.

At the beginning of the Questionnaire Part I, participants were asked to create a unique code number so that the different components of the study could be matched with the correct participant. As part of their unique 10-digit code number, participants were asked for the course

¹⁸ At the university at which data was collected, certificates are a designated set of for-credit courses focused upon a specific topic. At other institutions, this may be referred to as a 'minor.'

¹⁹ While these were the terms originally used in the questionnaire, I recognize that not everyone will have the same designated names for their schooling, e.g., some could have been homeschooled, went to school systems that combined elementary and middle school (or any combination of schools), as well as be international students with different designations altogether. Participants filled out the questionnaire to the best of their ability and had the opportunity to contact me if a question or problem arose. However, none of the participants contacted me regarding the school distinction.

number of the German course they were enrolled in at the time of partaking in the study;²⁰ as well as for their self-identified gender (with 0=male, 1=female; and 3=other).

3.2.3 Vignettes

The core materials used in this study were created learner profiles that were presented to study participants in the form of vignettes and served as prompts for participants' self-assessment.

3.2.3.1 The Use of Vignettes in Research on Perceptions

According to Finch (1987, p. 106), vignettes are commonly defined as “[...] short stories about hypothetical characters in specified circumstances, to whose situation the interviewee is invited to respond.” Bielak and Mystikowska-Wiertelak (2020) call vignettes “vivid scenarios” in which participants are “asked to imagine participating in or observing them” (p. 4). Vignettes can vary in length, can simulate real events or describe made-up scenarios, and can be presented either visually or in written form (Bradbury-Jones et al., 2014; Skilling & Stylianides, 2020; Stravakou & Lozgka, 2018). Skilling and Stylianides (2020) expand on Finch's definition of vignettes as follows:

“[...] we consider *vignettes* to be written, visual, or oral stimuli, aligned with relevant research paradigms and methodologies, reflecting realistic and identifiable settings that resonate with participants for the purpose of provoking responses, including but not limited to beliefs, perceptions, emotions, affective responses, reflections, and decision making.”
(p. 3)

²⁰ If they were not currently enrolled in a German course but had previously been enrolled in a German course at the university, they were asked to use '000' for this part of their code number.

Skilling and Styliandes propose a consistent vignette framework that should encompass the following features:

- Capture content that is relevant to the participant by using existing materials or constructing new material;
- Use either realistic or hypothetical situations that are not made up but based on real life;
- Utilize vignettes with the purpose to elicit and encourage discussion or responses.

The hypothetical and flexible nature of vignettes offers multiple benefits for researching beliefs, perceptions, or emotions. They offer a distance from the participant that lets them reflect on their own situation in a more objective way, without having to disclose any personal matters (Liu & Yu, 2021). Therefore, sensitive issues and the collection of personal data can be avoided. Further, they offer the opportunity to elicit participants' perceptions without having to recreate a situation to observe the participants' natural reaction. They may also offer another take on data that has been brought up in the interview or elicit thoughts and perspectives the participant would not have thought to share in a personal interview without being prompted by a vignette.

However, there are also certain drawbacks. Participants will be aware that vignettes are not actual situations and may adapt their answers accordingly. Vignettes must be believable, short so as not to cause the participants to lose focus, and interesting or enticing enough for participants to share their thoughts. Further, participants may feel discouraged from sharing perspectives that may be relevant but are outside of the scope of the given vignettes.

The use of vignettes has been gaining popularity across the social sciences (e.g., Abbatte et al., 2020; Azman & Mahadhir, 2017; Molinsky & Perunovic, 2008; Poulou & Norwich, 2000; Ravindran & Ilieva, 2021; Stravakou & Lozgka, 2018). In language learning research, vignettes

have been underutilized, as noted by Bielak and Mystkowska-Wiertelak (2020). Among the few studies that employed vignettes in L2 research is Hernandez (2018). He studied L2 Spanish learners' expressions of apology during short-term study abroad in Spain. In the study, learners were asked to engage in a discourse-completion task in response to five vignettes that together represented varying combinations of three variables: social status, social distance, and seriousness of offense. The study design was inspired by a study conducted by Shively and Cohen (2008) on Spanish requests and apologies in a study abroad setting. Elsewhere, the vignette methodology was used to investigate emotion-regulation among foreign language students through typical classroom scenario vignettes (Bielak & Mystkowska-Wiertelak, 2020); and through vignettes that included supervisory feedback situations (Liu & Yu, 2021).

3.2.3.2 The Use of Vignettes in this Study

The vignettes used in the present study were drafted by the researcher in such a way that they a) could be assumed to be familiar and relatable to study participants, e.g., by including representations of professions that participants might aspire to; b) represented different types of L2 acquisition, language use, and first language/s; and c) contained distractor elements, i.e., specific personality traits that varied across vignettes. Personality traits were chosen as a distractor for two reasons:

1. To make the described person appear well-rounded and therefore believable; and
2. To elicit from the participants insights into how personality traits or identities associated with language study.

In their respective composition, the vignettes devised for this study follow Finch's call for vignettes to describe "[...] hypothetical characters in specified circumstances, to whose situation

the interviewee is invited to respond” (1987, p. 106). Table 2 (below) shows the full text that captured each of the eight vignettes exactly as it was presented to the participants. Each vignette was assigned a capital letter (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, or H). Together, the vignettes contained instances of an L1 other than English, the sole L1 of the majority of the target population (Profiles B; D; E); one instance of a person without an L2 (Profile F); examples of an L2 acquired through different types of formal education (Profiles A; C; D; G; H); examples of an L2 acquired in informal settings such as at home (Profiles B; E); and instances of no current L2 use (Profiles C; F), occasional L2 use (Profiles A; H), and frequent L2 use (Profiles B; D; E; G). The personality traits were taken from a list of positive (e.g., ‘competent,’ ‘creative’) and relatable (‘procrastinator,’ ‘intimidating’) traits that were found through a Google search²¹ and cross-checked with other graduate students to find out whether they perceived these traits as positive, relatable, or both.²²

Table 2: Vignette descriptions as presented to the participants in the study

Vignette	Description
A	A is a native English speaker who is a high achiever at their job at a tech company. They are successful, competent, and easy-going. They learned German in high school and college and are now using their language skills occasionally when doing business with foreign clients.
B	B is a bilingual English and Spanish speaker who works in a local community project as a translator for people who don’t speak English. They are creative, warm, and extroverted. They learned their languages at home and use them every day both at their job and at home.
C	C is a native English speaker who works in marketing. They are practical, fearless, and they also tend to procrastinate quite a lot. They learned Spanish in high school but did not continue in college. They currently do not actively use their language skills.
D	D is originally from Germany but has been working in the US as an engineer for a few years now. They are driven, family-oriented, and can be quite sarcastic. They learned English in school in Germany and are now using it in their everyday life and at work in the US.

²¹ The adjectives were taken from a list of synonyms for ‘positive and relatable adjectives,’ however, the website from which this list stemmed has since gone offline. A similar list can be found at <https://prowritingaid.com/art/2299/positive-adjectives.aspx>.

²² During the interviews some participants mentioned specific character traits from the vignettes and declared that they saw them as negative or undesirable, such as the trait “intimidating,” “procrastinator,” or even “successful.” This is further addressed in the limitations of this study in Subchapter 6.1.

E	E is a multilingual English, Korean, and Chinese speaker who works at a successful start-up. They are analytical, intellectual, and funny. They learned their languages at home and use them to communicate with friends and family.
F	F is a native English speaker who owns their own business. They are savvy, hard-working, and goal-oriented. They never learned a second language.
G	G is a native English speaker who is currently in college. They are bright and a quick learner, though they can be intimidating at times. They learned Spanish in middle school and high school and are now continuing with it in college. They achieved near-native fluency in Spanish through schooling and use it exclusively in school.
H	H is a native English speaker who works for a local business. They are sharp-minded, witty, and they easily lose interest. They learned French in high school and in college where they studied abroad in France for a year. They used their language skills abroad, though most locals spoke English with them.

Table 3 (below) provides an abstracted rendition of Table 2. It breaks down the composition of the eight vignettes according to the criteria of L1/s, profession, personality, L2 acquisition, and L2 use. Color coding was applied to the columns in three of the categories for this study (home language/s; L2 acquisition; and L2 use), with the same shade of a color corresponding to a particular grouping within a category, e.g., one shade of blue corresponding to one L1. Specifically, three shades of blue were applied to the L1(s) column, with the lightest shade of blue corresponding to cells that describe multiple L1s; the medium shade corresponding to L1 German; and the darkest shade corresponding to L1 English. Three shades of yellow were applied to the L2 acquisition column, with the lightest shade of yellow corresponding to L2 acquisition at home; the medium shade corresponding to L2 acquisition through formal education; and the darkest shade corresponding to no L2 acquisition. Finally, three shades of red were applied to the L2 use column, with the lightest shade corresponding to cells that describe occasional L2 use; the medium shade corresponding to cells that describe frequent L2 use; and the darkest shade corresponding to no L2 use.

Table 3: Distribution of criteria across the eight vignettes

Profile	L1(s)	Profession	Personality	L2 Acquisition	Use of L2/3
A	English	Tech company	Successful, Competent, Easy-going	German in high school and college	Occasionally when doing business with foreign clients
B	Bilingual - English, Spanish	Translator in local community project	Creative, Warm, Extroverted	At home	Everyday, job and home
C	English	Marketing	Practical, Procrastination, Fearless	Spanish in high school, did not continue in college	Does not use L2
D	German	Engineer abroad	Driven, Family-oriented, Sarcastic	English in school in Germany	Uses English in everyday life and at work in the US
E	Multilingual - English, Korean, Chinese	Start-up	Analytical, Intellectual, Funny	At home	With friends and family
F	English	Business-owner	Savvy, Hard-working, Goal-oriented	No L2	Never
G	English	College	Bright, Quick learner, Intimidating	Spanish - middle school, high school, college	Near-native fluency through schooling, uses it exclusively in school
H	English	Local business	Sharp-minded, Witty, Easily loses interest	French - high school, college, 1 year SA in France	Used L2 during SA but most locals spoke English with them

For the purpose of reporting results, the language learner profiles (vignettes) as described in Table 3 were each reduced to key-word descriptors. The profile descriptors correspond to unique features of each profile, e.g., Profile B was designated *The Bilingual* since it is the only profile that features a bilingual speaker. Table 4 (below) shows an overview of profile key-word descriptors.

Table 4: Key-word designations of eight learner profiles (vignettes)

Overview of Profiles						
Profile	Descriptor	L1(s)	Profession	Personality	L2 Acquisition	Use of L2/3
A	<i>The Professional</i>	E	Tech company	Successful, Competent, Easy-going	HS College	Business with clients
B	<i>The Bilingual</i>	Bilingual (E,S)	Translator	Creative, Warm, Extroverted	At home	Friends/ family
C	<i>The Required Course Taker</i>	E	Marketing	Practical, Procrastination, Fearless	HS	No L2 use
D	<i>The Skilled Immigrant</i>	G	Engineer (in USA)	Driven, Family-oriented, Sarcastic	HS in Germany	Everyday Life/work
E	<i>The Multilingual</i>	Multilingual (E, K, C)	Start-up	Analytical, Intellectual, Funny	At home	Friends/ family
F	<i>The Monolingual</i>	E	Business owner	Savvy, Hard-working, Goal-oriented	No L2	Never
G	<i>The Educational Genius</i>	E	College	Bright, Quick learner, Intimidating	MS, HS College	Exclusively in school
H	<i>The Study Abroad Student</i>	E	Local Business	Sharp-minded, Witty, Easily bored	F HS, College SA	Little L2 during SA

Once presented with the vignettes (profiles), participants were asked to rate how much they identify, have identified, or will identify with each on a scale from 0% (=not at all like the participant) to 100% (=virtually identical to the participant) at five different timepoints of reference. Specifically, respondents reported retrospectively on their perceived likeness for the first two timepoints of reference (*before the beginning of formal German studies; at the beginning of formal German studies*); assessed their likeness to each profile *at the time of taking the study*;

and projected their likeness to each profile for the last two timepoints of reference (*at the conclusion of formal German studies; after the end of formal German studies*²³).

3.2.4 Interviews

In addition to the vignette instrument, the dissertation study relied on interviews that followed a semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix D) and included a subset of six study participants. One participant was interviewed in-person in a private conference room on campus, the other five interviews were conducted via Zoom in individual sessions that ranged in length from 60 to 140 minutes. The specific procedures will be described further below.

The interview was divided into three thematic segments: (1) Self-positioning; (2) discussion of the ratings that study participants had provided; and (3) discussion of a soap opera that students had drafted about the life of a German major ten years after graduation in a previous component of the study. The first two segments will be of relevance to the present study.

Specifically, the first segment was used to confirm the ratings previously given in the questionnaire. Participants were asked in-depth questions about the eight profiles A-H which they had previously rated for their likeness to themselves at five different timepoints of reference. Participants were asked which of these profiles they would most and least want to be like and why; which of the characteristics that had been described in the profiles participants thought could be transformed through learning a second language; and whether they had experienced a change in themselves as a result of their German studies.

²³ The fourth timepoint specifically refers to the end of their formal German studies (e.g., the end of the final German course they take in college or their college graduation), while the fifth timepoint refers to the timespan after the end of their final course (or graduation). The fifth timepoint mirrors the first timepoint.

In the second segment, participants were presented with their previous ratings of how alike or different from each of the profiles they considered themselves to be at five different timepoints relative to their studies of German and were then asked to state the reasons and perspectives that had prompted these ratings.

It is important to note that the sequence of the interviews, the questions, as well as the setting of the interview and the presence of the researcher may have had an influence on the participants' answers.

3.3 Study Procedures

To describe the study's procedures, I will first describe recruitment for the research project in its entirety. I will then describe participants and data collection procedures with a specific emphasis on data that will be analyzed in the course of the dissertation study.

3.3.1 Recruitment

Recruitment for the study aimed at the inclusion of students enrolled in all undergraduate and graduate courses that focused on German-language instruction or on undergraduate courses that focused on the mediation of topics related to the cultures of the German-speaking countries at a large Midwestern research university. Over the course of six terms (Fall 2020-Summer 2022) I visited German courses to advertise participation in the study to all prospective participants. As required by the IRB, I informed all prospective participants of the scope, risks, and benefits of the study. Participants were also asked to complete a consent form that explained that (a) participation in this study was voluntary; (b) participation was independent from evaluations, such as grades, in study participants' German classes; and (c) asked whether participants would be interested in participating in the follow-up interviews. Students were informed that participation in the

interviews was contingent upon completion of both parts of the questionnaire. The completed consent forms were to be emailed back to me. The incentive offered for participation in the first two components of the Questionnaire Part I was entry into a raffle for one of three \$25 gift cards at outlets of their choice. Upon completion of the next two components of Questionnaire Part I, another entry for a second set of three \$25 gift cards at outlets of their choice was earned. Completion of the final two components of Questionnaire Part I yielded one entry into a raffle for one \$50 gift card at an outlet of their choice. If participants chose to complete the second component of the study, Questionnaire Part II, they received one additional entry into the raffle for the \$50 gift card associated with the final two components of Questionnaire Part I. Participants who additionally participated in the interviews were compensated with a \$15 gift card of their choice.

Prospective participants received a hard copy of a flyer with a link to an online drop box, which contained instructions in the form of a Word document that explained the sequence in which participants were asked to fill out documents, i.e., the consent form, Questionnaire Part I, and then Questionnaire Part II; as well as on how to deposit the consent form (via email to the investigator) and the two questionnaire components (via email to an anonymous drop box). In the email with the consent form, participants were asked to indicate whether they wanted to be entered into the raffle and how many parts of the Questionnaires Part I and II they completed. Because of the anonymity of the completed surveys, the researcher could not verify if this was indeed correct; instead, they were entered into the raffle solely based on their own report of completion. The drop box further contained a copy of the consent form (Word document), and an electronic copy (Word document) of both components of the questionnaire (Questionnaire Part I and Part II). While participants had immediate access to both parts of the questionnaire, they were asked to only

complete Part II if they had completed Part I. Participants were permitted to work on Questionnaire Part I and II on their own time, interrupting and resuming work as they liked, so long as they completed Part I before Part II. Only questionnaires that were received by the end of spring semester 2021 were considered for the dissertation study; however, recruitment continued for two more terms in order to increase the number of participants in the overarching study.

Participants who had sent in a consent form by spring semester 2021 were contacted via email to inquire whether they would be willing to participate in a follow-up interview. Six participants replied to the email and were invited to an interview. The participants were asked to reveal the last two digits of their individual study code numbers at the beginning of each interview so that the correct Questionnaires Part I and II could be matched to each participant.

Individual interviews were conducted with each volunteer, four in spring 2021 and two in summer of 2021. As briefly mentioned above, one interview was conducted in person in a private conference room on campus, the other five interviews were conducted via Zoom. The interviews lasted between 60 and 140 minutes. All interviews were audio- and video-recorded with the participant's consent.

3.3.2 Study Participants

Table 5 (below) illustrates in overview participants in each of the three successive instruments by term of recruitment as well as in total. As a reminder, for the dissertation study, Questionnaire Part I only contributed demographic information about participants. The focus of analyses in this dissertation was on data gathered in Questionnaire Part II, i.e., the ratings of likeness to each vignette. Participants in the interviews constituted a subset of those who completed Questionnaire Part II, who, in turn, formed a subset of those who had completed Part I.

Table 5: Participants per instrument across six semesters of data collection

Instrument	Term (F=Fall; S=Spring; Su=Summer)	Number of participants
Questionnaire Part I	F 2020	3
	S 2021	11
	F 2021	10
	S 2022	7
	Su 2022	1
		Total: 32
Questionnaire Part II	S 2021	5
	F 2021	4
	S 2022	2
		Total: 11
Interviews	S 2021	Total: 6

Enrollment data for students enrolled in German courses during the period of recruitment were obtained from the Registrar's office for two purposes: To obtain a rough impression of how representative the number of participants was relative to all students enrolled and to assess how demographic characteristics of study participants compared to those of all students enrolled in courses targeted in recruitment. Table 6 (below) shows the total enrollment in beginner, intermediate, and advanced German classes²⁴ that were offered for each of the six semesters during which data collection for the study took place broken down by total enrollment number (n), the number of male and female students,²⁵ the citizenship status (domestic, alien, or permanent alien), as well as the enrollment level (undergraduate or graduate) by semester (F = fall semester; S =

²⁴ This does not include students who enrolled in "German for Reading Knowledge" as well as in independent studies.

²⁵ The Registrar's Office conveyed data that relied on a binary gender system.

spring semester; Su = summer term). The 2021 spring semester and 2022 summer term are shaded in gray to highlight the enrollment numbers for the semester during which the six participants completed the study.

Table 6: Participants enrolled in undergraduate German courses by gender, citizenship, and status.

		F20 (n=324)	S21 (n=278)	Su21 (n=3)	F21 (n=526)	S22 (n=415)	Su22 (n=4)
Gender	Female	151	148	2	249	207	3
	Male	173	130	1	277	208	1
Citizenship	Domestic	289	253	2	469	385	2
	Alien	32	23	1	52	24	2
	Alien (Permanent)	3	2	-	5	6	-
Status	Undergraduate	318	265	2	515	408	1
	Graduate	6	13	1	11	7	3

As shown in Table 5 (above), 32 students total filled out Questionnaire Part I. While there is likely an overlap in students enrolled in consecutive semesters, even the number of completed Questionnaires Part I in relation to the number of enrolled students in the semester with the highest total enrollment (Fall 2021) is small (e.g., 32 participants in comparison to 526 enrolled students in Fall semester 2021, or 6% of all enrolled students). The sample of participants chosen for this dissertation study (n=6) only equals 1.14% of all students enrolled in the German courses targeted in recruitment. Therefore, the sample is not representative of the overall population. The limitations that result from this small self-select group will be further discussed in Subchapter 6.1.

Table 7 (below) renders the same data by the percentage distribution of sub-categories within a category (e.g., ‘female’ and ‘male’ under ‘gender’).

Table 7: Participants enrolled in undergraduate German courses by gender, citizenship, and status.

		F20 (n=324)	S21 (n=278)	Su21 (n=3)	F21 (n=526)	S22 (n=415)	Su22 (n=4)
Gender	Female	46.6%	53.2%	66.7%	47.3%	49.9%	75%
	Male	53.4%	46.8%	33.3%	52.7%	50.1%	25%
Citizenship	Domestic	89.2%	91	66.7%	89.2%	92.8%	50%
	Alien	9.9%	8.3%	33.3%	9.9%	5.8%	50%
	Alien (Permanent)	0.9%	0.7%	-	0.9%	1.5%	-
Status	Undergraduate	98.1%	95.3%	66.7%	97.9%	98.3%	25%
	Graduate	1.9%	4.7%	33.3%	2.1%	1.7%	75%

The study sample is not representative of the population enrolled in the targeted German courses when it comes to its composition, either. While the sample consists of 100% female-identifying, domestic students, the target population shows a more varied sample (e.g., female-identifying students make up 75% of the population in Summer 2022; and domestic students make up 92.8% of the population in Fall 2021). The sample is further composed of 84% undergraduate students which is not representative of the overall targeted population as the percentage is either higher (Summer 2021 and Summer 2022) or lower (Fall 2020; Spring 2021; Fall 2021; Spring 2022) than the percentage of undergraduate students enrolled in all targeted courses.

Table 8 (below) shows the demographic information on the six participants of the dissertation study, taken from the Questionnaire Part I. The table lists the code number that was assigned for each participant for the purpose of data analysis (P1-P6), numbered in the order in which they volunteered for the interview, and the German course that they were enrolled in at the time of participating in this study. The courses were coded with numbers corresponding to the year in the course sequence, e.g., the number 2 for year 2, and the number 3 for years 3 or 4. The table further shows the participants' gender with only F (female) represented; the semester in which they filled out the Questionnaires Part I and II, with only Sp21 (Spring 2021) represented; their enrollment year (first-year student; sophomore; junior; senior; graduate student); their student status with only 'domestic' represented; their major(s) and/or undergraduate certificate(s); their

age at the time of taking the study; as well as when they first had the opportunity to enroll in formal studies of German (kindergarten, middle school (MS), high school (HS), college, grad(uate) school) and when they actually enrolled in formal German studies classes.

Table 8: Select background information of the participants in the dissertation study

Code	Course	Sex	Sem.	Level	Status	Major(s)	Certificate(s)	Age	German First Offered	German First Taken
P1	3	F	Sp21	First year	Domestic	Intl. Studies, Community & Environmental Sociology	German	19	MS HS College	MS HS College
P2	3/4	F	Sp21	Junior	Domestic	Chemical Engineering	German, Engineering for Energy Sustainability	20	K-12 College	K-12 College
P3	3	F	Sp21	First year	Domestic	Intl. Studies, German	Scandinavian Studies	18	MS HS College	MS HS College
P4	2	F	Sp21	Senior	Domestic	Political Science, Intl. Studies	German, Leadership	22	College	College
P5	3/4	F	Sp21	Senior	Domestic	German, Intl. Studies	European Studies	22	HS College	HS College
P6	2	F	Sp21	Grad	Domestic	Russian	Folklore	28	HS College Grad School	Grad School

As shown in Table 8, all participants except for P6 took formal German classes whenever they were first offered. P6 had the opportunity to take German in high school and college, but only started taking German classes in graduate school.

In order to facilitate clarity in future references to individual participants, each participant was assigned a verbal descriptor in addition to their code number. The descriptors for the participants arose from their interactions or statements in the interview (e.g., *The Connector* who

emphasized the importance of an L2 for community building); from their rating preferences (e.g., *The Resolute* who only voted for a singular profile); or their background information (e.g., *The Grad* as the only participant whose status was that of a graduate student). Table 9 (below) shows the descriptor and from which data component it derived for each participant (P1-6).

Table 9: Verbal participant descriptors

Participant	Descriptor	Source
P1	The Architect	Rating preferences, interview
P2	The Connector	Rating preferences, interview
P3	The Resolute	Rating preferences
P4	The Pragmatist	Rating preferences, interview
P5	The Dreamer	Rating preferences, interview
P6	The Grad	Background information

4. Results

The presentation of results in this chapter follows the three research themes (RTs) outlined in Subchapter 2.5. Each of the three research themes encompasses multiple research questions (RQs) to develop each overarching theme. RT1 investigates the self-perceived likeness of the six learners to each of the eight language user profiles and includes seven RQs (RQs 1.1-1.7); RT2 explores learners' self-perceived trajectory of likeness to each of the eight language user profiles across the timeline of reporting (RQs 2.1-2.3); and RT3 examines individual learner likes and dislikes of the eight language user profiles at the time of taking the study (RQs 3.1-3.5).

The analyses presented under all three RTs concern the ratings that the six study participants gave to indicate how strongly they identified at the time of the study, had identified previously, or expected to identify in the future with the descriptions (profiles) of each of eight imaginary people. These profiles were presented in the format of vignettes and varied in terms of (among other) characteristics, professional accomplishment, mono- versus bilingualism, and, if applicable, degree of L2 proficiency. These profiles can be viewed in Subchapter 3.2.3.

Each respondent rated each profile on a scale from zero percent (considering oneself not at all like a given profile) to 100% (considering oneself virtually identical to a given profile) five times to indicate their self-perceptions with regard to five different timepoints of reference in their language study. Results will be reported in terms of descriptive statistics, including, when appropriate, measures of central tendency and measures of variability. Since the purpose of the study was not and, given the small number of participants, could not be to make claims about generalizable patterns but rather to document diverse self-views and participant trajectories, inferential statistical analyses were not appropriate. Analyses of quantitative data will be enhanced with insights from interviews with each of the six participants that took place after they responded

to the questionnaire. During each interview, participants were reminded of their previous ratings and were asked to explain their reasoning behind them.

4.1 Research Theme 1: Self-Perceived Likeness of six Learners to Each of eight Language User Profiles

Five specific research questions (RQs) are being addressed under the umbrella of Research Theme (RT) 1 — the self-perceived likeness of six learners to each of eight language user profiles (Vignettes A-H). Each of the five RQs under RT1 pertains to recollections or projections of a different stage in the participants' language learning career, specifically, how much like each of the eight language user vignettes the participants reported they had been before their formal studies of German began (RQ 1.1); at the beginning of their formal studies (RQ 1.2); at the time of participating in this study (RQ 1.3); and how much like each of eight language user profiles participants imagined they will be at the conclusion of (RQ 1.4) and when they will no longer be engaged in their formal studies of German (RQ 1.5).

In Questionnaire Part II, the six study participants had rated how alike to each of eight different language user profiles they thought they had been, are, or would be at five different timepoints throughout their German language learning career. Each language-user profile was represented in a vignette (Vignettes A-H). The dimensions of the vignettes and their specific instantiations in each profile, will be shown in the tables below, starting with the reporting of results for RQ 1.1. RQs 1.1-1.5 each correspond to one of these timepoints.

4.1.1 RQ 1.1: How Much Like Each of eight Language User Profiles (Vignettes A-H) Did Each of six Study Participants Recollect They Had Been *before* Their Formal Studies of German Began?

To answer RQ 1.1, I analyzed the ratings that the participants had given with regard to their self-perceived likeness to each of the eight profiles at the timepoint *before the beginning of formal studies of German*.

Tables 10 (just below) and 11 (further below) show (a) what summary label ('descriptor') was attached to each profile; (b) how each profile (Vignettes A-H) was constructed with regard to the five components L1, (professional) aspirations, personality, language acquisition, and the use of the L2/3; (c) how much like each profile the six participants' (P1-6) recollected that they had been *before the beginning of their formal studies of German* as expressed on a scale from zero (=no likeness at all) to 100 (=total likeness) percent; and summary statistics by profile.

Specifically, of the two tables, Table 10 draws attention to response patterns that attach to each specific profile with regard to participants' likeness ratings (0-100%), as judged from the vantage point of their state before they had begun formal studies of German. To access Table 10 most efficiently, particular attention should be paid to rows, with each row presenting the six respondents' ratings of a given profile. Color coding was applied to all profile ratings by all participants taken together (all cells under 'ratings by participant in %'). White (uncolored) cells correspond with ratings of zero percent (=no likeness at all). Ten shades of blue were selected to mark percentages between a hypothetical one percent²⁶ and 50%, with the darkest blue corresponding to a score close to a (hypothetical) one percent and the lightest shade of blue signaling 50%. In contrast, ten shades of red were chosen for percentages between a hypothetical 51% to 100%, with the lightest red indicating scores close to 51% and the darkest red

²⁶ 'Hypothetical' because not a single respondent assigned a percentage below five percent.

corresponding to a score of 100%. In short, blue indicates a trend toward a low degree of participant-perceived likeness; red shows a trend toward a high degree of participant-perceived likeness; and the depth of the shade signals the intensity of either trend. Further, toward the right, the table displays for each profile under ‘summary statistics’: the number of zero percent ratings; the average of six individual percentage scores; the standard deviation (*SD*); and the coefficient of variation (*CV*). The number of zero percent ratings indicate the number of participants who reported a total lack of affiliation with a given profile. The average ratings show the overall picture of all respondents’ ratings combined, which shows the general tendency of (dis)preference across all participants. The *SD* indicates the spread of the ratings in the dataset, while the *CV* is an independent measure used to express dispersion. These two measurements give a more detailed insight into how much participants were in agreement with each other.

Table 10: Ratings of likeness-to-profiles before the beginning of formal German studies as given by the six study participants

Overview of Profiles							Ratings by Participant in %						Summary Statistics			
Profile	Descriptor	L1(s)	Profession	Personality	L2 Acquisition	Use of L2/3	Architect (P1)	Connector (P2)	Resolute (P3)	Pragmatist (P4)	Dreamer (P5)	Grad (P6)	# ratings	Avg. %	SD	CV %
A	<i>The Professional</i>	E	Tech company	Successful, Competent, Easy-going	HS College	Business with clients	20	5	80	0	0	20	2	20.83	30.4	146
B	<i>The Bilingual</i>	Bilingual (E,S)	Translator	Creative, Warm, Extroverted	At home	Friends/family	20	5	0	0	0	25	3	8.33	11.25	135
C	<i>The Required Course Taker</i>	E	Marketing	Practical, Procrastination, Fearless	HS	No L2 use	30	5	0	30	100	0	2	27.5	38.18	139
D	<i>The Skilled Immigrant</i>	G	Engineer (in USA)	Driven, Family-oriented, Sarcastic	HS in Germany	Everyday Life/work	15	5	0	0	0	0	4	3.33	6.06	182
E	<i>The Multilingual</i>	Multilingual (E, K, C)	Start-up	Analytical, Intellectual, Funny	At home	Friends/family	15	0	0	0	0	20	4	5.83	9.17	157
F	<i>The Monolingual</i>	E	Business owner	Savvy, Hard-working, Goal-oriented	No L2	Never	30	0	0	30	100	15	2	29.17	37.2	128
G	<i>The Educational Genius</i>	E	College	Bright, Quick learner, Intimidating	MS, HS College	Exclusively in school	20	5	0	10	0	65	2	16.67	24.83	149
H	<i>The Study Abroad Student</i>	E	Local Business	Sharp-minded, Witty, Easily bored	HS, College SA	Little L2 during SA	25	5	0	10	0	30	2	11.67	12.91	111

Overall, 27 ratings out of 48 (56%) were above zero. Each profile had at least two ratings over zero, i.e., was somewhat relatable to at least two respondents. In other words, more than half of all ratings resulted in some degree of self-perceived likeness even before formal studies had begun and none of the profiles were entirely unrelatable at that timepoint.

Three profiles were associated with the highest averages when students reflected on themselves at the beginning of their formal studies of German: *The Monolingual* (F, 29.17%); *The Required Course Taker*; (C, 27.5%); and *The Professional* (A, 20.83%). These three profiles described people without much language engagement either in their lives outside of work and school or, more fundamentally, at all. In contrast, the three profiles that described bi- or multilinguals (*The Bilingual*, B, 8.33%; *The Multilingual*, E, 5.83%; and *The Skilled Immigrant*, D, 3.33%) showed the lowest averages. The two profiles that featured formal language education (*The Educational Genius*, G, 16.67%; and *The Study Abroad Student*, H, 11.67%) formed the midfield among rating averages.

A coefficient of variation (CV) of 100% indicates that variation corresponds to one standard deviation. Table 10 shows that when CVs were calculated across respondents for each profile, all CVs exceeded 100%. Participants diverged quite strongly on their respective likeness ratings of a given profile. Relatively speaking, when participants reflected on themselves before the beginning of their formal German studies, they agreed the most on the profile of a *Study Abroad Student* (H, CV 111%), a profile whose average (11.67%) ranked in the midfield. In contrast, they disagreed the most on the profile of a *Skilled Immigrant* (D, CV 182%), whose average (3.33%) however was the lowest of all the profiles. The profiles with the highest averages, *The Monolingual* (F, 29.17%) and *The Required Course Taker* (C, 27.5%), both showed relatively low divergence

across participant ratings (the CVs for these profiles rank third lowest and second lowest, respectively).

Table 11 (below) highlights trends that manifested in the same ratings shown in Table 10, but with an emphasis on patterns by respondent (rather than by profile, as was done in Table 10). Table 11 is best approached via a focus on the by-participant columns. As in Table 10, cells that correspond to zero ratings are not colored. For responses greater than zero, each participant's responses (expressed in percentages of self-perceived likeness) are colored in a unique color. For each respondent, the highest percentage rating was shaded in the deeper chosen shade. The lowest percentage rating (if not zero) was shaded in the lighter chosen shade. Further, the bottom rows of the table display the average percentage rating for all profiles taken together and as given by a specific participant; the associated standard deviation (*SD*); the coefficient of variation (*CV*); and the range, i.e., the span between the lowest and highest rating assigned by a participant. The last row of Table 11 shows the average of averages, i.e., the average of all ratings assigned by all six participants for all eight profiles.

Table 11: Ratings of likeness-to-profiles before the beginning of formal German studies as given by the six study participants with an emphasis on by-participant patterns

Overview of Profiles							Ratings by Participant, %					
File #	Descriptor	Home language/s	Profession, Aspirations	Personality	Language Acquisition	Use of L2/3	Architect (P1)	Connector (P2)	Resolute (P3)	Pragmatist (P4)	Dreamer (P5)	Grad (P6)
A	<i>The Professional</i>	E	Tech company	Successful, Competent, Easy-going	HS College	Business with clients	20	5	80	0	0	20
B	<i>The Bilingual</i>	Bilingual (E,S)	Translator	Creative, Warm, Extroverted	At home	Friends/family	20	5	0	0	0	25
C	<i>The Required Course Taker</i>	E	Marketing	Practical, Procrastination, Fearless	HS	No L2 use	30	5	0	30	100	0
D	<i>The Skilled Immigrant</i>	G	Engineer (in USA)	Driven, Family-oriented, Sarcastic	HS in Germany	Everyday Life/work	15	5	0	0	0	0
E	<i>The Multilingual</i>	Multilingual (E, K, C)	Start-up	Analytical, Intellectual, Funny	At home	Friends/family	15	0	0	0	0	20
F	<i>The Monolingual</i>	E	Business owner	Savvy, Hard-working, Goal-oriented	No L2	Never	30	0	0	30	100	15
G	<i>The Educational Genius</i>	E	College	Bright, Quick learner, Intimidating	MS, HS College	Exclusively in school	20	5	0	10	0	65
H	<i>The Study Abroad Student</i>	E	Local Business	Sharp-minded, Witty, Easily bored	HS, College SA	Little L2 during SA	25	5	0	10	0	30
Average by Respondent, %							21.88	3.75	10	10	25	21.88
SD							5.94	2.31	28.28	13.09	46.29	20.52
CV, %							27	62	283	131	185	94
Range							15	5	80	30	100	65
Average of Averages, %							15					

For an initial overview, the bottom row of Table 11 shows that as a group, the six participants identified little with the combined eight profiles, achieving an average of averages of only 15%. However, as the rows just above the one displaying the average of averages show, CVs varied considerably across respondents, from a low CV of 27% for *The Architect* (P1) to a high CV of 283% for *The Resolute* (P3). Similarly, ranges between lowest and highest scores assigned by each participant to the eight profiles differed considerably, with a range of five measured for *The Connector* (P2) and a range of 100 for *The Dreamer* (P5).

Two participants, *The Resolute* (P3) and *The Dreamer* (P5), expressed extremes. They displayed either (near) total affiliation (80% and 100%, respectively) with a particular profile or total dissociation (zero percent), with no ratings in between. What is more, *The Resolute* (P3) affiliated (80%) with only one profile, *The Professional* (A), whereas *The Dreamer* (P5) chose both *The Required Course Taker* (C) and *The Monolingual* (F) (100% each). All but one (*The Architect*, P1) of the remaining four respondents dissociated themselves totally (zero percent) from two or more of the profiles. However, there were discernible differences among them. *The Grad* (P6) tended much more strongly toward one profile, i.e., *The Educational Genius* (G; 65%) than toward the remaining higher-than-zero profiles. The participant *Pragmatist* (P4) took a selective approach with attention to only two profiles, *The Required Course Taker* (C) and *The Monolingual* (F), but the self-perceived likeness to these two was rather weak at 30%, respectively. Participant *Connector* (P2) did not affiliate at all (assigned 0%) with the two language-based profiles, *The Multilingual* (E), and *The Monolingual* (F), but also only perceived a very weak likeness to the remaining profiles at five percent each. A similar lack of clear preference was noted for participant *Architect* (P1), who saw some likeness with regard to each of the profiles but none more than at 30%.

4.1.2 RQ 1.2: How Much Like Each of eight Language User Profiles (Vignettes A-H) Did Each of six Study Participants Recollect They Had Been *at the Beginning* of Their Formal Studies of German?

RQ 1.2 echoes RQ 1.1. Whereas RQ 1.1 dealt with participants' self-perceived likeness to each of eight profiles *before the start of their formal studies of German*, RQ 1.2 examines self-perceived likeness *at the beginning of formal studies of German*. Therefore, to answer RQ 1.2, the same types of analysis were applied as had been used for RQ 1.1. In structure and visualization practices, Table 12 (below) resembles the previous Table 10 and Table 13 (further below) follows the structure of Table 11 (above).

Table 12: Ratings of likeness-to-profiles at the beginning of formal German studies as given by the six study participants

Overview of Profiles							Ratings by Participant in %						Summary Statistics			
Profile	Descriptor	L1(s)	Profession	Personality	L2 Acquisition	Use of L2/3	Architect (P1)	Connect or (P2)	Resolute (P3)	Pragmatist (P4)	Dreamer (P5)	Grad (P6)	#, 0 ratings	Avg. %	SD	CV %
A	<i>The Professional</i>	E	Tech company	Successful, Competent, Easy-going	HS College	Business with clients	20	50	80	30	10	0	1	31.67	29.27	92
B	<i>The Bilingual</i>	Bilingual (E,S)	Translator	Creative, Warm, Extroverted	At home	Friends/family	20	10	0	10	20	20	1	13.33	8.16	61
C	<i>The Required Course Taker</i>	E	Marketing	Practical, Procrastination, Fearless	HS	No L2 use	30	10	0	60	50	0	2	25	25.88	104
D	<i>The Skilled Immigrant</i>	G	Engineer (in USA)	Driven, Family-oriented, Sarcastic	HS in Germany	Everyday Life/work	20	50	0	10	10	0	2	15	18.71	125
E	<i>The Multilingual</i>	Multilingual (E, K, C)	Start-up	Analytical, Intellectual, Funny	At home	Friends/family	20	10	0	10	25	30	1	15.83	11.14	70
F	<i>The Monolingual</i>	E	Business owner	Savvy, Hard-working, Goal-oriented	No L2	Never	20	5	0	30	10	5	1	11.67	11.25	96
G	<i>The School Geonius</i>	E	College	Bright, Quick learner, Intimidating	MS, HS College	Exclusively in school	20	40	0	30	20	40	1	25	15.17	61
H	<i>The Study Abroad Student</i>	E	Local Business	Sharp-minded, Witty, Easily bored	HS, College SA	Little L2 during SA	25	5	0	20	60	15	1	20.83	21.31	102

Overall, 38 ratings out of 48 (79%) were above zero. Each profile had at least four ratings over zero, i.e., was somewhat relatable to at least four respondents. Evidently, more than three quarters of all ratings resulted in some degree of self-perceived likeness at the beginning of formal studies and none of the profiles were entirely unrelatable at that timepoint.

Three profiles were associated with the highest averages when students reflected on themselves *at the beginning of their formal studies of German*: *The Professional* (A, 31.67%); *The Required Course Taker* (B, 25%); and *The School Genius* (G, 25%). They described people with their primary language engagement solely in a professional setting such as in business or at school.

In contrast, the three profiles that described bi- or multilinguals (*The Multilingual*, E, 15.83%); *The Skilled Immigrant* (D, 15%); and *The Bilingual* (B, 13.33%), and the profile that described a person that had never engaged with a second language (*The Monolingual*, F, 11.67%), showed the lowest averages. The profile that featured formal language education together with learning a language through a study abroad program (*The Study Abroad Student*, H, 20.83%) formed the midfield among rating averages.

A coefficient of variation (CV) of 100% indicates that variation corresponds to one standard deviation. Table 12 shows that when CVs were calculated across respondents for each profile, the CVs for three profiles (*The Skilled Immigrant*, D, CV 125%; *The Required Course Taker*, C, CV 104%; and *The Study Abroad Student*, H, CV 102%) exceeded 100%. Participants diverged quite strongly on their respective likeness ratings of these three profiles. Relatively speaking, when participants reflected on themselves *at the beginning of their formal German studies*, they agreed the most on the profile of a *Bilingual* (B, CV 61%) and of a *School Genius* (G, CV 61%), profiles with the second lowest and the second highest averages, respectively. In

contrast, they disagreed the most on the profile of a *Skilled Immigrant* (D), whose average ranged in the midfield.

Table 13 (below) highlights trends that manifested in the same ratings shown in Table 12 but with an emphasis on patterns by respondent (rather than by profile, as was done in Table 12). Table 13 is best approached via a focus on the by-participant columns. As in Table 12, cells that correspond to zero ratings are not colored. For responses greater than zero, each participant's responses (expressed in percentages of self-perceived likeness) are colored in a unique color. For each respondent, the highest percentage rating was shaded in the deeper chosen shade. The lowest percentage rating (if not zero) was shaded in the lighter chosen shade. Further, the bottom rows of the table display the average percentage rating for all profiles taken together and as given by a specific participant; the associated standard deviation (*SD*); the coefficient of variation (*CV*); and the range, i.e., the span between the lowest and highest rating assigned by a participant. The last row of Table 13 shows the 'total average' or the average of averages, i.e., the average of all ratings assigned by all participants.

Table 13: Ratings of likeness-to-profiles at the beginning of formal German studies as given by the six study participants with an emphasis on by-participant patterns

Overview of Profiles							Ratings by Participant, %					
Profiles	Descriptor	Home language/s	Profession, Aspirations	Personality	Language Acquisition	Use of L2/3	Architect (P1)	Connector (P2)	Resolute (P3)	Pragmatist (P4)	Dreamer (P5)	Grad (P6)
A	The Professional	E	Tech company	Successful, Competent, Easy-going	HS College	Business with clients	20	50	80	30	10	0
B	The Bilingual	Bilingual (E,S)	Translator	Creative, Warm, Extroverted	At home	Friends/family	20	10	0	10	20	20
C	The Required Course Taker	E	Marketing	Practical, Procrastination, Fearless	HS	No L2 use	30	10	0	60	50	0
D	The Skilled Immigrant	G	Engineer (in USA)	Driven, Family-oriented, Sarcastic	HS in Germany	Everyday Life/work	20	50	0	10	10	0
E	The Multilingual	Multilingual (E, K, C)	Start-up	Analytical, Intellectual, Funny	At home	Friends/family	20	10	0	10	25	30
F	The Monolingual	E	Business owner	Savvy, Hard-working, Goal-oriented	No L2	Never	20	5	0	30	10	5
G	The School Genius	E	College	Bright, Quick learner, Intimidating	MS, HS College	Exclusively in school	20	40	0	30	20	40
H	The Study Abroad Student	E	Local Business	Sharp-minded, Witty, Easily bored	HS, College SA	Little L2 during SA	25	5	0	20	60	15
Average by Respondent, %							21.88	22.5	10	25	25.63	13.75
SD							3.72	20.35	28.28	16.9	19.17	15.29
CV, %							17	91	283	68	75	111
Range							10	45	80	50	50	40
Average of Averages, %							19.79					

For an initial overview, the bottom row of Table 13 shows that as a group, the six participants identified little with the combined eight profiles, achieving an average of averages of only 19.79%. However, as the rows just above the one displaying the average of averages show, CVs varied considerably across respondents, from a low CV of 17% for *The Architect* (P1) to a high CV of 283% for *The Resolute* (P3). Similarly, ranges assigned by each participant to the eight profiles differed considerably, with a range of 10 measured for *The Connector* (P2) and a range of 80 measured for *The Dreamer* (P5).

One participant, *The Resolute* (P3), expressed extremes. They displayed near total affiliation (80%) with a particular profile or total dissociation (zero percent), with no ratings in between. What is more, *The Resolute* (P3) affiliated (80%) with only one profile, *The Professional* (A). Like *The Resolute* (P3), *The Grad* (P6) also expressed total dissociation (zero percent) from three of the profiles. However, in contrast to *The Resolute* (P3), *The Grad* (P6) showed the most diverse ratings out of all the participants in that they used six different scores, though none of these scores show strong affiliation with any of the profiles.

Different from these two respondents, the other participants rated all profiles higher than zero percent, and therefore affiliated their selves with all profiles to some degree *at the beginning of their formal German studies*. *The Connector* (P2) rated the two profiles that indicate language use primarily at work the highest at 50% each, i.e., *The Professional* (A) and *The Skilled Immigrant* (D), though the overall self-perceived affiliation was weak. A similar lack of clear preference was noted for Participant *Architect* (P1), who saw some likeness with regard to each of the profiles but none more than at 30%. *The Dreamer* (P5) did not perceive much likeness with the work-related language user profiles (*The Professional*, A; *The Skilled Immigrant*, D), as well as *The*

Monolingual (E), at 10% each. Instead, they tended more strongly toward the *Study Abroad Student* (H) at 60%.

4.1.3 RQ 1.3: How Much Like Each of eight Language User Profiles (Vignettes A-H) Did Each of six Study Participants Report They Are *at the Time* of Taking this Study?

RQ 1.3 echoes RQ 1.1. Whereas RQ 1.1 dealt with participants' self-perceived likeness to each of eight profiles *before the start of their formal studies of German*, RQ 1.3 examines self-perceived likeness *at the time of taking this study*. Therefore, to answer RQ 1.3, the same types of analysis were applied as had been used for RQ 1.1. In structure and visualization practices, Table 14 (below) resembles the previous Table 10 and Table 15 (further below) follows the structure of the previous Table 11.

Table 14: Ratings of likeness-to-profiles at the time of taking this study as given by the six study participants

Overview of Profiles							Ratings by Participant in %						Summary Statistics			
Profile	Descriptor	L1(s)	Profession	Personality	L2 Acquisition	Use of L2/3	Ar-chitect (P1)	Con-nector (P2)	Res-olute (P3)	Prag-ma-tist (P4)	Drea-mer (P5)	Grad (P6)	#, 0 rat-ings	Avg. %	SD	CV %
A	<i>The Professional</i>	E	Tech com-pany	Successful, Competent, Easy-going	HS College	Business with clients	50	70	80	60	95	0	1	59.17	32.93	56
B	<i>The Bilingual</i>	Bilingual (E,S)	Translator	Creative, Warm, Extroverted	At home	Friends/family	25	20	0	20	70	20	1	25.83	23.33	90
C	<i>The Required Course Taker</i>	E	Marketing	Practical, Procrastination, Fearless	HS	No L2 use	25	10	0	40	0	0	3	12.5	16.66	133
D	<i>The Skilled Immigrant</i>	G	Engineer (in USA)	Driven, Family-oriented, Sarcastic	HS in Germany	Everyday Life/work	20	60	0	10	70	0	2	26.67	30.77	115
E	<i>The Multilingual</i>	Multilingual (E, K, C)	Start-up	Analytical, Intellectual, Funny	At home	Friends/family	30	10	0	20	80	30	1	28.33	27.87	98
F	<i>The Monolingual</i>	E	Business owner	Savvy, Hard-working, Goal-oriented	No L2	Never	20	10	0	50	0	5	2	14.17	19.08	135
G	<i>The School Genius</i>	E	College	Bright, Quick learner, Intimidating	MS, HS College	Exclusively in school	30	90	0	50	60	40	1	45	30.17	67
H	<i>The Study Abroad Student</i>	E	Local Business	Sharp-minded, Witty, Easily bored	HS, College SA	Little L2 during SA	30	20	0	50	70	15	1	30.83	25.38	82

Overall, 36 ratings out of 48 (75%) were above zero. Each profile had at least three ratings over zero, i.e., was somewhat relatable to at least three respondents. Put another way, three quarters of all ratings resulted in some degree of self-perceived likeness *at the time of taking this study* and none of the profiles were entirely unrelatable at that timepoint.

Three profiles were associated with the highest averages when students reflected on themselves at the time of taking this study: *The Professional* (A, 59.17%); *The School Genius* (G, 45%); and *The Study Abroad Student* (H, 30.83%). They described people with language engagement primarily in formal language education or at work. In contrast, the two profiles that described people with little to no engagement with a second language (*The Monolingual*, F, 14.17%; and *The Required Course Taker*, C, 12.5%) showed the lowest averages. The three profiles that described bi- or multilinguals (*The Multilingual*, E, 28.33%; *The Skilled Immigrant*, D, 26.67%; and *The Bilingual*, B, 25.83%) formed the midfield among rating averages.

A coefficient of variation (CV) of 100% indicates that variation corresponds to one standard deviation. Table 14 shows that when CVs were calculated across respondents for each profile, the CVs for three profiles (*The Monolingual*, F, CV 135%; *The Required Course Taker*, C, CV 133%; and *The Skilled Immigrant*, D, CV 115%) exceeded 100%. Participants diverged quite strongly on their respective likeness ratings of these three profiles. Relatively speaking, when participants reflected on themselves *at the time of taking this study*, they agreed the most on the profile of the *School Genius* (G, CV 67%) and the *Professional* (A, CV 56%), the profiles with the highest averages. In contrast, they disagreed the most on the profiles of the *Monolingual* (F, CV 135%) and *The Required Course Taker* (C, CV 133%), the profiles with the lowest averages.

Table 15 (below) highlights trends that manifested in the same ratings shown in Table 14 but with an emphasis on patterns by respondent (rather than by profile, as was done in Table 14).

Table 15 is best approached via a focus on the by-participant columns. As in Table 14, cells that correspond to zero ratings are not colored. For responses greater than zero, each participant's responses (expressed in percentages of self-perceived likeness) are colored in a unique color. For each respondent, the highest percentage rating was shaded in the deeper chosen shade. The lowest percentage rating (if not zero) was shaded in the lighter chosen shade. Further, the bottom rows of the table display the average percentage rating for all profiles taken together and as given by a specific participant; the associated standard deviation (*SD*); the coefficient of variation (*CV*); and the range, i.e., the span between the lowest and highest rating assigned by a participant. The last row of Table 15 shows the 'total average' or the average of averages, i.e., the average of all ratings assigned by all participants.

Table 15: Ratings of likeness-to-profiles at the time of taking this study as given by the six study participants with an emphasis on by-participant patterns

Overview of Profiles							Ratings by Participant, %					
Profiles	Descriptor	Home language/s	Profession, Aspirations	Personality	Language Acquisition	Use of L2/3	Architect (P1)	Connector (P2)	Resolute (P3)	Pragmatist (P4)	Dreamer (P5)	Grad (P6)
A	The Professional	E	Tech company	Successful, Competent, Easy-going	HS College	Business with clients	50	70	80	60	95	0
B	The Bilingual	Bilingual (E,S)	Translator	Creative, Warm, Extroverted	At home	Friends/ family	25	20	0	20	70	20
C	The Required Course Taker	E	Marketing	Practical, Procrastination, Fearless	HS	No L2 use	25	10	0	40	0	0
D	The Skilled Immigrant	G	Engineer (in USA)	Driven, Family-oriented, Sarcastic	HS in Germany	Everyday Life/work	20	60	0	10	70	0
E	The Multilingual	Multilingual (E, K, C)	Start-up	Analytical, Intellectual, Funny	At home	Friends/ family	30	10	0	20	80	30
F	The Monolingual	E	Business owner	Savvy, Hard-working, Goal-oriented	No L2	Never	20	10	0	50	0	5
G	The School Genius	E	College	Bright, Quick learner, Intimidating	MS, HS College	Exclusively in school	30	90	0	50	60	40
H	The Study Abroad Student	E	Local Business	Sharp-minded, Witty, Easily bored	HS, College SA	Little L2 during SA	30	20	0	50	70	15
Average by Respondent, %							28.75	36.25	10	37.5	55.63	13.75
SD							9.54	32.04	28.28	18.32	35.80	15.29
CV, %							33	88	283	49	64	111
Range							30	60	80	50	95	40
Average of Averages, %							30.31					

For an initial overview, the bottom row of Table 15 shows that as a group, the six participants identified only slightly with the combined eight profiles, achieving an average of averages of 30.31%. However, as the rows just above the one displaying the average of averages show, CVs varied considerably across respondents, from a low CV of 33% for *The Architect* (P1) to a high CV of 283% for *The Resolute* (P3). Similarly, ranges between lowest and highest scores assigned by each participant to the eight profiles differed considerably, with a range of 30 measured for *The Architect* (P1) and a range of 95 for *The Dreamer* (P5).

Two participants, *The Resolute* (P3) and *The Dreamer* (P5), expressed extremes. They displayed either near total affiliation (80%; 95%, respectively) with a particular profile or total dissociation (zero percent), with *The Resolute* (P3) showing no ratings in between. What is more, *The Resolute* (P3) affiliated (80%) with only one profile, *The Professional* (A). In contrast, *The Dreamer* (P5) affiliated with most profiles except for the profiles that show little to no language use (*The Required Course Taker*, C; and *The Monolingual*, F). Only one (*The Grad*, P6) of the remaining four respondents dissociated themselves totally (zero percent) from three of the profiles. The other three participants showed some affiliation with all of the profiles; however, neither completely distanced themselves from any of the profiles (none of them assigned a zero percent score), nor did they show any strong attachment to one of the eight profiles (the highest rating was at 70%).

4.1.4 RQ 1.4: How Much Like Each of eight Language User Profiles (Vignettes A-H) Did Each of six Study Participants Project They Will Be *at the Conclusion* of Their Formal German Studies?

RQ 1.4 echoes RQ 1.1. Whereas RQ 1.1 dealt with participants' self-perceived likeness to each of eight profiles *before the start of their formal studies of German*, RQ 1.4 examines self-perceived likeness *at the conclusion of formal studies of German*. Therefore, to answer RQ 1.4, the same types of analysis were applied as had been used for RQ 1.1. In structure and visualization practices, Table 16 (below) resembles the previous Table 10 and Table 17 (further below) follows the structure of the previous Table 11. However, there is no available data to display in both Tables 16 and 17 for participant *The Grad* (P6). Therefore, the column for *The Grad* (P6) shows 'N/A', for not available.²⁷

²⁷ The Grad (P6) did not rate the profiles at two timepoints, *at the end of your formal German studies*, and *after your formal German studies*. During the interview, The Grad (P6) clarified that this was due to the fact that they did not anticipate ever stopping their formal German education and always partaking in some form of German study, e.g., private tutoring.

Table 16: Ratings of likeness-to-profiles at the conclusion of formal German studies as given by the six study participants

Overview of Profiles							Ratings by Participant in %						Summary Statistics			
Profile	Descriptor	L1(s)	Profession	Personality	L2 Acquisition	Use of L2/3	Architect (P1)	Connector (P2)	Resolute (P3)	Pragmatist (P4)	Dreamer (P5)	Grad (P6)	#, 0 ratings	Avg. %	SD	CV %
A	<i>The Professional</i>	E	Tech company	Successful, Competent, Easy-going	HS College	Business with clients	60	70	80	100	100	N/A	0	82	17.89	22
B	<i>The Bilingual</i>	Bilingual (E,S)	Translator	Creative, Warm, Extroverted	At home	Friends/family	50	20	0	40	90	N/A	1	40	33.91	85
C	<i>The Required Course Taker</i>	E	Marketing	Practical, Procrastination, Fearless	HS	No L2 use	25	30	0	30	0	N/A	2	17	15.65	92
D	<i>The Skilled Immigrant</i>	G	Engineer (in USA)	Driven, Family-oriented, Sarcastic	HS in Germany	Everyday Life/work	20	60	0	10	90	N/A	1	36	37.82	105
E	<i>The Multilingual</i>	Multilingual (E, K, C)	Start-up	Analytical, Intellectual, Funny	At home	Friends/family	30	20	0	20	90	N/A	1	32	34.21	107
F	<i>The Monolingual</i>	E	Business owner	Savvy, Hard-working, Goal-oriented	No L2	Never	20	10	0	60	0	N/A	2	18	24.9	138
G	<i>The School Genius</i>	E	College	Bright, Quick learner, Intimidating	MS, HS College	Exclusively in school	50	90	0	85	75	N/A	1	60	36.91	62
H	<i>The Study Abroad Student</i>	E	Local Business	Sharp-minded, Witty, Easily bored	HS, College SA	Little L2 during SA	40	20	0	60	40	N/A	1	32	22.8	71

Overall, 31 ratings out of 40 (76%) were above zero. Each profile had at least three ratings over zero, i.e., was somewhat relatable to at least three respondents. In other words, more than three quarters of all ratings resulted in some degree of self-perceived likeness *at the conclusion of formal German studies* and none of the profiles were entirely unrelatable at that timepoint. *The Professional* (A) was rated higher than zero by all five participants, therefore indicating consensus regarding at least some degree of likeness.

Two profiles were associated with the highest averages when students projected their future selves *at the conclusion of their formal studies of German*: *The Professional* (A, 82%); and *The School Genius* (G, 60%). who learned their L2 through formal schooling and whose language engagement now was primarily in formal language education or at work. In contrast, the two profiles that described people with little to no engagement with a second language (*The Monolingual*, F, 18%; and *The Required Course Taker*, C, 17%) showed the lowest averages.

The three profiles that described bi- or multilinguals (*The Bilingual*, B, 40%; *The Skilled Immigrant*, D, 36%; and *The Multilingual*, E, 32%) and the profile that described a person who participated in a study abroad program (*The Study Abroad Student*, H, 32%) formed the midfield among rating averages.

A coefficient of variation (CV) of 100% indicates that variation corresponds to one standard deviation. Table 16 shows that when CVs were calculated across respondents for each profile, three of the CVs exceeded 100%. Participants diverged quite strongly on their respective likeness of these three profiles. Relatively speaking, when participants projected their future selves at the conclusion of their formal German studies, they agreed the most on the profile of a *Professional* (A, CV 22%), the profile whose average is the highest. In contrast, they disagreed

the most on the profile of a *Monolingual* (F, CV 138%), whose average however is the second lowest of all the profiles.

Table 17 (below) highlights trends that manifested in the same ratings shown in Table 16 but with an emphasis on patterns by respondent (rather than by profile, as was done in Table 16). Table 17 is best approached via a focus on the by-participant columns. As in Table 16, cells that correspond to zero ratings are not colored. For responses greater than zero, each participant's responses (expressed in percentages of self-perceived likeness) are colored in a unique color. For each respondent, the highest percentage rating was shaded in the deeper chosen shade. The lowest percentage rating (if not zero) was shaded in the lighter chosen shade. Further, the bottom rows of the table display the average percentage rating for all profiles taken together and as given by a specific participant; the associated standard deviation (*SD*); the coefficient of variation (*CV*); and the range, i.e., the span between the lowest and highest rating assigned by a participant. The last row of Table 17 shows the 'total average' or the average of averages, i.e., the average of all ratings assigned by all participants.

Table 17: Ratings of likeness-to-profiles at the conclusion of formal German studies as given by the six study participants with an emphasis on by-participant patterns

Overview of Profiles							Ratings by Participant, %					
Files	Descriptor	Home language/s	Profession, Aspirations	Personality	Language Acquisition	Use of L2/3	Architect (P1)	Connector (P2)	Resolute (P3)	Pragmatist (P4)	Dreamer (P5)	Grad (P6)
A	The Professional	E	Tech company	Successful, Competent, Easy-going	HS College	Business with clients	60	70	80	100	100	N/A
B	The Bilingual	Bilingual (E,S)	Translator	Creative, Warm, Extroverted	At home	Friends/ family	50	20	0	40	90	N/A
C	The Required Course Taker	E	Marketing	Practical, Procrastination, Fearless	HS	No L2 use	25	30	0	30	0	N/A
D	The Skilled Immigrant	G	Engineer (in USA)	Driven, Family-oriented, Sarcastic	HS in Germany	Everyday Life/work	20	60	0	10	90	N/A
E	The Multilingual	Multilingual (E, K, C)	Start-up	Analytical, Intellectual, Funny	At home	Friends/ family	30	20	0	20	90	N/A
F	The Monolingual	E	Business owner	Savvy, Hard-working, Goal-oriented	No L2	Never	20	10	0	60	0	N/A
G	The School Genius	E	College	Bright, Quick learner, Intimidating	MS, HS College	Exclusively in school	50	90	0	85	75	N/A
H	The Study Abroad Student	E	Local Business	Sharp-minded, Witty, Easily bored	HS, College SA	Little L2 during SA	40	20	0	60	40	N/A
Average by Respondent, %							36.88	40	10	50.63	60.63	N/A
SD							15.34	29.28	28.28	31.45	41.61	N/A
CV, %							42	73	283	62	69	N/A
Range							40	80	80	90	100	N/A
Average of Averages, %							39.63					

For an initial overview, the bottom row of Table 17 shows that as a group, the five participants identified somewhat with the combined eight profiles, achieving an average of averages of 39.63%. However, as the rows just above the one displaying the average of averages show, CVs varied considerably across respondents, from a low CV of 42% for *The Architect* (P1) to a high CV of 283% for *The Resolute* (P3). Similarly, ranges between lowest and highest scores assigned by each participant to the eight profiles differed considerably, with a range of 40 measured for *The Architect* (P1) and a range of 100 for *The Dreamer* (P5).

Four of five participants, *The Connector* (P2), *The Resolute* (P3), *The Pragmatist* (P4), and *The Dreamer* (P5), expressed extremes. They displayed either (near) total affiliation (90%; 80%; 100%; 100%, respectively) with a particular profile or (near) total dissociation (10%; zero percent; 10%; 10%, respectively). Further, *The Resolute* (P3) affiliated (80%) with only one profile, *The Professional* (A), rating all other profiles at zero percent. Similarly, both *The Pragmatist* (P4) and *The Dreamer* (P5) most affiliated with *The Professional* (A) as well (100%). What is more, the two participants also have one or more profiles they projected to affiliate with *at the conclusion of their formal German studies*. *The Pragmatist* (P4) projected likeness (85%) to *The School Genius* (G), while *The Dreamer* (P5) projected likeness (90%) to *The Bilingual* (B), *The Skilled Immigrant* (D), and *The Multilingual* (F). In contrast, *The Connector* (P2) most affiliated (90%) with *The School Genius* (G) but did not show such strong affiliation to another profile. Participant *Architect* (P1) shows a lack of clear preference in contrast to the other participants, who saw some likeness with all of the profiles, but none more than at 60% for *The Professional* (A).

4.1.5 RQ 1.5: How Much Like Each of eight Language User Profiles (Vignettes A-H) Did Each of six Study Participants Project They Will Be in the Times *when They Are No Longer Engaged* in Formal Studies of German?

RQ 1.5 echoes RQ 1.1. Whereas RQ 1.1 dealt with participants' self-perceived likeness to each of eight profiles *before the start of their formal studies of German*, RQ 1.5 examines self-perceived likeness *after the end of formal studies of German*. Therefore, to answer RQ 1.5, the same types of analysis were applied as had been used for RQ 1.1. In structure and visualization practices, Table 18 (below) resembles the Table 10 and Table 19 (further below) follows the structure of Table 11 (above). However, there is no available data to display in both Tables 18 and 19 for participant *The Grad* (P6). Therefore, the column for *The Grad* (P6) shows 'N/A', for not available.²⁸

²⁸ *The Grad* (P6) did not rate the profiles at two timepoints, *at the end of your formal German studies*, and *after your formal German studies*. During the interview, *The Grad* (P6) clarified that this was due to the fact that they did not anticipate ever stopping their formal German education and always partaking in some form of German study, e.g., private tutoring.

Table 18: Ratings of likeness-to-profiles after the end of formal German studies as given by the six study participants

Overview of Profiles							Ratings by Participant in %						Summary Statistics			
Profile	Descriptor	L1(s)	Profession	Personality	L2 Acquisition	Use of L2/3	Architect (P1)	Connector (P2)	Resolute (P3)	Pragmatist (P4)	Dreamer (P5)	Grad (P6)	#, 0 ratings	Avg. %	SD	CV %
A	The Professional	E	Tech company	Successful, Competent, Easy-going	HS College	Business with clients	65	90	80	100	100	N/A	0	87	14.83	17
B	The Bilingual	Bilingual (E,S)	Translator	Creative, Warm, Extroverted	At home	Friends/family	60	20	0	50	90	N/A	1	44	35.07	80
C	The Required Course Taker	E	Marketing	Practical, Procrastination, Fearless	HS	No L2 use	25	30	0	30	0	N/A	2	17	15.65	92
D	The Skilled Immigrant	G	Engineer (in USA)	Driven, Family-oriented, Sarcastic	HS in Germany	Everyday Life/work	30	80	0	10	90	N/A	1	42	40.87	97
E	The Multilingual	Multilingual (E, K, C)	Start-up	Analytical, Intellectual, Funny	At home	Friends/family	30	20	0	20	90	N/A	1	32	34.21	107
F	The Monolingual	E	Business owner	Savvy, Hard-working, Goal-oriented	No L2	Never	20	10	0	80	0	N/A	2	22	33.47	152
G	The School Genius	E	College	Bright, Quick learner, Intimidating	MS, HS College	Exclusively in school	40	70	0	95	75	N/A	1	56	36.98	66
H	The Study Abroad Student	E	Local Business	Sharp-minded, Witty, Easily bored	HS, College SA	Little L2 during SA	30	30	0	60	15	N/A	1	27	22.25	82

Overall, 31 ratings out of 48 (76%) were above zero. Each profile had at least two ratings above zero, i.e., was somewhat relatable to at least two respondents. More than three quarters of all ratings resulted in some degree of self-perceived likeness *after the end of formal German studies* and none of the profiles were entirely unrelatable at that timepoint.

One profile was clearly associated with the highest average when students projected their selves *after the end of their formal studies of German: The Professional* (A, 87%). This profile described someone who learned their L2 in school and is now using it exclusively at work. In contrast, the two profiles that described no language engagement in their lives (*The Monolingual*, F, 22%; and *The Required Course Taker*, C, 17%) showed the lowest averages. The four profiles that described bi- or multilinguals (*The Bilingual*, B, 44%; *The Skilled Immigrant*, D, 42%; and *The Multilingual*, E, 32%) as well as successful language learners (*The School Genius*, G, 56%) formed the midfield among rating averages.

A coefficient of variation (CV) of 100% indicates that variation corresponds to one standard deviation. Table 18 shows that when CVs were calculated across respondents for each profile, two CVs exceeded 100%. Participants diverged quite strongly on their respective likeness ratings of two of the given profiles. Relatively speaking, when participants projected their selves *after the end of their formal German studies*, they agreed the most on the profile of *The Professional* (A, CV 17%), the profile with the highest average. In contrast, they disagreed the most on the profile of *The Monolingual* (F, CV 152%), whose average however is the second lowest of all the profiles, as well as on the profile of *The Multilingual* (E), whose average ranked in the midfield.

Table 19 (below) highlights trends that manifested in the same ratings shown in Table 18 but with an emphasis on patterns by respondent (rather than by profile, as was done in Table 18).

Table 19 is best approached via a focus on the by-participant columns. As in Table 18, cells that correspond to zero ratings are not colored. For responses greater than zero, each participant's responses (expressed in percentages of self-perceived likeness) are colored in a unique color. For each respondent, the highest percentage rating was shaded in the deeper chosen shade. The lowest percentage rating (if not zero) was shaded in the lighter chosen shade. Further, the bottom rows of the table display the average percentage rating for all profiles taken together and as given by a specific participant; the associated standard deviation (*SD*); the coefficient of variation (*CV*); and the range, i.e., the span between the lowest and highest rating assigned by a participant. The last row of Table 19 shows the 'total average' or the average of averages, i.e., the average of all ratings assigned by all participants.

Table 19: Ratings of likeness-to-profiles after the end of formal German studies as given by the six study participants with an emphasis on by-participant patterns

Overview of Profiles							Ratings by Participant, %					
Profile	Descriptor	Home language/s	Profession, Aspirations	Personality	Language Acquisition	Use of L2/3	Architect (P1)	Connector (P2)	Resolute (P3)	Pragmatist (P4)	Dreamer (P5)	Grad (P6)
A	<i>The Professional</i>	E	Tech company	Successful, Competent, Easy-going	HS College	Business with clients	65	90	80	100	100	N/A
B	<i>The Bilingual</i>	Bilingual (E,S)	Translator	Creative, Warm, Extroverted	At home	Friends/family	60	20	0	50	90	N/A
C	<i>The Required Course Taker</i>	E	Marketing	Practical, Procrastination, Fearless	HS	No L2 use	25	30	0	30	0	N/A
D	<i>The Skilled Immigrant</i>	G	Engineer (in USA)	Driven, Family-oriented, Sarcastic	HS in Germany	Everyday Life/work	30	80	0	10	90	N/A
E	<i>The Multilingual</i>	Multilingual (E, K, C)	Start-up	Analytical, Intellectual, Funny	At home	Friends/family	30	20	0	20	90	N/A
F	<i>The Monolingual</i>	E	Business owner	Savvy, Hard-working, Goal-oriented	No L2	Never	20	10	0	80	0	N/A
G	<i>The School Genius</i>	E	College	Bright, Quick learner, Intimidating	MS, HS College	Exclusively in school	40	70	0	95	75	N/A
H	<i>The Study Abroad Student</i>	E	Local Business	Sharp-minded, Witty, Easily bored	HS, College SA	Little L2 during SA	30	30	0	60	15	N/A
Average by Respondent, %							37.5	43.75	10	55.63	57.50	N/A
SD							16.48	31.14	28.28	34.17	44.24	N/A
CV, %							44	71	283	61	77	N/A
Range							45	80	80	90	100	N/A
Average of Averages, %							40.88					

For an initial overview, the bottom row of Table 19 shows that as a group, the five participants identified somewhat with the combined eight profiles, achieving an average of averages of 40.88%. However, as the rows just above the one displaying the average of averages show, CVs varied considerably across respondents, from a low CV of 44% for *The Architect* (P1) to a high CV of 283% for *The Resolute* (P3). Similarly, ranges between lowest and highest scores assigned by each participant to the eight profiles differed considerably, with a range of 45 measured for *The Architect* (P1) and a range of 100 for *The Dreamer* (P5).

Four of five participants, *The Connector* (P2), *The Resolute* (P3), *The Pragmatist* (P4), and *The Dreamer* (P5), expressed extremes. They displayed either (near) total affiliation (90%; 80%; 100%; 100%, respectively) with a particular profile or (near) total dissociation (10%; zero percent; 10%; zero percent, respectively). What is more, *The Resolute* (P3) affiliated (80%) with only one profile, *The Professional* (A), rating all other profiles at zero percent. Similarly, the other three participants most strongly affiliated with *The Professional* (A) as well (100%). Further, they also have one or more other profiles they projected to affiliate with *after the end of their formal German studies*. *The Connector* (P2) projected near total likeness (80%) to *The Skilled Immigrant* (D), *The Pragmatist* (P4) projected near total likeness (95%) to *The School Genius* (G), while *The Dreamer* (P5) projected near total likeness (90%) to *The Bilingual* (B), *The Skilled Immigrant* (D), and *The Multilingual* (F). Participant *Architect* (P1) shows a lack of clear preference in contrast to the other participants, who saw some likeness with all of the profiles, but none more than at 65% for *The Professional* (A).

4.2 Research Theme 2: Learners' Self-Perceived Likeness to Each of eight Language User Profiles across the Timeline of Reporting (RQs 1.1-1.5)

Research Theme (RT) 2 examined overarching trends that emerged from participants' responses with regard to how alike they considered themselves to be to each of the eight different language user profiles across the five timepoints, i.e., *before the beginning of formal German studies* (T1); *at the beginning of formal German studies* (T2); *at the time of taking the study* (T3); *at the conclusion of formal German studies* (T4); and *after the end of formal German studies* (T5).

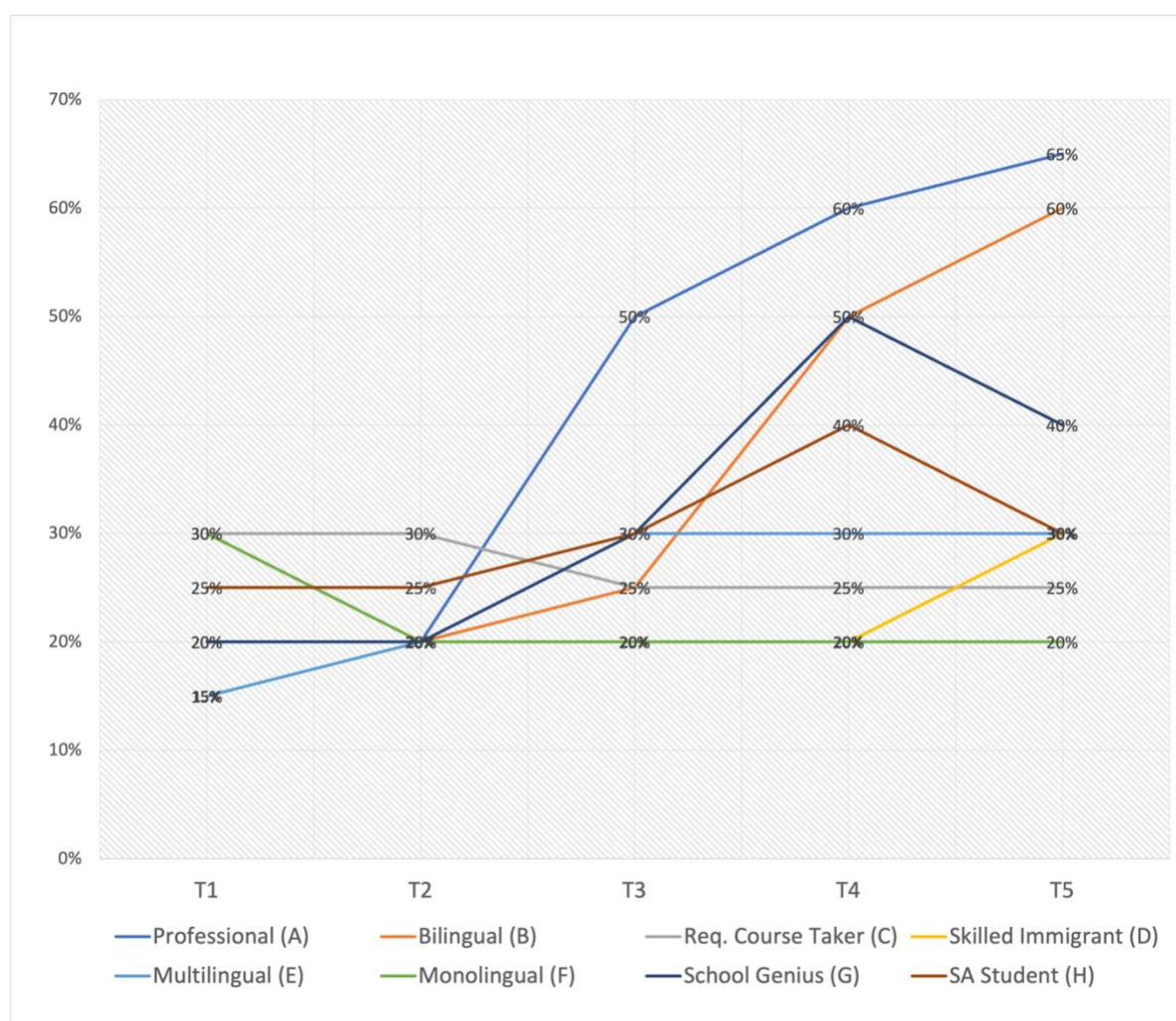
The data pertaining to each of these timepoints have already been analyzed and results discussed in RT1 (above). In contrast to RT1, RT2 specifically focused on respondents' trajectories across the five timepoints in two regards, (a) by individual participants (RQs 2.1-2.6); and (b) by overarching dis/preferences for specific profiles over time (RQ 2.7).

4.2.1 RQ 2.1: What Are the Trajectories of Perceived Self-Likeness to Each of the eight Language User Profiles (Vignettes A-H) across the five Timepoints for Participant *The Architect* (P1)?

Figure 2 (below) shows the ratings of self-perceived likeness to each of eight profiles across the five timepoints given by participant *The Architect* (P1) in the form of a line-graph. Each line represents the participant's rating for a specific profile (A-H). The x-axis corresponds to the five timepoints (T1-T5), while the y-axis corresponds to intensity of self-perceived likeness (0-100%). In data visualization (the respective graphs pertaining to each participant, starting with *The Architect*, P1, in RQ2.1), some of the lines overlap each other when they follow an identical trajectory. This circumstance, unresolvable in Excel, may render lines invisible for all practical purposes and give the inaccurate impression of missing data points. Therefore, the instances of overlapping lines will be mentioned in the description of each figure.

In the specific instance of participant *The Architect* (P1), the yellow line for the profile *The Skilled Immigrant* (D) overlaps with the light blue line (profile *The Multilingual*, E) at T1, and then overlaps with the green line (profile *The Monolingual*, F) between T2-T4. The orange line for the profile *The Bilingual* (B) and the royal blue line for profile *The Professional* (A) overlap with the dark blue line for the profile *The School Genius* (G) between T1 and T2, while the gray blue line (*The Multilingual*, E) overlaps with the line for *The School Genius* (G) between T2 and T3.

Figure 2: Trajectories of perceived self-likeness to each of the eight language user profiles across the five timepoints reported by participant *The Architect*



The shape of participant *The Architect*'s (P1) overall trajectories can be described as that of a steady emergence, since all lines *before the beginning of formal German studies* (T1) were within

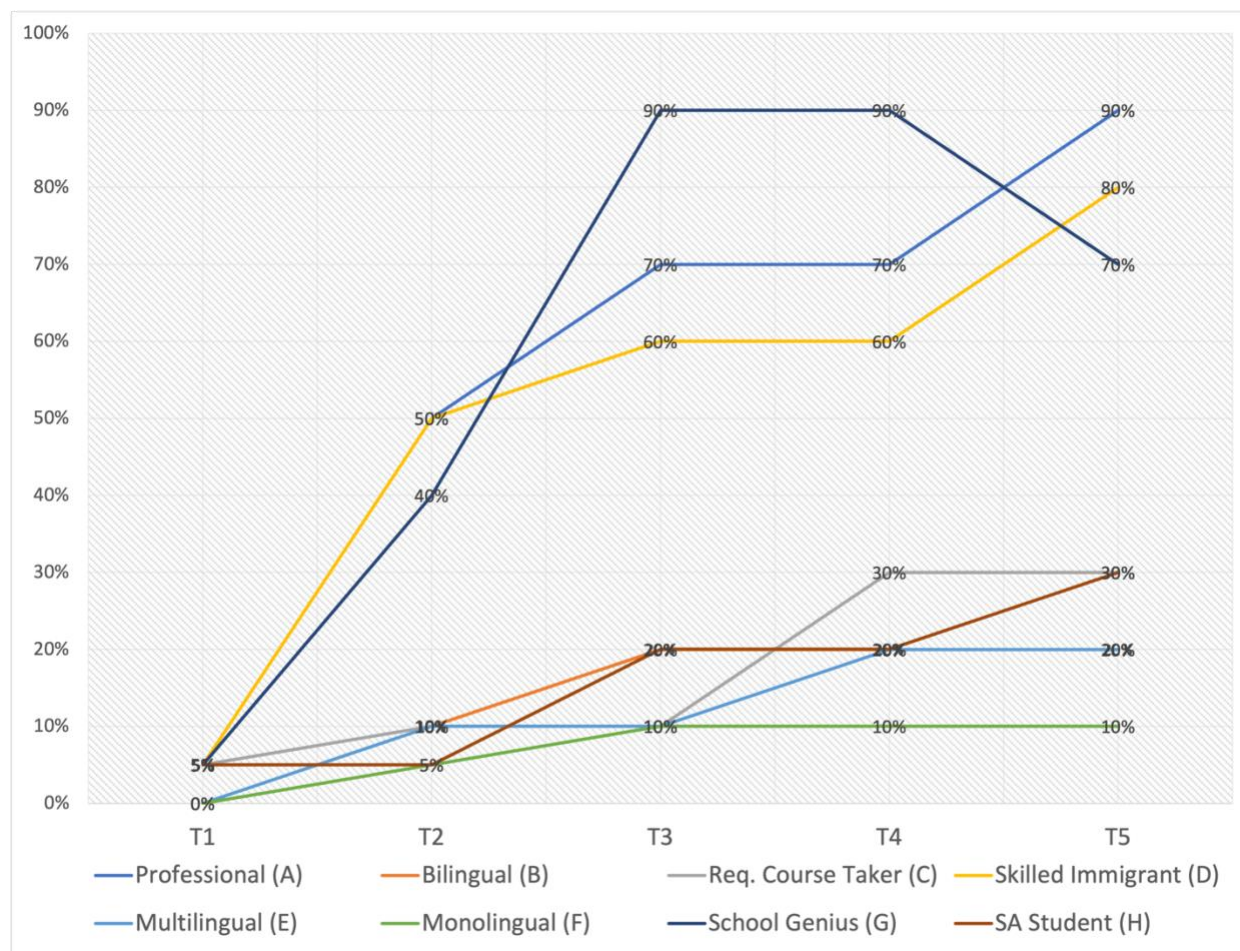
increments of 5% of one another. *At the beginning of formal German studies (T2)*, two of the lines began to move, i.e., the line representing the profile *The Multilingual (E)* started to rise and the line for the profile *The Monolingual (F)* started to fall, though each by no more than 10%. *At the time of taking part in the study (T3)*, four of the lines rose in a continuous upward trajectory: the lines representing the profiles *The Professional (A)*; *The Bilingual (B)*; *The School Genius (G)*; and *The Study Abroad Student (H)*. *At the conclusion of formal German studies (T4)*, the profile *The Professional (A)* emerged as the clear favorite at 60% with a 10% lead over the closest profiles (50%, *The Bilingual, B*; and *The School Genius, G*). *After the end of formal German studies (T5)*, the line for the profile *The Bilingual (B)* joined that for the profile *The Professional (A)* at the top.

4.2.2 RQ 2.2: What are the Trajectories of Perceived Self-Likeness to Each of the eight Language User Profiles (Vignettes A-H) across the five Timepoints for Participant *The Connector (P2)*?

Figure 3 (below) shows the ratings of self-perceived likeness to each of eight profiles across the five timepoints given by participant *The Connector (P2)* in a format similarly to that in the graph presented in response to RQ 2.1. Here, too, some of the lines overlap and are not visible in the figure. The royal blue line for the profile *The Professional (A)* overlaps with the yellow line for the profile *The Skilled Immigrant (D)* between the first two timepoints, *before and at the beginning of formal German studies (T1 and T2)*. The gray line for the profile *The Required Course Taker (C)* overlaps with the light blue line for the profile *The Multilingual (E)* between the second timepoint, *at the beginning of formal language learning (T2)*, and the third timepoint, *at the time of taking part in this study (T3)*, while the orange line (profile *The Bilingual, B*) overlaps with the gray line (profile *The Required Course Taker, C*) between the first two timepoints, *before and at the beginning of formal German studies (T1 and T2)*; the brown line (profile *The Study Abroad*

Student, H) between the third timepoint, *at the time of taking part in this study* (T3), and the fourth timepoint, *by the conclusion of formal German studies* (T4); as well as the light blue line (profile *The Multilingual, E)* between the two last timepoints, *by the conclusion and after the end of formal German studies* (T4 and T5).

Figure 3: Trajectories of perceived self-likeness to each of the eight language user profiles across the five timepoints reported by participant *The Connector*



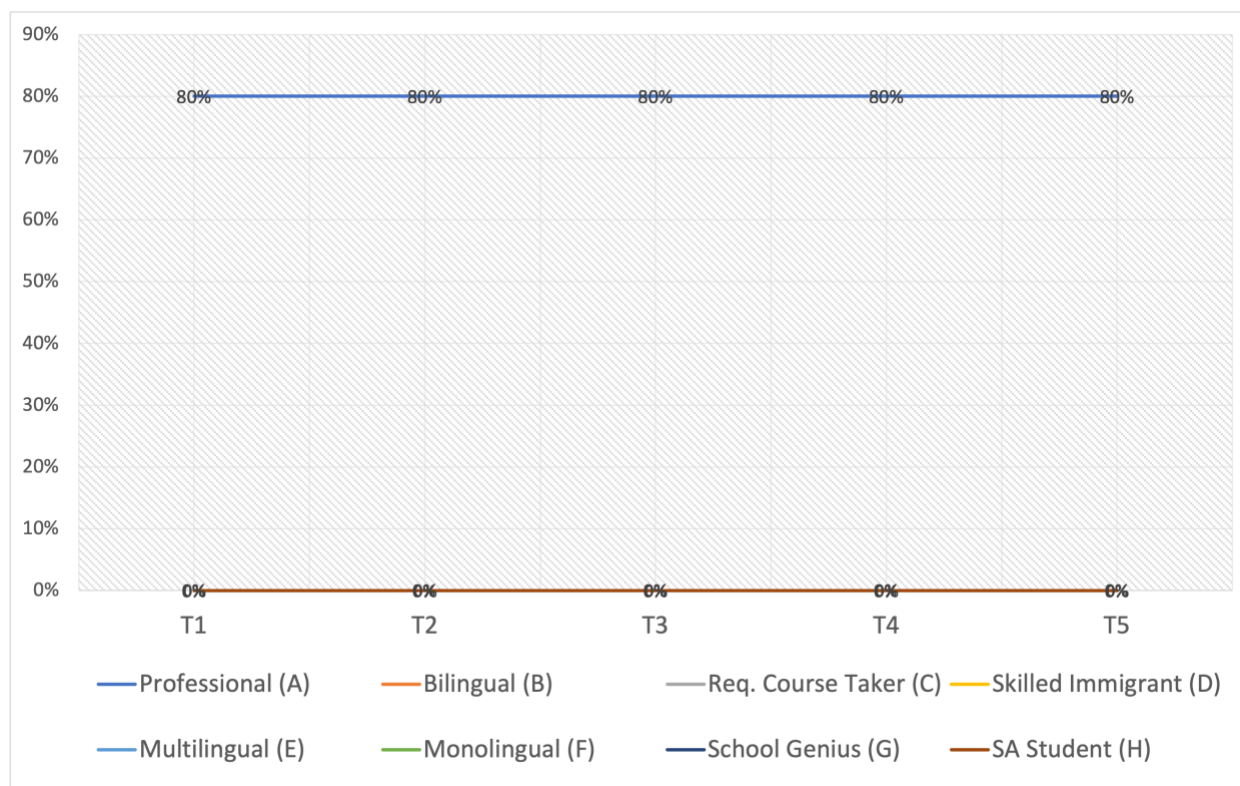
The shape of trajectories that pertain to participant *The Connector* (P2) can be described as that of a two-strand bundler, since there were two distinct strands that developed starting *at the beginning of formal German studies* (T2). One strand, consisting of five profiles (*The Bilingual, B*; *The Required Course Taker, C*; *The Multilingual, E*; *The Monolingual, F*; and *The Study Abroad Student, H*) showed little increase in self-perceived likeness over time. The other strand, consisting

of three profiles (*The Professional*, A; *The Skilled Immigrant*, D; and *The School Genius*, G), showed a substantial increase in self-perceived likeness over time from *the beginning until after the end of formal German studies* (T2 through T5). Of the three steeply rising lines, profile *The School Genius* (G) rose to the highest-ever peak of all profiles (90%) from the time of taking the study (T3) to the end of formal German studies (T4), but then dropped by 20% after the end of formal German studies (T5), the only profile of eight that showed a drop at any timepoint for participant *The Connector* (P2).

4.2.3 RQ 2.3: What are the Trajectories of Perceived Self-Likeness to Each of the eight Language User Profiles (Vignettes A-H) across the five Timepoints for Participant *The Resolute* (P3)?

Figure 4 (below) shows the ratings of self-perceived likeness to each of eight profiles across the five timepoints given by participant *The Resolute* (P3) in the form of a line-graph. The data is visualized similarly to the graphs presented in previous RQs under RT2. All lines, except for the royal blue line for the profile *The Professional* (A), overlap each other since all of the other seven profiles received a zero percent rating across all five timepoints.

Figure 4: Trajectories of perceived self-likeness to each of the eight language user profiles across the five timepoints reported by participant *The Resolute*



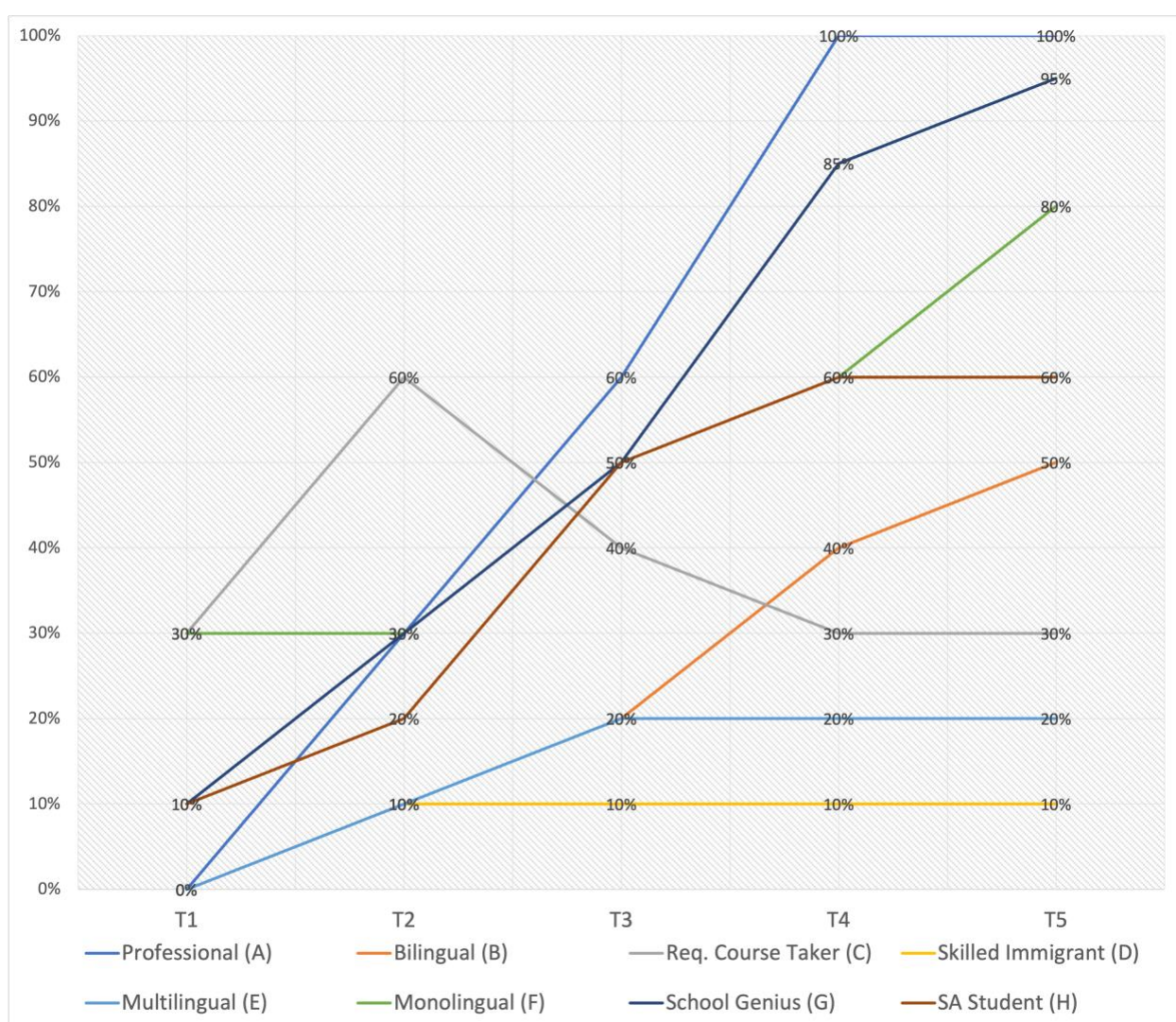
The Resolute's (P3) overall trajectories can be described as forming the shape of a split flatliner, since there was absolutely no movement in terms of profile preferences across time and one line consistently diverged from all others with its unusually high rating at 80% (for the profile *The Professional*, A) at all five timepoints. In comparison, participant *The Resolute* (P3) showed no affiliation at all with any of the other seven profiles, as they were rated at 0% across all timepoints.

4.2.4 RQ 2.4: What are the Trajectories of Perceived Self-Likeness to Each of the eight Language User Profiles (Vignettes A-H) across the five Timepoints for Participant *The Pragmatist* (P4)?

Figure 5 (below) shows the ratings of self-perceived likeness to each of eight profiles across the five timepoints given by participant *The Pragmatist* (P4) in the form of a line-graph. The data is visualized similarly to the graphs presented in previous RQs under RT2. The following lines

overlap with each other due to visualization issues in Excel: The green line (profile *The Monolingual*, F) overlaps with the dark blue line (profile *The School Genius*, G) between T2 and T3 and with the brown line (profile *The Study Abroad Student*, H) between T3 and T4; The orange line (profile *The Bilingual*, B) overlaps with the light blue line (profile *The Multilingual*, E) between T1 and T3; and the yellow line (profile *The Skilled Immigrant*, D) overlaps with the light blue line between T1 and T2.

Figure 5: Trajectories of perceived self-likeness to each of the eight language user profiles across the five timepoints reported by participant The Pragmatist



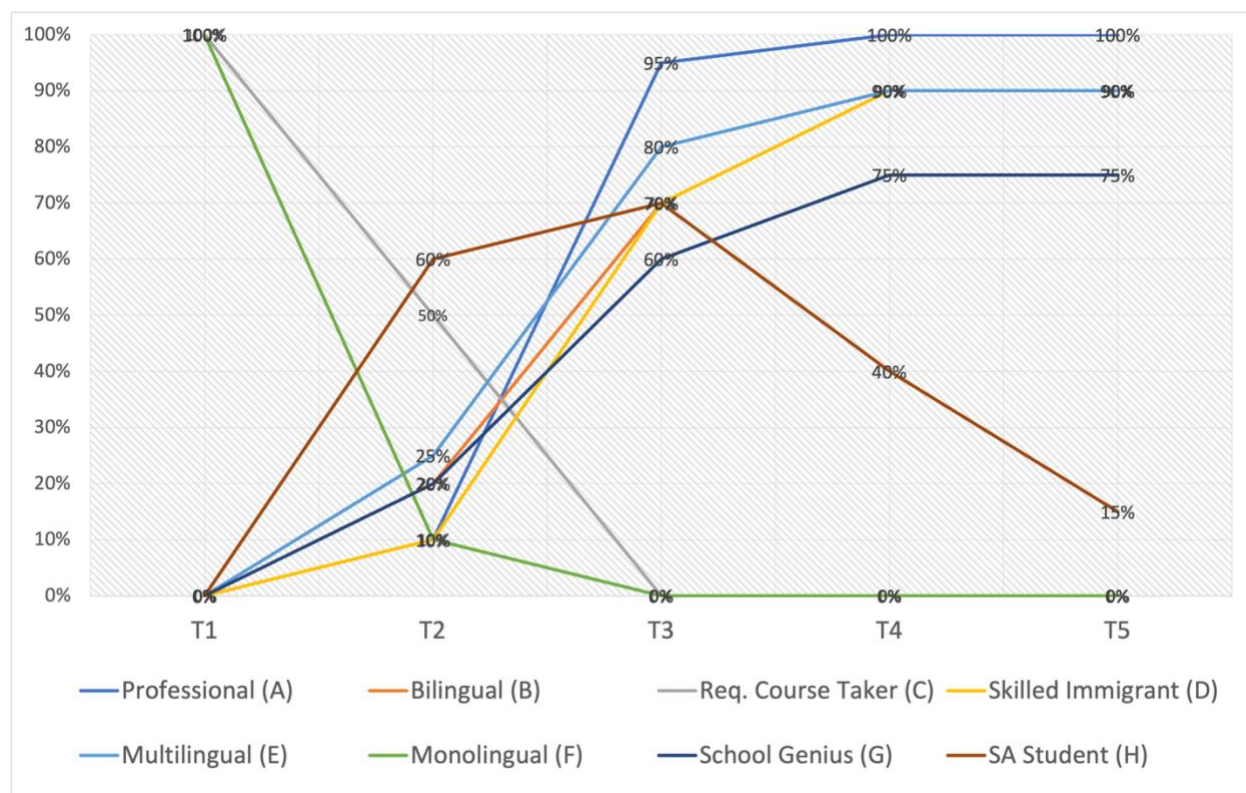
Participant *The Pragmatist's* (P4) overall trajectories can be described as shaped in layers. After initial ratings *at the beginning of formal German studies* (T2) of all profiles fell within 30% of each other, with each successive timepoint, an increasing number of lines diverged, so that *by the end of formal German studies* (T4), all but two lines (profile *The Monolingual*, F; and profile *The Study Abroad Student*, H) had separated. By the last timepoint (*after the end of German studies*, T5), none of the lines overlapped. Their lines reveal profiles *The Professional* (A) and *The School Genius* (G) to be the most strongly affiliated-with profiles, while the line for the profile *The Skilled Immigrant* (D) continued to signal its lowest ranking across the three timepoints (from *at the time of taking the study* until *after the end of formal German studies*, T3-5).

4.2.5 RQ 2.5: What are the Trajectories of Perceived Self-Likeness to Each of the eight Language User Profiles (Vignettes A-H) across the five Timepoints for Participant *The Dreamer* (P5)?

Figure 6 (below) shows the ratings of self-perceived likeness to each of eight profiles across the five timepoints given by participant *The Dreamer* (P5) in the form of a line-graph. The data is visualized similarly to the graphs presented in previous RQs under RT2. The royal blue line for the profile *The Professional* (A) overlaps with the yellow line for the profile *The Skilled Immigrant* (D) between T1 and T2. The orange line (profile *The Bilingual*, B) overlaps with the dark blue line (profile *The School Genius*, G) between T1 and T2, as well as with the yellow line (profile *The Skilled Immigrant*, D) between T3 and T4, and with the light blue line (profile *The Multilingual*, E) between T4 and T5. The gray line for the profile *The Required Course Taker* (C) **overlaps** with the green line for the profile *The Monolingual* (F) between T3 and T5. Finally, the yellow line

(profile *The Skilled Immigrant*, D) overlaps with the light blue line (profile *The Multilingual*, E) between T4 and T5.

Figure 6: Trajectories of perceived self-likeness to each of the eight language user profiles across the five timepoints reported by participant *The Dreamer*



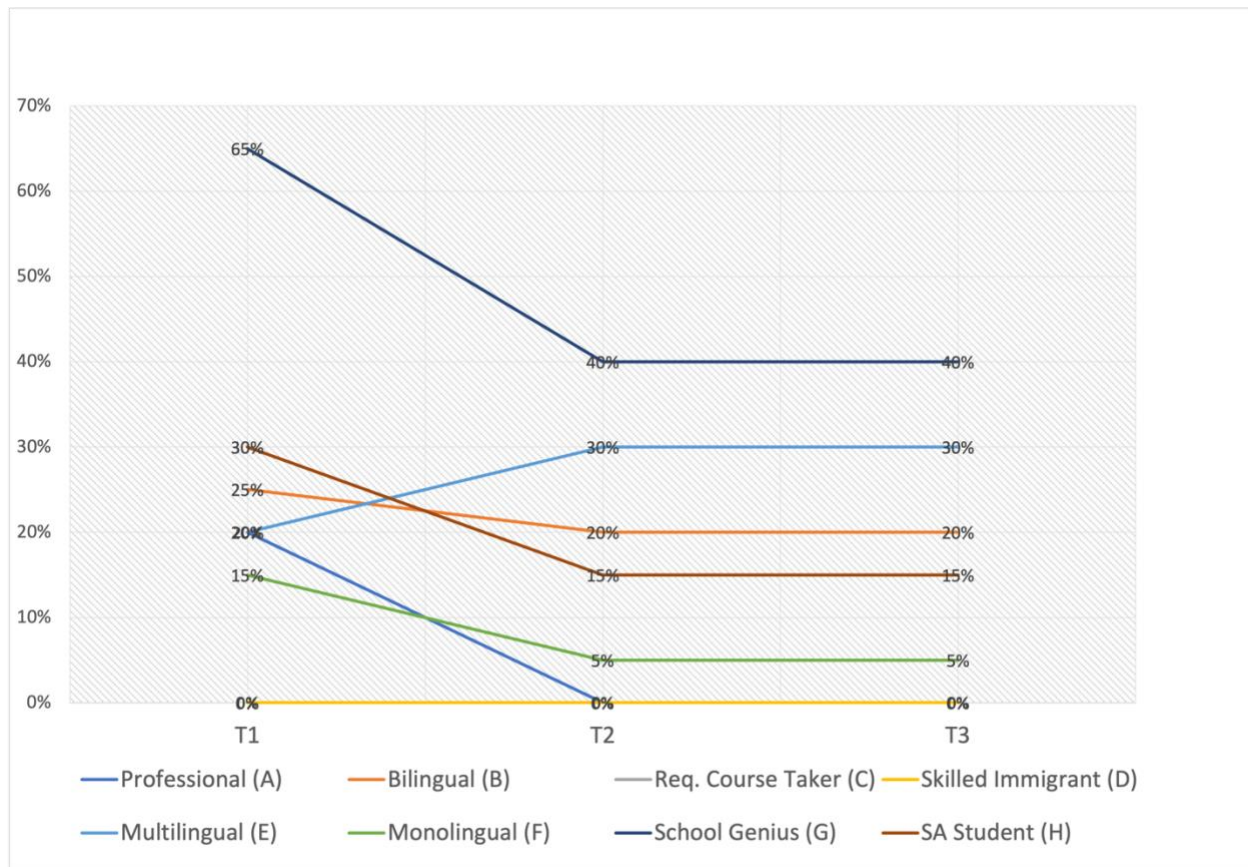
The shape of *The Dreamer*'s (P5) overall trajectories can be described as a 'switch', followed by 'scissors'. The shape of a switch can be attributed to the fact that the profiles they said they had been most like (e.g., *The Required Course Taker*, C; and *The Monolingual*, F) initially (*before the beginning of formal German studies*, T1), had both gone to zero by the time of taking this study (T3). Conversely, by the end of participant *The Dreamer*'s (P5) formal German studies (T4), four profiles (*The Professional*, A; *The Multilingual*, E; *The Skilled Immigrant*, D; and *The School Genius*, G) emerged as the most popular. These same four profiles had received ratings of zero percent *before the beginning of formal German studies* (T1); they started their steep rise between *the beginning of formal German studies* (T2) and the time of *participating in this study* (T3). One

profile, *The Study Abroad Student* (H), traced a notable bell curve, reaching its zenith *at the time of taking part in the study* (T3). This results in the shape of ‘scissors.’ Notably, participant *The Dreamer* (P5) was about to embark on a year-long study abroad-trip in Germany shortly after participating in this study; therefore, the third timepoint (*taking part in the study*) coincided with the highest likeness rating for the profile describing a *Study Abroad* student. Trajectories pertaining to participant *The Dreamer* (P5) formed the shape of scissors because by the time of the last measurement (*after the end of formal German studies*, T5), a clear distinction between the five profiles on top (*The Professional*, A; *The Bilingual*, B; *The Skilled Immigrant*, D; *The Multilingual*, E; and *The Required Course Taker*, C) and the three profiles on the bottom (*The Monolingual*, F; *The School Genius*, G; and *The Study Abroad Student*, H) had become apparent.

4.2.6 RQ 2.6: What are the Trajectories of Perceived Self-Likeness to Each of the eight Language User Profiles (Vignettes A-H) across the five Timepoints for Participant *The Grad* (P6)?

Figure 7 (below) shows the ratings of self-perceived likeness to each of eight profiles across the five timepoints given by participant *The Grad* (P6) in the form of a line-graph. The data is visualized similarly to the graphs presented in previous RQs under RT2. Because *The Grad* did not rate the profiles beyond the time of *taking part in the study* (T3), here is no data displayed for *at the conclusion of formal German studies* (T4) and *after the end of formal German studies* (T5). Further, there are a few overlapping lines: The royal blue line (profile *The Professional*, A) overlaps with the yellow line (profile *The Skilled Immigrant*, D) between T2 and T3; and the gray line (profile *The Required Course Taker*, C) overlaps with the yellow line between T1 and T3.

Figure 7: Trajectories of perceived self-likeness to each of the eight language user profiles across the three timepoints reported by participant The Grad



By the conclusion of *The Grad*'s (P6) participation at *at the time of taking the study* (T3), an impression of disenchantment had started to manifest, with *the beginning of formal German studies* (T2) appearing to be a pivotal moment. Between *before the beginning of formal German studies* (T1) and *at the beginning of formal German studies* (T2), one single profile (*The Multilingual*, E) had shown an increase, albeit a modest one (10%). The initial clear leader (*The School Genius*, G) remained the most popular choice, but in much closer approximation to the remaining profiles. *By the time of taking part in this study* (T3), the spread across profiles had decreased from 65% at the first timepoint to 40%. The profiles consistently rated at zero percent (*The Skilled Immigrant*, D; and *The Required Course Taker*, C) were joined in the zero-range by the profile *The Professional* (A) at the beginning of formal German studies (T2).

4.2.7 RQ 2.7 Looking at five Respondents (P1-5), which of the eight Language User Profiles (Vignettes A-H) Was Most Frequently Chosen as, Respectively, the One Most and the One Least Like Respondents at Each of five Timepoints?

To answer RQ 2.7, self-perceived likeness ratings to each of eight profiles were averaged across five of the six participants (P1-5) with regard to all five timepoints. Since *The Grad* (P6) did not rate the profiles at the last two timepoints, their ratings were removed from the overview.

In Table 20, color was applied to the profile with the highest (red) and the profile with the lowest (blue) average at each timepoint (column). Even as color coding followed columns (timepoints), the most appropriate way to read Table 20 is by row, i.e., to see how frequently and when a given profile was color coded (and rated) as ‘most alike’ or ‘least alike’ on average.

Table 20: Average likeness ratings of five study participants (P1-5) to eight language profiles across all five timepoints

Profiles	Overview of Profiles						Average Ratings by Timepoint (T1-5), %				
	Descriptor	Home language/s	Profession, Aspirations	Personality	Language Acquisition	Use of L2/3	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5
A	<i>The Professional</i>	E	Tech company	Successful, Competent, Easy-going	HS College	Business with clients	21	38	71	82	87
B	<i>The Bilingual</i>	Bilingual (E,S)	Translator	Creative, Warm, Extroverted	At home	Friends/family	5	12	27	40	44
C	<i>The Required Course Taker</i>	E	Marketing	Practical, Procrastination, Fearless	HS	No L2 use	33	30	15	17	17
D	<i>The Skilled Immigrant</i>	G	Engineer (in USA)	Driven, Family-oriented, Sarcastic	HS in Germany	Everyday Life/work	4	18	32	36	42
E	<i>The Multilingual</i>	Multilingual (E, K, C)	Start-up	Analytical, Intellectual, Funny	At home	Friends/family	3	13	28	32	32
F	<i>The Monolingual</i>	E	Business owner	Savvy, Hard-working, Goal-oriented	No L2	Never	32	13	16	18	22
G	<i>The School Genius</i>	E	College	Bright, Quick learner, Intimidating	MS, HS College	Exclusively in school	7	22	46	60	56
H	<i>The Study Abroad Student</i>	E	Local Business	Sharp-minded, Witty, Easily bored	F HS, College SA	Little L2 during SA	8	22	34	32	27

The profile *The Professional* (A) was the profile that respondents on average believed they were most like at all timepoints except the first (*before the beginning of formal German studies*), i.e., during the entire duration of their formal studies of German. What is more, the degree of affiliation increased steadily and notably from timepoint to timepoint, starting at an average rating of 38% *at the beginning of formal German studies* (T2) and rising to an average of 87% at the last timepoint, *after the end of formal German studies* (T5).

Profile *The Required Course Taker* (C) was the profile that participants on average reported to be most like *before they began their formal studies of German* (T1), at an average rating of 33%. Profile *The Monolingual* (F) was rated at a similar average (32%). This finding may not surprise, but the trajectory of ratings for this profile across time raises some questions. Although the profile experienced a dip at the point at which *formal studies of German began* (T2), falling to 13% and constituting the second lowest rated profile at that time after *The Bilingual* (B, 12%), it began a steady rise from then on to the last timepoint (T5, average of 22%).

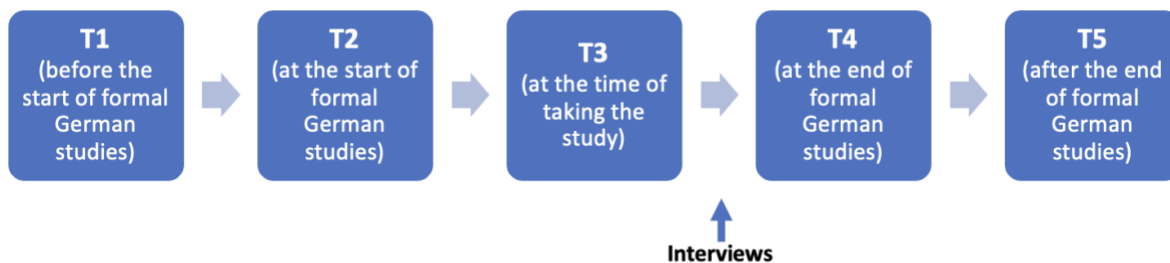
As *The Monolingual* (F) profile's average ratings started to rise again *at the time of taking the interview* (T3) after its temporary dip *at the beginning of formal German studies* (T2), the profile of the *Required Course Taker* (C) took its place as the profile with the lowest average likeness rating at the remaining timepoints (T3, T4, T5), even though it was the profile participants reported to be most like previously.

Profile *The Multilingual* (E) was the profile that participants on average reported to be least like *before beginning of their formal German studies* (T1), with a rating of 3%. It is therefore not only the lowest average likeness rating at the first timepoint, but overall the lowest of all average ratings at all timepoints.

4.3 Research Theme 3: Individual Learners' (Dis)preferences of the eight Language User Profiles

Research Theme (RT) 3 examines which of the eight profiles each participant reported to like or dislike the most at the particular time of one-on-one interviews with the researcher. These took place after the participants had filled out the initial survey (Questionnaire Parts I and II), which, in turn, informed the interviews (see Chapter 3). In the survey, participants had reported the degree of their self-perceived likeness to each of the eight profiles across the five timepoints of reference (T1-5). In their respective interview, each participant was asked once more which of the eight profiles they felt most alike at the time. In addition, in the interview, each participant was asked to declare the profile(s) that they most and the profile(s) that they least liked. Figure 8 (below) shows how the interview data fits in with the other five timepoints of reference.

Figure 8: Time of interviews in relation to the five timepoints of reference



RT3 explores the following three research questions.

- RQ3.1: Which of eight language user profiles (Vignettes A-H) did each participant P1-6 most like to resemble at the time of their respective interview?
- RQ3.2: Which of eight language user profiles (Vignettes A-H) did each participant P1-6 least like to resemble at the time of their respective interview?
- RQ3.3: Which of eight language user profiles (Vignettes A-H) did each participant P1-6 report to resemble the most at the time of their respective interview?

Table 21 (below) shows (a) which profile(s) each of the six participants reported they most desired to resemble (liked the most) and least desired to resemble (liked the least); (b) to which profile they reported to actually be like the most as expressed on a scale from zero (=no likeness at all) to 100 (=total likeness) percent; and (c) the profile(s) participants projected to be most like *after the conclusion of their formal studies of German* (see RQ 1.5). If a participant reported more than one profile, the corresponding cell was split into two with each profile named in one of the halves. If a participant did not name any profile, the cell was labelled with ‘N/A,’ for ‘not available.’ In Table 21, each profile was highlighted in its unique color so as to indicate distributions and prevalence more readily, e.g., all cells that denote the profile *The Bilingual* (B) were colored in green and all cells that pertain to *The School Genius* (G) were marked with light purple. White (uncolored) cells correspond with no answer (‘N/A’).

Table 21: (Dis)preferences for and likeness to the eight profiles at the time of the interview and projected likeness to the eight profiles at T5

Participant	At the time of the interview			After the end of formal German studies (T5)
	Most liked profile(s)	Least liked profile(s)	Profile which respondents felt most like	Profile which respondents project to be most like
The Architect (P1)	The Bilingual (B)	The Required Course Taker (C) The Monolingual (F)	The School Genius (G)	The Professional (A)
The Connector (P2)	The Skilled Immigrant (D)	N/A	The School Genius (G)	The Professional (A)
The Resolute (P3)	The Professional (A)	The Monolingual (F)	The School Genius (G)	The Professional (A)
The Pragmatist (P4)	The Bilingual (B)	The Study Abroad Student (H)	The School Genius (G)	The Professional (A)
The Dreamer (P5)	The Bilingual (B)	The Required Course Taker (C) The Monolingual (F)	The Skilled Immigrant (D)	The Professional (A)

The Grad (P6)	The Bilingual (B)	The Required Course Taker (C)	The School Genius (G)	N/A
	The Skilled Immigrant (D)	The School Genius (G)		

To answer RQ 3.1, mentions presented in the first column of Table 21 were analyzed. The profiles that are centered around frequent language use either in personal or professional life are most often named as the profile participants preferred the most at the time of the interview. Five of the six participants (all but *The Resolute*, P3) preferred profiles that include frequent and fluent L2 or even L3 use with friends and family (profiles *The Bilingual*, B; and *The Skilled Immigrant*, D). All respondents preferred profiles that use their language at work: As explained in the profile descriptions, *The Bilingual* (B) works as a translator; *The Skilled Immigrant* (D) uses their L2 to work abroad; and *The Professional* (A) uses their L2 when conducting business with foreign clients.

RQ 3.2 focused on the participants' dispreferences as presented in the second column of Table 21. The profiles listed in the 'least-liked' category comprised three types: Profiles that described no L2 use (*The Monolingual*, F); profiles that suggested L2 use as separate from natural environments (*The Required Course Taker*, C; and *The School Genius*, G) and limited L2 use with native speakers (*The Study Abroad Student*, H).

RQ 3.3 examined the likeness-ratings to the profiles that each of the participants were asked to give once more during the interview; specifically, they rated which of the eight language profiles they felt most like. All participants except *The Dreamer* (P5) reported to most resemble *The School Genius* (G), the profile that mentioned a person who became fluent in their L2 solely through coursework. In contrast, Participant *The Dreamer* (P5), who at the time of the interview was studying abroad in Germany, reported to feel most like *The Skilled Immigrant* (D), a profile centered around a trilingual immigrant working in another country. When comparing the data to

the data reported in the first and second columns, it can be noted that the profile *The Skilled Immigrant*, (D), which Participant *The Dreamer* (P5) believed to resemble the most, was exactly the profile that two participants (*The Connector*, P2; and *The Grad*, P6) reported as their most preferred profile. All participants except *The Dreamer* (P5) believed themselves to most resemble the profile *The School Genius* (G). In the particular instance of participant *The Grad* (P6), this assessment meant that the respondent thought they bore the strongest resemblance to the profile that they also disliked the most.

In summary, none of the participants felt they were like their most preferred profile at the time of the interview and only one believed themselves to be most like the profile that they appreciated the least. What is more, as a group the participants produced the most consistent responses (their choice of *The School Genius*, G) when asked about their likeness. Opinions diverged more notably when the best- and worst-liked profiles were under discussion although none of the profiles appeared under both categories.

When comparing the profiles that participants reported to prefer (first column of Table 21) with the profiles that participants projected to be most like after the end of their formal German studies (fourth column of Table 21), there is no overlap of profiles except for participant *The Resolute* (P3) who most liked and projected to be most like *The Professional* (A). The other four participants (there is no available data for *The Grad*, P6, at this timepoint) also projected to be most like *The Professional* (A), yet their preferences diverge: *The Architect* (P1), *The Pragmatist* (P4), and *The Dreamer* (P5) all most preferred profile *The Bilingual* (B), while *The Connector* (P2) preferred profile *The Skilled Immigrant* (D). Both profiles *The Bilingual* (B) and *The Skilled Immigrant* (D) highlight frequent L2 use outside of the workplace with friends and family. In

contrast, profile *The Professional* (A) uses their L2 mainly when conducting business with foreign clients.

5. Discussion and Implications

This chapter interprets the results of the study in the context of current research in the fields of SLA and psychology (Chapter 2), as well as discusses implications for research, pedagogy, and program planning. The chapter is organized into three main themes: (1) A plethora of selves;²⁹ (2) toward an expanded L2 Self System; and (3) L2 learning as a catalyst for transformation.

5.1 A Plethora of Selves

The results of this study speak to multiple theories of L2 selves when these theories are taken separately as well as when they are combined. However, some of the insights gained in my dissertation research also point to the need to reconsider some core tenets of current theories. Results have shown that a nearly exclusive focus on future developments as it characterizes current research in the footsteps of Dörnyei's L2MSS is not conceptually sufficient. Concepts that capture past selves (or perhaps more precisely, past versions of the same self) matter, too. In this regard, I will propose the concept of the 'retired self.' What is more, results suggest the need to think of relationships among various models of L2 selves in a manner that emphasizes dynamic aspects. At the end of the chapter, I will outline how the notion of change, or transformation of the L2 self through L2 acquisition, can be conceptualized in an expanded model of L2 motivation that synthesizes the dynamic self-concepts, or aspects, of the self.

I will briefly review theoretical frameworks that were outlined in depth in Chapter 2. The currently most influential model of the learner self in SLA is the L2MSS as pioneered by Dörnyei (2005, 2009), who, in turn, drew inspiration from psychological (Higgins, 1987; Markus & Nurius, 1986) and L2 motivational research (e.g., Gardner, 1985). Dörnyei's model relies on the three

²⁹ The plural 'selves' will be used to refer to multiple types, or categories, of a self; the singular 'self' will be used to refer to one specific and/or a coherent concept of self, even when shared by multiple participants.

dimensions of *ideal self*, *ought-to self*, and the L2 learning experience, and has been subjected to continuous theoretical adaption, including by Dörnyei and his associates (e.g., Boo et al., 2015; Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017; Dörnyei & Chan, 2013). Subsequent research has proposed additional dimensions of the L2 self, including the *anti-ought-to self* (Thompson & Vásquez, 2015; Thompson, 2017); the *rooted self* (MacIntyre et al., 2017); the *ideal multilingual self* (Henry, 2017); and the *(im)plausible self* (Chavez, 2020), among others. These dimensions of the L2 self will be elucidated via specific examples that were gleaned during the course of this study.

5.1.1 Possible Selves – the Fallow Land

This subchapter is dedicated to the discussion of future-directed selves, including *possible* (future) selves (Subchapter 5.1.1.1); *ideal* (future) selves (5.1.1.2); *feared* (future) selves (5.1.1.3); and a range of other (future) selves (5.1.1.4).

5.1.1.1 Possible (Future) Selves

In RT1, I reported on participants' perceived likeness to different types of language users at different timepoints of reference, including those in the past and future, as seen from their current vantage point. In line with future-oriented conceptions of the self, i.e., *possible selves*, the participants' ratings of the profiles for the fourth (*at the end of formal German studies*) and fifth (*after the end of formal German studies*) timepoint of reference are pertinent.

Five of six participants reported one or more forms of a *future self*. *The Architect* (P1); *The Resolute* (P3); *The Pragmatist* (P4); and *The Dreamer* (P5) indicated that when they thought of *the end of their German studies* (T4), among all named profiles they expected to be most like *The Professional* (A). Going one timepoint of reference farther into the future, i.e., when their formal

studies of German would be behind them, five of five reporting participants (*The Architect* (P1); *The Connector* (P2); *The Resolute* (P3); *The Pragmatist* (P4); and *The Dreamer* (P5) predicted that they would be most like *The Professional* (A). In other words, four of five reporting participants designated *The Professional* (A) as their persistent (i.e., at both future timepoints) *future self* and a fifth participant (*The Connector*, P2) joined them in this view when referencing the second future timepoint (T2, *after formal studies of German had been concluded*). Two of the participants, *The Pragmatist* (P4) and *The Dreamer* (P5), rated this profile at the maximum of 100% at both timepoints. It can be inferred, then, that *The Professional* (A), a profile that highlighted a life revolving around occasional L2 use centered around business, was a *possible self* for these participants.

Four respondents focused on more than one profile when they described themselves in the future. When referencing the timepoint farthest in the future, participant *The Architect* (P1) also affiliated with the profile of *The Bilingual* (B, 60%); *The Connector* (P2) with the profile *The Skilled Immigrant* (D, 80%); and *The Pragmatist* (P4) with the profile *The School Genius* (G, 95%). Similarly, participant *The Dreamer* (P5), at both future timepoints, identified with three additional profiles, i.e., *The Bilingual* (B, 90%), *The Skilled Immigrant* (D, 90%), and *The Multilingual* (E, 90%). In doing so, these four participants imagined lives that resemble the life of *The Professional* (A) but are enhanced by L2 use that permeates daily life.

A sixth participant, *The Grad* (P6), showed unique response behaviors in that (1) they refrained from rating profiles with regard to any of the two future points in time (i.e., points beyond *at the time of taking the study*), a decision that they explained during the interview with the expectation that their current self was unlikely to undergo further changes; and (2) even for the timepoints situated in the past or present, they rated no profile higher than 40% (i.e., the profile

The School Genius, G, before the beginning of formal German studies). In short, they saw relatively little likeness to any of the listed profiles. The participant conceded that at one point in the past, they had imagined a *possible self* that was similar to the profile *The Professional* (A): “At one point I saw myself going into a more regular job like at an NGO.” However, they added that they had since changed professional paths by going to graduate school for Russian Literature, a decision that in their mind put them on a career path that no longer matched the profile of *The Professional* (A).

To summarize in terms of theory, one participant (*The Grad*, P6) was unable to imagine or unwilling to describe a *future (possible) self*; one participant (*The Resolute*, P3) focused on a single possibility (*The Professional*, A); and four participants (*The Architect*, P1; *The Connector*, P2; *The Pragmatist*, P4; and *The Dreamer*, P5) imagined multiple *future selves*.

5.1.1.2 *Ideal (Future) Selves*

In answer to RT3, participants were asked in the interviews to state which of the eight language profiles they would most like to be like in the (non-descript) future. Participants’ answers can be interpreted as expressions of their *ideal self* as perceived at the time of the interviews.

One participant (*The Grad*, P6) named more than one profile as desirable, i.e., *The Skilled Immigrant* (D) as well as *The Bilingual* (B). The latter was favored by three other participants as well, i.e., by *The Architect* (P1); *The Pragmatist* (P4); and *The Dreamer* (P5). Two participants, *The Connector* (P2) and *The Grad* (P6), expressed an affinity for *The Skilled Immigrant* (D). Participant *The Resolute* (P3) stood alone in choosing as their most desired profile *The Professional* (A). In doing so, Participant *The Resolute* (P3) was also the only respondent who preferred a profile that described bounded rather than pervasive L2 use.

A comparison between participants' *possible future selves* (who they thought they might become) and the specific version or versions of their *future self* that seemed ideal to them (who they would like to become) indicates that only participant *The Resolute* (P3) referenced the same profile (*The Professional*, A) as their *ideal* and *possible* (most likely) *self*. Their unified focus on *The Professional* (A), the profile chosen by most participants as the most likely but not also most desirable outcome, may indicate that *The Resolute* (P3) deliberately refrained from being guided by idealizations that they did not consider to be realistic. *The Grad* (P6), who had rejected any notions of *future selves*, nevertheless retained ideals, which may or may not have also been aspirational.

The remaining four participants (*The Architect*, P1; *The Connector*, P2; *The Pragmatist*, P4; and *The Dreamer*, P5) distinguished to varying degrees between their most likely self (universally captured in the profile *The Professional*, A) and their *ideal self* or *selves*, in whose choice there also was greater divergence. In clearly distinguishing between likely and desired learning outcomes, these four participants seemed to be guided by a realistic and possibly instrumental sense of self that limits future L2 use to delineated purposes (i.e., work).

5.1.1.3 Feared (Future) Selves

In the same interview that was referenced above, participants were also asked which of the profiles they would least like to resemble. In theoretical terms, participants were asked to express their *feared self*. Half of the participants (*The Architect*, P1; *The Dreamer*, P5; and *The Grad*, P6) named more than one profile. The profiles that were most commonly chosen to denote *feared selves* were those that connoted little to no L2 use, i.e., *The Monolingual* (F, chosen by *The Architect*, P1; *The Resolute*, P3; and *The Dreamer*, P5) or L2 use that was forced and/or limited to instructional

settings, i.e., *The Required Course Taker* (C, selected by *The Architect*, P1; *The Dreamer*, P5; and *The Grad*, P6); *The Study Abroad Student* (H, chosen only by *The Pragmatist*, P4); and *The School Genius* (chosen only by *The Grad*, P6). As participant *The Dreamer* (P5) explained in the interview: “Not using or minimally using German in life is a fear of mine.” They elaborated that the fear stems from how integrated German is into their sense of self; and if one were to take that away, they would not recognize themselves anymore.

A comparison between participants’ most likely *future selves* and the specific version of their *future selves* that they feared to become indicates no overlap between the two. Together, results suggest that all respondents, in fact, developed one or more possible L2 selves. These imaginations included both *ideal* and *feared selves*, as outlined in Dörnyei (2005, p. 99) in reference to Markus and Nurius’ (1986) seminal work: “[...] [they are] specific representations of one’s self in future states, involving thoughts, images, and senses, and are in many ways the manifestations, or personalized carriers, of one’s goals and aspiration (or fears, of course).” Therefore, *possible selves* can be classed as *ideal selves* or *feared selves*. In any case, they serve as motivating self-guides for the current self to either strive toward or to avoid. It is important to note, however, that *feared selves* are not a dimension in Dörnyei’s L2MSS. Nevertheless, as they have been proposed in the *possible selves*-framework and acknowledged in Dörnyei’s own work, they were used as a basis for analysis in this study.

5.1.1.4 A Range of (Future) Selves

Results of this study raise questions about the conceptual relationship among terms such as *possible*, *ideal*, and *feared self*. Whereas both *ideal* and *feared self* need to be considered ‘possible’ in some regard, as participants were able to articulate and therefore, able to imagine them, neither type of self appeared particularly likely to respondents. There appears to be a range of *possible selves*, e.g., ranging from ideal to feared but not limited to these two extremes. Clearly, the use of the plural *possible selves* is the most appropriate (Bak, 2015):

“It is also worth noting that the plural is used in the concept of possible selves, clearly indicating that we are not dealing with a single possible self but with a multielement set of perceived possibilities. A person may generate many alternative versions of the self, either relating to different life domains or within one domain. These are not representations of some abstract personality traits or generic categories but comprehensive ideas of oneself in particular roles and situations.” (p. 651)

This notion of multiple, potentially concurring, *possible selves* from which L2 learner motivation can be derived may also be inferred from the results of this study. In the interview, participants were mindful of the instrumental value of their degree in German, and, simultaneously, their perceived limited opportunities to apply their L2. Most respondents seemed to situate their most likely L2 self between their *ideal L2 self*, a self with abundant L2 use in all aspects of their life – and their *feared L2 self*, a self that would use little or no L2 or do so only in instructional settings. What is more, participants’ most likely L2 self tended to look beyond L2 use as a goal in and of itself to align it with other goals, such as becoming a successful professional.

In developing the L2MSS, Dörnyei (2005) largely oriented to the notion of integrative motivation over that of instrumental motivation, as outlined by Gardner (1985). Yet, the results of

the present study imply that instrumentally-coded *possible selves* (such as *The Professional*, A) not only provide L2 learning motivation, but may override the motivational power that has been hypothesized to derive from an *ideal self* (such as *The Skilled Immigrant*, D) when this *ideal self* is deemed to be implausible (Chavez, 2020). What is more, the L2MSS includes only the two future self-guides, the *ideal* and *ought-to self*. However, other dimensions of the *possible self* have since been proposed. In accordance with a more nuanced view of *possible selves*, the results suggest other dimensions of the self, including the *rooted self* (MacIntyre et al., 2017) and the *ideal multilingual self* (Henry, 2017).

In the interviews as well as in Questionnaire Part I, four participants (*The Architect*, P1; *The Connector*, P2; *The Pragmatist*, P4; and *The Dreamer*, P5) described German heritage as a motivational factor to learn and continue to learn German. *The Dreamer* (P5) specifically mentioned an improved relationship with their German grandfather since they started their German education: “If I didn’t speak German, I wouldn’t be able to communicate with [my German-speaking family members].” *The Connector* (P2) expressed that learning German has helped them connect to their culture and origins. They declared that they could better relate to other people who have emigrated from Germany to the U.S. in the past centuries, demonstrating motivation that stems from a desire to connect with the past. *The Pragmatist* (P4) similarly referred to their German heritage as the reason why they are learning German: “I’m a little bit—I’m part German.” The *rooted self* appears to motivate these participants regardless of whether they have recently immigrated relatives (e.g., parents), as distant perceived German heritage was a reason for participants to study, and continue to study, German as well.

Several participants foregrounded the idea of being or becoming multilingual. *The Grad* (P6) mentioned in the interview that they “became more multilingual” over the course of their

language studies and that they idealized a *multilingual self*, commenting on the profile *The Multilingual* (E): “I wish I was like that.” In fact, two participants (*The Connector*, P2; and *The Grad*, P6) idealized profile *The Multilingual* (E). In theoretical terms, some participants seem to be motivated by an *ideal multilingual self*.

To summarize, all participants reported some form of *possible selves*, including *ideal*, *feared*, *rooted*, *ideal multilingual*, or likely selves. In any case, in their orientation toward their *future self* (five participants) as well as in the reluctance to describe a *future self* that differs from its current version (*The Grad*), participants took into account how plausible a future self is when they projected who they will be like in the future.

5.1.2 Back to the Future: The *Retired Self* as a Bi-Directional Motivator

Guided by the future orientation that is inherent to the dominant theoretical framework of L2 motivation, the L2MSS, previous discussions have focused mainly on *future selves*. However, this study intentionally drew on retrospection by asking participants to comment on their relative likeness to each of eight learner profiles at two timepoints in the past (*before the beginning of formal German studies* and *at the start of formal German studies*). Together with reporting on their current self, past and *future selves* were incorporated into the construction of trajectories of self-perceived likeness to different learner profiles (see RT2, Subchapter 4.2).

These trajectories revealed that participants’ affiliation with certain profiles – at least when seen from the current vantage point – was described as dynamic, strengthening and weakening over time, often without a clear directionality. For instance, Participant *The Dreamer* (P5) reported to be virtually exactly like (100%) the profiles *The Monolingual* (F) and *The Required Course Taker* (C) *before they started formally studying German* (T1). These two profiles feature no L2

use. *The Dreamer* (P5) reported a rapid decrease in likeness once they started formally learning German (T2) and reported practically no likeness to these profiles (0%) *at the time of taking the study* (T3). Therefore, they once perceived themselves to be monolingual, reporting no L2 use at all, as implied by the two profiles. They have since dissociated from these profiles, however, and instead identify more closely with profiles that feature high L2 use.

Taking the time-transcendental aspect of the Self System into account (Oyserman et al., 2012), it seems that different profiles entered or departed the range of *possible selves* at different times and rarely did so definitively. The distinction between past and *future selves*, as a result, becomes blurred.

Dörnyei's L2MSS frames motivation as unidirectionally forward-pointing and as driven by the discrepancy between future-oriented *possible selves* and the current L2 self-concept. In this narrow focus on the future, L2MSS deviates from both current psychological research and the psychological theories that inspired it. Markus and Nurius (1986) outline the relevance of past selves (p. 955): "Past selves, to the extent that they may define an individual again in the future, can also be possible selves." In a similar vein, Peetz and Wilson (2008) investigated the *temporally extended self*; and Singer and Salovey (1993) pioneered the *(mis)remembered self*, two concepts that both investigate past selves and their connection to motivation. More recently, Oyserman et al. (2012) described the importance of past experiences, memories, and past selves on the self-concept(s) that people currently hold. Even within SLA research, language learning motivation has been described as a perpetual process across time (Ushioda, 1998).

In response to this theoretical gap, and based on the results of the present study, I propose the concept of a 'retired self.' This *retired self* encompasses a once imagined possible, and perhaps even hoped-for self that has been retired in favor of newer, emerging *possible selves*. These *retired*

selves are not necessarily rejected selves, though they could be, but retired in the sense that they may once more emerge later in a language learner's trajectory of self-conceptualizations. The *retired self* may not serve the learner at the moment, but it may still be available to the learner when it is evoked again. Whether foregrounded or backgrounded at a given time, the *retired self* may inform or contribute to the current L2 self as well as to *possible selves* – similar to how *The Grad* (P6) retired their *possible self* of a profession similar to that described in profile *The Professional* (A) in favor of a more L2-focused career in Russian literature.

In Markus and Nurius' *possible selves* theory, *possible selves* are grounded in the past but influence an individual's future in that they reoccur as *possible selves*. This proposition is reflected in the *retired self*'s potential to reemerge and influence present and future self-concepts. Results of the present study indicate that the flow between past and *future selves* is not unidirectional from the former to the latter. Instead, respondents in this study also articulated their past selves based on their projected *future selves*. This observation is supported by the connection between one's self-defining memories and one's goals, as put forth by Singer and Salovey (1993). Past selves provide references to interpret and formulate *possible selves*, and in turn, the current or *future self* reinterprets the past based on new, changed information. Therefore, I hypothesize that *retired selves* serve as bi-directional motivators across time.

5.1.3 The Interconnected Nature of L2 Self-Concepts

The interconnected nature of different L2 self-concepts, including the *retired self*, can be illustrated with the example of results that were specific to participant *The Dreamer* (P5).

The Dreamer (P5) projected *possible selves* that centered around frequent L2 use, in its form constant and reaching outside the professional sphere (profile *The Bilingual*, B), and

minimally, at work (*The Professional*, A). Their *feared selves* involved the total absence of L2 use (*The Monolingual*, F, and *The Required Course Taker*, C). Through their German heritage, the *rooted self* served as an additional motivator. When it came to past selves, *The Dreamer* (P5) reported *retired selves* that were similar to the profiles *The Monolingual* and *The Required Course Taker*. These *retired selves* informed *The Dreamer's* (P5) *possible selves* in the sense that they were reflected in their *feared selves*. In the interview, the participant exclaimed that to them, “being monolingual is a privilege [...]” that is inherent to the US-American English native speaker experience, a ‘privilege’ that they rejected for themselves to instead pursue an L2 self. The goal to become distinct from the majority culture, or what you ‘ought-to’ not be, was driving this participant to continue with their language studies. Therefore, it could be argued that *The Dreamer's anti-ought-to self* (Thompson & Vásquez, 2015) involved proficiency in and frequent use of the L2. Further, there appears to be a connection between this *anti-ought-to self* and the *retired selves*, the selves that are either monolingual or show no desire for language use. Figure 9 (below) illustrates the interconnectedness of these future L2 self-concepts and the current L2 self-concept as they manifest in the *The Dreamer's* (P5) responses. Each self that emerged from the results presented in RT1–3 as well as the interview is depicted by a square that shows the named self as well as a brief indication of how it was identified in the results. The lines between the different selves represent potential overlap, connections, or influences among the selves. The double-sided arrow vis-à-vis the current L2 self-concept symbolizes the influential nature of the constant movement of selves that can influence the current L2 self-concept at any given moment,

and

vice

versa.³⁰

Figure 9: The different selves as they manifest in the results for The Dreamer

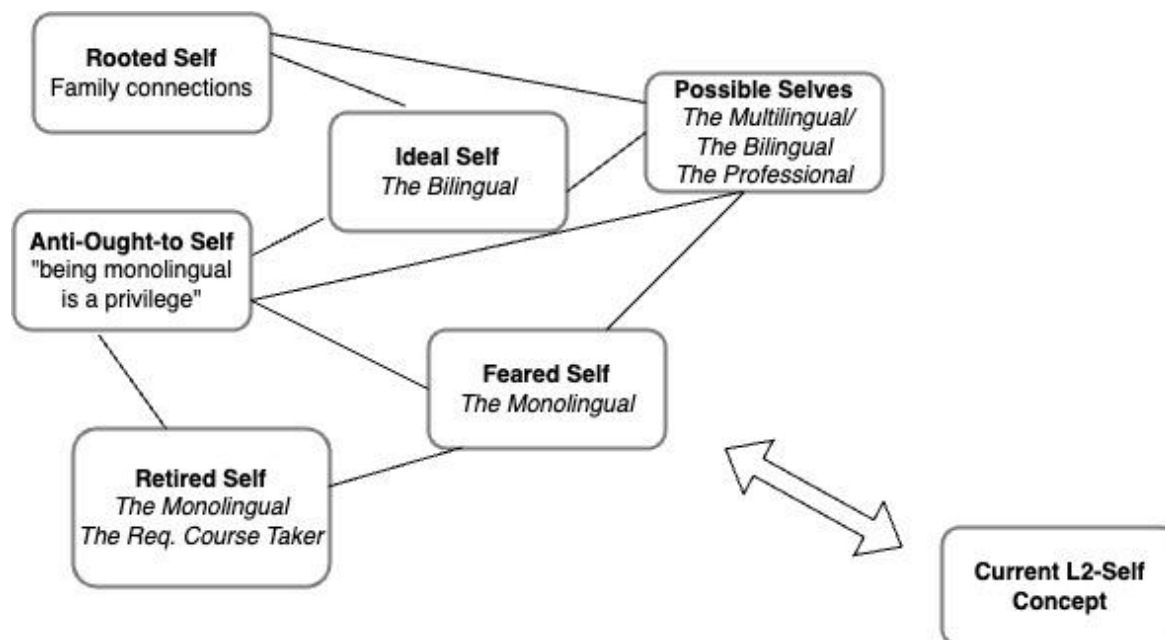
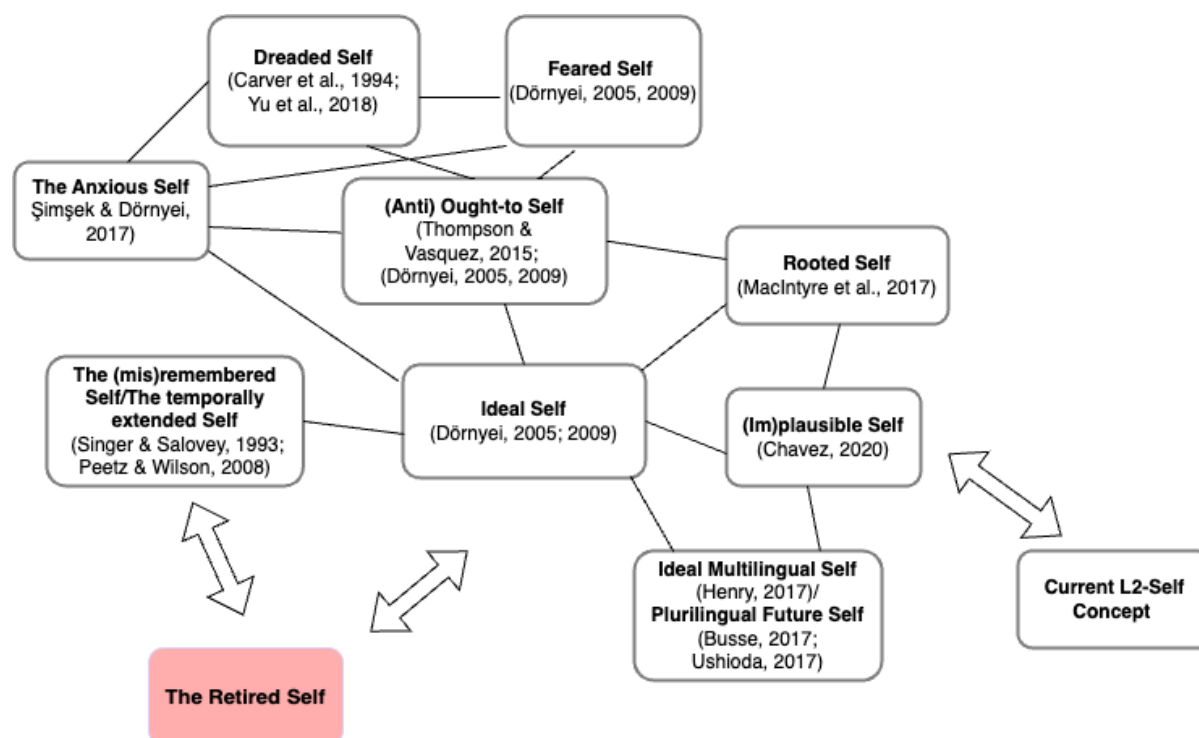


Figure 9 can be abstracted to illustrate the notion of interconnected L2 self-concepts that span the past, present, and future. Figure 10 (below) shows a model that illustrates the interplay between the different L2 selves that arose from the literature review in connection with the results of this study. Similar to Figure 9, Figure 10 shows the different L2 self-concepts as discrete squares. The lines between different squares show potential interactions or influences between different L2 self-concepts, e.g., the *ought-to self* might help the learner (indirectly or subconsciously) articulate the *ideal self*. The double-sided arrows in Figure 10 symbolize the interactions and a potentially mutual dependence between the past-oriented (*mis*)*remembered self* as well as the future-facing

³⁰ It is important to note that this model (and all subsequent models presented in this dissertation) should not be read from left to right but is rather an interconnected cloud in a 3D space and is only depicted in this matter due to format restrictions.

other selves, e.g., the *(anti) ought-to self*, and the *retired self*. The *retired self* is represented in this model in the same type of square as the other self-concepts, and the red color was applied to represent the new addition to the model.

Figure 10: Model of the self-concepts of the L2 self



While this model shows all self-concepts and their connections as present at all times, this is done only for illustrative purposes. Neither are all L2 self-concepts nor connections between them inherently present for any one given L2 learner at a time; nor are they always constant, which has been shown in the generally changing likeness-ratings that four reporting participants gave across the timepoints of reference. Only *The Resolute* (P3) chose the same profile as the most like them across all timepoints of reference. Instead, the L2 self at any given point in time (such as represented in Figure 10) can be modelled merely as a snapshot of the current L2 self, with different selves present, or ‘foregrounded,’ more strongly than others. The past (or *retired*) self suggests a lingering influence of past selves on the current behaviors and decisions of a language

learner, such as *The Dreamer*'s (P5) continued engagement with their German family members to not fall back into their past self that included little to no L2 use. They may also be reactivated as a *possible self*; however, for the current L2 self-concept, the past selves are backgrounded.

This fore- and backgrounding of selves can be seen in the snapshots of the current L2 self that arose from the results of this study, as the results suggest that participants reported different foregrounded past selves (e.g., a different *possible self*) that drove their motivation in the past. These have since been backgrounded in favor of other emerging *possible selves*. The notion of presence, or fore- and backgrounding, of different selves will be further expanded upon in Subchapter 5.2.4.

5.2 Toward an Expanded L2 Self System

The discussion presented in the previous subchapter can be synthesized into an expanded model of the L2 Self System. The following subchapters explain the concepts that inform the model (5.2.1-5.2.4). The final subchapter shows an illustration of the expanded L2 Self System (5.2.5).

5.2.1 Addition of the Time-Transcending Aspect to L2 Motivation

In order to better understand the participants' motivations and the ways in which the different L2 self-concepts manifest for each participant, the temporal factor of the self needs to be considered. The connection between motivation and temporal focus, or components of the self, has been specifically pointed out by Oyserman and James (2009). Not just the future, but a learner's L2 past has to be taken into account when considering their motivation. As Markus and Kitayama ascertained (p. 421): "Selves [...] are simultaneously schemas of past behavior and patterns for current and future behavior." Therefore, when examining the L2 self, one has to take a holistic approach to better attempt to understand the decisions and behaviors of L2 learners that in turn can influence motivation.

5.2.2 The Self is Situated

As has been established in the field of psychology, the self is stable yet dynamic (McGuire & McGuire, 1988, p. 70) in the sense that it is situated, "[...] a product of situations and a shaper of behavior in situations [...]." The salience of self-concepts fluctuates depending on the current situation; and the situation might influence which self-concept is activated at a given time (Cho, 2015). Therefore, each reported data point, and in turn, each interpreted self is a snapshot of the current L2 self-concept that can change, depending on the situation and time at which the learner

reports about it. This is visible not just in the reported trajectories of the participants (RT2), but also in the differences between reported likeness to profiles at the time of filling out the survey (RT1) and the interview (RT3). The difference in time in data collection was enough for the participants to report a differing self-concept, with a different profile that they reported to feel most like in the moment, e.g., *The Dreamer's* (P5) projected highest likeness to profile *The Professional* (A) in the future before study abroad, and to profile *The Multilingual* (E) during their study abroad in Germany.

5.2.3 Networked Self-Concepts

As previously mentioned, there are multiple self-concepts in a self:

“Because they are able to reflect on themselves over time and from multiple perspectives, people can evaluate themselves using multiple standards, predict how social interactions will go, and self-regulate by acting in ways that facilitate future self-needs and wants. In that sense, there is not a single *me* but multiple *me*’s, or at least multiple facets to each *me*.”
(Oyserman et al., 2012, p. 72)

In the L2 context, when taking the time-transcending factor of the L2 self into account, one can argue that these multiple *me*’s, or multiple facets to each *me*, can be interpreted as different motivational selves. As mentioned in Subchapter 5.1.3, participants have multiple, dynamic, connected selves that are activated depending on the situated context they find themselves in. Based on the ratings presented under RT1, it seems that participants can have multiple differing *possible selves* as well as past, or *retired*, selves, that are still actively influencing the current L2 self as well as facilitate the *future self*. Therefore, the different selves, or different self-concepts of the one L2 self, interact with each other and are connected to each other.

5.2.4 Fore- and Backgrounding of Different Self-Concepts

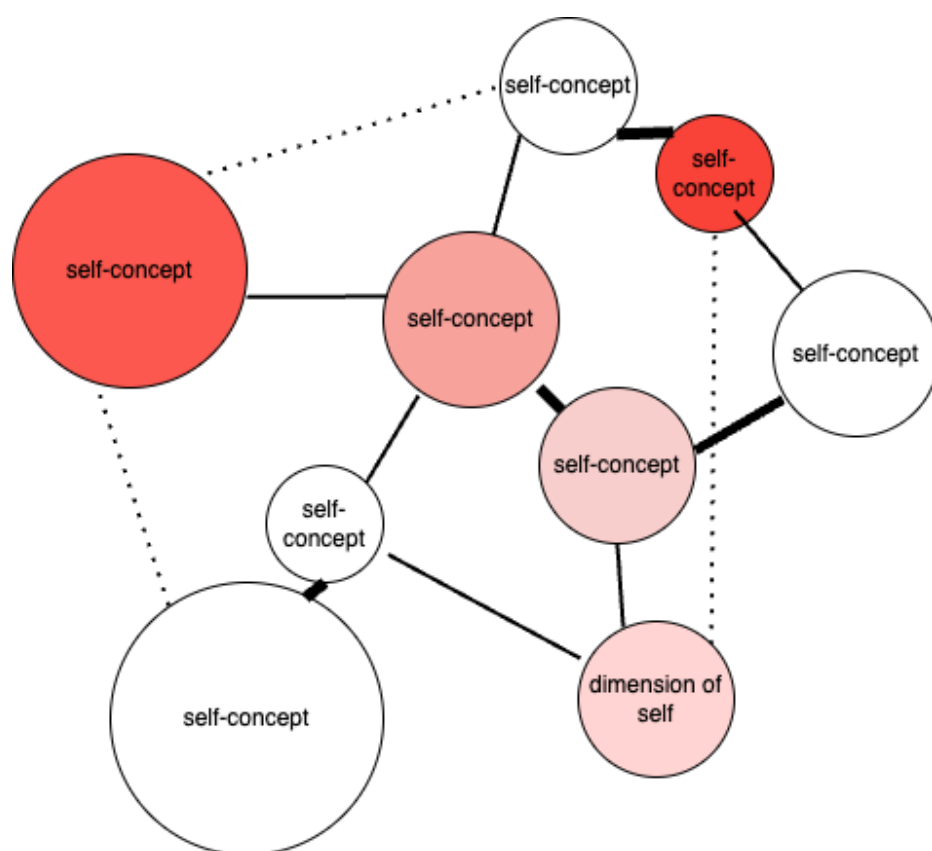
The different self-concepts are stable yet dynamic, situated, interconnected, and time-transcending in the sense that they remain with the person and still influence their motivation and behavior. One explanation for the appearance of different selves in different situations is that these self-concepts are triggered to become salient, depending on the situation; as self-concepts can be fluctuating and reshaped by a situation (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Cho, 2015). I hypothesize, then, that self-concepts are either fore- or backgrounded at any given point in time. Depending on the situation and how it is primed, a different self-concept will be activated and becomes accessible: “[...] the aspects of one’s self and identity that matter in the moment are determined by what is relevant in the moment” (Oyserman, 2012, p. 76). It is important to note that salience does not automatically increase motivation; what is important, however, is relevance to the self (Oyserman et al., 2014). Bak (2015, p. 652) alludes to the situated foregrounding in his article on *possible selves*: “[...] a change of the situational context, as it were, imposes a different perspective of looking at oneself. Such a change in the repertoire of possible selves happens spontaneously, provided that there has been a sufficiently significant change of situation.”

In the L2 context, then, there may not necessarily be a change of the L2 self, but rather a constant L2 Self System in which self-concepts become salient, and are fore- or backgrounded, depending on the situation. The L2 self is stable, yet the composition of different self-concepts that make up the self are dynamic. The current L2 self, then, is made-up of a collection of foregrounded working L2 self-concepts. Not just *future selves*, but also past selves influence, and, if relevant, motivate the learner, depending on their level of foregroundedness.

5.2.5 An Expanded Model of the L2 Self

In order to visualize the fore- and backgrounding of the L2 self-concepts, including past, current, and *possible selves*, an abstract model has been created that serves as an illustration of a snapshot of the L2 learner self in regard to motivation at a single given point in time and represents a proposed expanded model of the L2 Motivational Self System. Figure 11 (below) exemplifies the fore- and backgrounded self-concepts at such a single timepoint. The self-concepts, each represented by a circle, are arranged in a network to highlight their interconnectivity. The different sizes of the circles represent the relative prominence, or foregroundedness, of the self-concept. The proximity of the circles to each other represent similarity at a given point in time, and the type and thickness of the lines (a dotted line represents a weaker tie than a thick line) represent the strength of their connection with each other. Color coding was applied to represent the relative prominence of the L2 in a self-concept at a given point in time, with no color applied (white circles) to imply no current L2 prominence in a self-concept, and a dark red implying a strong contribution of the L2 to that self-concept. Lighter shades of red imply a weaker contribution of the L2 to that self-concept at this given timepoint.

Figure 11: Expanded model of the L2 self



5.3 L2 Learning as a Catalyst for Transformation?

As previously stated, this study set out to investigate, in the broadest sense, whether learners of German showed signs of transformation because of their L2 learning. Transformation, according to the APA Dictionary of Psychology, can be defined as “any change in appearance, form, function, or structure,” and, according to the Cambridge dictionary, as “a complete change in the appearance or character of something or someone, especially so that that thing or person is improved.” Two aspects are central to the definition: 1) there is a change, and 2) it should be complete. The added component of general improvement as expressed in the Cambridge Dictionary definition seems to be optional, though generally preferred. In their study of the experience of positive psychological transformation, Fortino et al. (2021, p. 96) define transformation as “[...] a process of meaningful and lasting change in an individual’s way of being” (p. 96). What Fortino et al. define as “catalysts of transformation” (p. 97), or “destabilizers” (Schlitz et al., 2011, p. 227), are disruptive factors in a person’s life. According to Bak (2015, p. 652), *possible selves* are stable, but the “repertoire of possible selves” changes when there is a change in the role of a person, e.g., when one becomes a parent: “A change of situation stimulates changes in possible selves, which in turn facilitates adaptation to the new situation.”

The present study explored claims of L2 learning as a catalyst of transformation. In the field of SLA, transformation has been mainly investigated in relation to study abroad (e.g., Barkhuizen, 2017; Dirkx et al., 2010; Du & Jackson, 2020; Ellwood, 2011; Fryer & Roger, 2017, 2018; Milstein, 2005; Yu et al., 2018), which could be categorized as a catalyst, or a destabilizer, as well. The following subchapters summarize the findings of the study in regard to a potential transformation in the L2 learner (5.3.1-5.3.2) and potential catalysts (5.3.3), before drawing

conclusions regarding the connection between the proposed expanded L2 Self System and possible transformations (5.3.4).

5.3.1 Drastic Changes across Learner Timelines

In this study, participants reported their perceived likeness to different language user profiles across five timepoints of reference. Their trajectories were analyzed under RT2. Drastic changes in likeness or a (nearly) complete change from no likeness to virtually identical likeness can hint at L2 learning as a potential catalyst.

Three participants reported a drastic change in likeness to one or more profiles: *The Connector* (P2), *The Pragmatist* (P4), and *The Dreamer* (P5). For example, *The Dreamer's* (P5) ratings for the most identified with profiles *before the beginning of formal German studies*, *The Required Course Taker* (C) and *The Monolingual* (F), drop down to 50% and 10%, respectively, *at the beginning of formal German studies*, and down to 0% *at the time of taking the study*. Instead, *The Dreamer* (P5) reported virtual identical likeness to profiles *The Professional* (A, 95%) and *The Multilingual* (E, 80%) *at the time of taking the study*, with a projected further increase (100% and 90%, respectively) *by the end of formal German studies*.

The Dreamer's (P5) ratings can be interpreted as a change of heart, as they rejected profiles with little language use in favor of profiles that dominantly feature L2 use. This, in turn, could hint at a potential experience that started a transformational process. What is more, *The Dreamer* (P5) commented on the strong effect that language learning had on them in the interview: “Learning a second language has dramatically changed not only my educational path but who I am as a person and how I see the world and how I interact with other people.”

These results may indicate a potential transformation into active, lifelong language users, one that coincides with the participants' start of their L2 learning and one that participants project to be stable and permanent, even after the conclusion of their formal language studies.

5.3.2 Drastic Changes happen with your 'First' L2

In addition, there may be an indication that this only occurs with the L2 and not any subsequently learned languages. The two participants who had previously learned another L2 before learning German, *The Resolute* (P3) and *The Grad* (P6), both showed stable ratings throughout their trajectories. In the interview, *The Grad* (P6) explained that their stable ratings are due to the fact that all changes had already happened before they started learning German, while learning Russian, the L2 that they focus on. They emphasized the importance of Russian in their life as follows:

“[...] when I first started learning Russian and obviously therefore [...] before I began my studies of German, I really didn't think my language study was going to go any further than using it occasionally hopefully in some sort of professional aspect, but I really didn't think it was going to be all-encompassing as it really is.”

In this quote, *The Grad* (P6) described Russian as the catalyst of their change, from someone who was not going to fill their life with language study into someone whose livelihood entails the study of an L2, as they now are a graduate student of Russian literature.

5.3.3 Study Abroad as a Potential Catalyst for Foregrounding of Different Selves

While there is much research into study abroad as a major transformative experience, or a potential transformation catalyst (see Subchapter 2.4.1), there has not been much research into the actual processes of such a 'transformation.' In this study, participant *The Dreamer* (P5) began their study

abroad year in Germany between filling out the questionnaires and participating in the interview. There are reported differences between their profile ratings of who they reported to be most like and anticipated to be most like in the future before they went abroad and while they were studying abroad. They projected to be most like profile *The Professional* (A) before they went on their study abroad, but during the interview, they now projected to be most like *The Multilingual* (E) in the future. However, while their likeness to these profiles changed and their *possible selves* differ, one cannot establish a causal connection between study abroad as the sole catalyst for a change in *The Dreamer's* (P5) self. Instead, what may be evident is a shift in salient self-concepts of their L2 learner self that caused a difference between their current L2 self at the time of filling out the survey and partaking in the interview, or between being in the U.S. and studying abroad in Germany. In other words, different self-concepts of their L2 self were triggered and therefore foregrounded during the study abroad experience.

5.3.4 Transformation and the L2 Self System

The results presented in this study established the base for a deeper look at how the L2 learner's self constitutes itself, and whether there were changes or even indices for a transformation. As briefly described in Subchapter 5.3.1, some results were interpreted to show potential changes that may indicate a sign of transformation in three of the participants.

However, if the previously proposed expanded model of the L2 self (see Subchapter 5.2.5) is taken into consideration, an alternative explanation for the results presents itself. The model proposes that all selves, including past and *future selves*, are present in the language learner at all times, and that there is no hard distinction between the past, current, and future learner self. At the same time, the selves are in constant flux, and are fore- or backgrounded depending on the situation

or trigger that is currently present. Transformation in regard to L2 learning, then, is not necessarily the complete and intense change of a person, but rather the trigger that helps generate current and *future selves* that in turn force certain selves, such as *retired selves*, into the background. This foregrounding and backgrounding of selves may be highly individual, and it explains differences between participants. Learning an L2 may help bring out, or uncover, self-concepts that were previously in the background of the L2 Self System. *The Grad* (P6) articulated this notion during the interview as follows: “[...] I just think that transformation suggests being something that you weren’t before, and I don’t think that those characteristics weren’t always there [...]. I think it’s just a new aspect of the same person, you know.” Regarding L2 learning as the catalyst of transformation, *The Grad* (P6) elucidated: “[...] I think learning a language can in some cases bring out characteristics that were, but were not obvious, they just weren’t being shown but they were there.”

5.4 Implications

Several implications have arisen from this study in relation to theory, L2 pedagogy, and program planning. First, when it comes to L2 motivation theory and concepts of the self, the role that a learner's past plays in relation to decisions that influence current and future motivation has been understudied. Similar to the research built upon the L2MSS (Al-Hoorie, 2018), findings from the present study support the need for an expansion of the motivational model, specifically in regard to the past. In fact, all proposed additional self-dimensions in SLA research have been future-oriented (e.g., Chavez, 2020; Henry, 2017) aside from the *rooted self* (MacIntyre et al., 2017) that touches on motivation derived from connections to heritage. In fact, psychological research into the influence of an individual's past (e.g., Peetz & Wilson, 2008; Singer & Salovey, 1993) supports the lasting effect of past selves on the current L2-self concept. The proposed *retired self*, and the notion that *retired selves* influence an L2 learner's current and future behaviors and motivation to strive towards certain *future selves*, implies the following: L2 learner motivation needs to be understood from a holistic perspective that spans the learner's learning trajectory, including before they started learning the L2, and the decisions, motivations, and other influences on a learner that made them decide on learning the L2. What is more, most studies based on the L2MSS, including Dörnyei's studies (e.g., 2005), provide insights into the current self and projected future selves at one point in time. However, findings of the present study support both the need for a longitudinal study of the L2 learner, including potential fluctuations and changes in L2 motivation across time, as well as learner perceptions of themselves and their motivations across time from a vantage point.

In terms of L2 pedagogy, past learner experiences are seldom considered beyond whether learners have previously encountered certain vocabulary terms, grammatical structures, cultural topics, or certain works of fiction, etc. When it comes to motivation, a learner's past may be

brought to attention when they have had a personal experience that now demotivates the learner, or if they have not (yet) been inspired to continue beyond a certain course level. What is more, the structure of language course continuity in the North American post-secondary context amplifies the constant changes of instructor and therefore little-known learner history. However, the findings of the present study suggest potential benefits of a holistic L2 learner trajectory, not just for the L2 instructor, but especially for the learners themselves as they continue to develop possible selves in their L2. Surveys and learner diaries may support reflection on the learner's own goals and past decisions that have led them to their current L2 self; which may, in turn, be projected into the future. While the challenges of scheduling and program planning need to be taken into consideration, continued teaching by the same instructor across multiple semesters may aid in the holistic understanding of the L2 learner.

Further, the notion of lacking or fluctuating motivation often plays a role when it comes to students starting or continuing with a language. If language learners map out their specific experiences and motivational selves, including their positive and negative selves, the learner's increased awareness of their L2 selves may potentially lead to a more systematic approach to their L2 learning. A clear vision of their L2 learning trajectory may help students reflect continued motivation into the future. According to Cho (2015), a clear mental image of one's successful past selves enhances task endurance. Hence, activating past L2 self-concepts may potentially increase not only motivation, but actual performance in the L2.

Second, the difference between *ideal* and *plausible selves* has become salient in the results of the present study. While most participants of the study expressed an *ideal self* that included high L2 proficiency and frequent L2 use both at work and elsewhere, participants did not project a future that reflects these ideals. Rather, they reported different, likely or *plausible selves*, that

integrated some L2 use, mostly in an instrumental manner (e.g., to conduct business with foreign clients). Participants were still hopeful for their ideal future but were striving towards their plausible self as the more likely, safer option. It is unclear which of these *future selves* generated (more) motivation as this was beyond the scope of the present study. Still, two questions arise from this observation: (1) If there are concurrent future self-concepts, do they interfere with each other when it comes to derived motivation? Do they compete with each other or are they compartmentalized? (2) What do differing *ideal* and *plausible selves* mean for the L2 classroom?

While the first question remains to be answered in future research, there are a few considerations for the L2 classroom. L2 learners may benefit from a variety of examples of successful language learners in various fields that utilize their L2s to differing degrees. In connection with the ACTFL world-readiness standards, specifically, the goal area 'Communities,' helping learners visualize differing futures may help bridge the gap of ideal and (perceived) plausible future. In fact, teaching the L2, especially within the North American context, needs to include practical directions for learners to continue to strive towards a *plausible self* (e.g., one that utilizes their L2 in business). This will be a continued challenge for language programs everywhere. To help students reach their *ideal selves* and realize their potential plausibility, concrete examples, e.g., successful L2 role models (Muir et al., 2019) such as alumni of the program, may be brought into the classroom in the form of guest speakers or even contacts with whom the L2 learners may engage. Another implication may be to focus efforts on transparency not just what can be achieved via language study, via pure L2 proficiency, but rather, that acquiring an L2 involves other skills, insights not just into other cultures but one's own, and a general, potential, mindset shift. In fact, participants of this study remarked on the value of L2 learning outside of language proficiency multiple times in the interview. For example, *The Dreamer* (P5)

remarked that “learning a second language has dramatically changed not only my educational path but who I am as a person and how I see the world and how I interact with other people.” In short, the difference in value attached to L2 proficiency and the benefits that come with L2 learning beyond linguistic ability as reflected in *The Dreamer*’s (P5) statement are still a challenge in the L2 classroom and language programming, but for L2 motivation, combining the two may be of great importance. This issue had already been brought to attention in the MLA report (2007), in which these differing approaches to language study had been admonished:

“At one end, language is considered to be principally instrumental, a skill to use for communicating thought and information. At the opposite end, language is understood as an essential element of a human being’s thought processes, perceptions, and self-expressions; and as such it is considered to be at the core of translingual and transcultural competence. While we use language to communicate our needs to others, language simultaneously reveals us to others and to ourselves. Language is a complex multifunctional phenomenon that links an individual to other individuals, to communities, and to national cultures.”

Similar to the lack of transparency in the classroom, there often seems to be a lack of clear vision of one’s *ideal self* among students. In an article outlining an exploratory action-research project set in an intermediate EFL classroom in Japan, Sampson (2012) discusses the benefits of vision for motivation through concrete interventions in the classroom. Participants reported a lack of ownership and vision despite voluntary enrollment in the course. Through a series of exercises grounded in the L2MSS, participants’ increased awareness of their L2 self-images and how they changed throughout the course of the project. Activities were comprised of a free-writing exercise, of tasks that asked participants to envision an ideal self and share with a classmate, an ongoing

learning diary, and a skit, among others. The study shows the power of a clearer vision of one's ideal self-image. In summary, students may benefit from learning to articulate their future goals through motivating and vision-enhancing exercises, while simultaneously being exposed to differing, non-proficiency specific paths that may foster their vision for their own future that is both, or either, ideal and plausible.

Finally, the proposed expanded model of the L2 self explains the changes in an L2 learner self across time through the fore- and backgrounding of self-concepts depending on different situations. Therefore, a need arises for a reexamination – and a potential update – of current SLA self theories in conjunction with current findings in psychological research. The variability of the L2 self further implies that change, at least in the sense of a current, foregrounded composition of the L2 self, can happen, and could potentially be triggered through contexts or larger catalysts (e.g., study abroad). Different from what research into study abroad has suggested (e.g., Capobianco, 2017), learners may not be ‘transformed’ through their experiences abroad, but it may still lead to changes in self-concept composition. Potentially, specific situations either in the classroom or in an immersive context may be used to trigger the foregrounding of desired motivational selves. However, these reflections are based on the findings of the present study and therefore in need of greater investigation. Still, the often-promised positive transformation through L2 learning (see Subchapter 2.3) needs to be reconsidered. Specifically, the positive promise of transformation that leads to a completely new self may be threatening to some learners as it could imply the loss of oneself, or parts of oneself, along the way. Instead, if L2 learners were made aware of the potential of change within an L2 self without loss of self-concepts, feelings of unsettlement may be avoided. L2 learning and accompanying change is then potentially more accessible and less anxiety-inducing to certain students. Further, programs may promise a

transformation, but ‘underdeliver’ in results. If instead programs focused on the promise of stable yet dynamic changes in connection with sustained motivation across a learner trajectory, loss of motivation could be avoided.

6. Conclusion

This concluding chapter of the dissertation serves two main purposes: (1) To illustrate the limitations of the present study (Subchapter 6.1) as well as (2) to outline future research based on the findings of this study (Subchapter 6.2). The chapter ends with concluding remarks (Subchapter 6.3).

6.1 Limitations

The present study offers impulses for a continued, deeper exploration of the motivations of L2 learners inspired by beliefs about transformative aspects of L2 study, as well as for a continued evaluation of the L2 self. However, due to its inherently limited nature, the findings of this study cannot be taken into account without paying attention to certain limitations that are related to the participant sample and the design of the study.

6.1.1 Limitations Related to the Participant Sample

As described in Chapter 3, the participants for this study were recruited from multiple different German language courses across different semesters at a single large Midwestern research institution, and participants were asked to fill out the first part of the questionnaire as well as an optional second part of the questionnaire. Participants were further informed about the possibility of a follow-up interview that was in direct relation to the second questionnaire interview. Due to the overall length of the questionnaires as well as the optionality of the second questionnaire plus interview, among other factors, a low number of participants ($n=6$) enrolled in all parts of the study. What is more, the participants were self-selected (e.g., Dörnyei & Csizér, 2012). Further, the sample only consists of intermediate, female-identifying, native speakers of English that have

had experience with learning an L2 before taking German classes in college. Their learning experiences, learning trajectories, and specifically their motivations are highly individualized. Therefore, the findings of the study cannot be generalized.

6.1.2 Limitations Related to the Study Design and Data Analysis

The data for this study was collected via a vignette instrument in which participants rated their likeness to eight different language user profiles at five different timepoints of reference. Each profile was conceptualized with a set of five categories of features, including personality traits. As outlined in Chapter 3, the characteristics were added as a distractor. However, some of the participants responded to these characteristics and took them into account when considering their rating. In the follow-up interview, participants were asked to explain, and, if necessary, qualify their ratings of the profiles. While some participants mentioned that the characteristics played a role in their ratings, they did not change the overall trends or patterns that were described under RT1. However, I cannot guarantee that all participants remembered to mention all their influences on their ratings during the interview process. Therefore, some of the ratings may be influenced by the characteristics rather than be a sole indicator for students' views of language use and other previously described analysis. In addition, while the character traits were chosen to represent positive or relatable character traits, not all participants viewed them as such. In fact, they had highly individualized opinions of different character traits that were further discussed during the interview. If I were to recreate the study, I would leave out the personality traits as distractors to avoid confusion and differing possible interpretation among participants.

Similarly, the vignettes were designed with different L1s to make them appear more realistic and to add another distractor. Again, not all participants took these into account. Some

participants rated the profiles as presented to them in the questionnaire; others changed these languages in their mind to languages that they learned or spoke, as was identified during the interviews. Therefore, there are limitations regarding the comparability of certain ratings. Because trends and patterns, however, stay the same, I chose to not mark the amended ratings in RT1. In addition, the final vignette instrument was not piloted. While previous versions of the questionnaire, including the vignettes, underwent multiple testing stages, due to the limited availability of participants I was not able to pilot the final vignette instrument. Some of the above-mentioned issues in regard to comparability could have been avoided.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the study – while asking about timepoints of reference including speculation about the participants’ future – was not conceptualized as a longitudinal study but rather a study of perception from a vantage point. Participants may not correctly remember their past thoughts or preferences about language learning; and their current ideas of their future may not line up with their actual future trajectories.

The follow-up interviews and their analysis may also not give a complete picture of the participants’ opinions. Due to the timeline of data acquisition, the interviews were conducted before the survey analysis was completed. Therefore, not all aspects and themes uncovered in the analysis were addressed in the interviews to elicit further explanations from the respondents, e.g., while participants were asked about their (dis)preferences for profiles at the time of taking the interview (see RT3), they were not asked about the other timepoints of reference in the past and the future. This led to RT3 not fully mirroring RT1.

Finally, due to the sequencing of the survey as well as the interviews, I cannot guarantee that the survey questions or previous interview questions may have had an unintended influence

on the participants, as participants may have kept the overall themes and questions regarding transformation in mind when they answered further questions.

6.2 Future Research

This study set out to investigate the processes of L2 self formation and changes through L2 learning. This subchapter will describe some avenues for future research based on the results of this study (6.2.1-6.2.2), as well as from data that was unreported in the dissertation (6.2.3).

6.2.1 Motivation and the L2 Self

The present study has proposed a model that attempts to explain the process of change within the L2 learner as they go through the L2 learning process, with a special emphasis on the entirety of the learner's L2 learning experience, including their past experiences and past selves that may still influence the learner's behaviors and choices in the present, as well as their *future selves*.

The study inferred the learner's selves throughout their learner career. However, there was no unified approach to testing and verifying the participants' specific type of motivation. Therefore, a study that includes both the participant's ratings of likeness to language learner profiles across timepoints together with a questionnaire that tests their motivation will be a logical follow-up study. For example, a revised version of the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB), developed by Gardner (1985), could provide data that would give further insight into the participants' attitudes towards language study as a whole as well as their type of motivation (e.g., Gardner, 2001). Since the L2 self model proposed in this study draws on Dörnyei's L2MSS, which in turn draws on Gardner's notion of integrative motivation, the AMTB is a logical addition.

A second follow-up study based on the model would investigate the motivational effect of the different selves presented in the model, specifically, the past and *future selves* that participants reported. It is unclear to what extent their reported past selves, e.g., their *retired selves*, contribute to their motivation to learn, or to continue to learn, their L2. While a motivational effect is suspected – at least in the sense that the *retired self* influences a shift in *future selves* – a further exploration of the motivational aspect of the past self is important to understand the connections of past, current, and *future selves* clearly.

6.2.2 The Role of Time and Foregrounded Selves

The past, current, and *future selves* and their interconnectedness across time leads to another point in need of further investigation. While this study investigated participants' perceptions of likeness to different learner profiles at five different timepoints from a vantage point, the insights rendered from the participants' ratings do not necessarily reflect their true thoughts at the actual timepoints but rather their memory of their thoughts and projections of their future thoughts. A longitudinal study that monitors language learners as they go through the process of starting, continuing, and ending their formal language studies will produce accurate data of their current selves, motivations, and attitudes to language learning that may offer a clearer picture of the participants' perceptions at each timepoint. The data can also be compared to this study, which in turn will shed light on the accuracy of perceptions of past and *future selves* from the vantage point of the present.

What is more, such a longitudinal study will deliver further insights into the catalysts of fore- and backgrounding of selves that were discussed in Chapter 5.3. While study abroad has been suspected to transform – to fore- and background different selves – a learner (Capobianco, 2017),

the longitudinal study will offer the opportunity to investigate other events in a participant's life that may have correlating effects on their L2 self.

Additionally, a longitudinal study may further investigate the *ideal self* of participants at each timepoint. The current study only yields insights into the potential *ideal self* for the present timepoint (*at the time of taking the study*), but not for the other five timepoints. A study that investigates learner perceptions across time not only regarding their likeness to language profiles, but also their (dis)preferences, will offer a closer look at a potential relationship between *ideal self* and other *future selves*, including plausible selves, of the learner.

6.2.3 Future Research Based on Unreported Data

Three further possible studies arise from data that was unreported in the dissertation study. First, unreported data from the interviews include participants' own understanding of what transformation entails, and their perceptions of potential transformative processes that are unveiled during L2 learning in regard to fore- and backgrounding of selves as a process across time. Preliminary analyses of the interview data reveal differing opinions among participants on whether L2 learning may be transformative (similarly to the perception of transformation through language study reported in popular opinion, see Subchapter 2.3.2). Further, opinions differ regarding whether fore- and backgrounding may be offset by different events related to language learning, such as study abroad. For example, *The Dreamer* (P5) reported changes in their self, personality, and attitude through their study abroad. However, further data is needed to fully investigate their perceptions of changed self in relation to all potential catalysts for the change.

Second, the sample of the study may have implications for the salience of fore- and backgrounding processes of the L2 self. As Oyserman et al. (2012) pointed out, changes in the self

need to be relevant to the individual to generate motivation. The sample of the study is self-selected. Unreported data from parts of the Questionnaire Part I as well as the interview show not just favorable attitudes toward L2 learning, but also encouraging, positive L2 learning role models such as teachers and older siblings. There may be a correlation between positive attitudes and experiences and awareness of, or openness to, L2 processes that are in need of further investigation.

Finally, there is an indication for potential differences in attitude, outlook, and processes of fore- and backgrounding within the L2 self based on whether it is a learner's first or additional L2 (see Subchapter 5.3.2). The sample size is too small to infer any definitive conclusions, but for two of the participants in the study (*The Resolute*, P3; and *The Grad*, P6), German is not their first L2. *The Resolute* (P3) is learning German as a third language after bilingually acquiring English and Danish as L1s, and *The Grad* (P6) as a graduate student of Russian is acquiring German after their L1 English and learning French in high school and Russian in college and graduate school (as per data from Questionnaire Part I and the interviews). Their data, specifically their stable ratings for profiles in comparison to the ratings of the four other participants (see results reported under RT2), show potential for a grouping between L2 learners and additional L2 learners and a potential for stabilizing of the L2 self at a certain point in time. Therefore, a study contrasting longitudinal data of L2 learners with longitudinal data of additional L2 learners may provide further insights into the changing aspects of the L2 self across time.

6.3 Final Remarks

The dissertation study set out to explore the often-circulated idea that L2 learning transforms you into a new and improved person. The main goal of the study was to investigate, then, whether such a change occurred within the L2 learner self; and whether L2 learning had an effect on the L2 self across the learning trajectory. A combination of self and motivational theories in the fields of psychology and SLA served as the theoretical backdrop for this study.

Results revealed the need for a holistic look at the L2 learner trajectory to further understand the motivational processes that are on-going in an L2 learner. Different from what previous motivation research suggests, the learner seems to not only gain motivation from future-oriented *possible selves*, but from past selves as well. The study introduced the concept of the *retired self*, a previously *possible self* that has, due to circumstance or other reason, been ‘retired,’ yet still serves as motivation for the L2 learner. The importance of past selves has been emphasized in psychological research. The study affirms the need for an integration of the past into models of L2 motivation.

Second, results supported the notion that the self is a stable construct, yet the make-up (self-concepts) of the self are constantly changing in reaction to different situations. An expanded model of the L2 self has been put forth that combines both Oyserman’s and Dörnyei’s research to explain the dynamic nature of shifting self-concepts within the L2 learner as a process of fore- and backgrounding of self-concepts. This, in turn, suggests that transformation through L2 learning does not imply a complete change of the L2 self, but rather a constant foregrounding of past, current, or *future selves* that may serve as motivation.

The dissertation study confirms a need to not only reevaluate current theoretical models in SLA, especially in regard to recent developments in the field of psychology, but the need for further longitudinal studies to continue investigation into the validity of the proposed model of the

L2 self. Results call for a continued, further investigation into the formation, and changes, of the L2 learner self as an important building block for sustained L2 motivation throughout a learner's L2 learning career.

7. References

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Appendix A: IRB Approval



Education and Social/Behavioral Science IRB

3/24/2021

Submission ID number: [2020-1370-CP001](#)
Title: Perceptions of self-concept in the language learner
Principal Investigator: Monika Chavez
Point-of-Contact: Sophia Alexandra Strietholt
IRB Staff Reviewer: Olyvia Kuchta

The ED/SBS IRB conducted a review of the change of protocol to the above referenced application. The study was determined to continue to qualify for exemption.

You have identified the following financial sources to support the research activities in this IRB application:

None.

If this information is incorrect, please submit a change to modify your application as appropriate.

To access the materials the IRB reviewed and accepted as part of the change of protocol exemption determination, please log in to your ARROW account and view the documents tab in the submission's workspace.

Although the human subjects research described in the ARROW application referenced above was determined to meet the federal criteria for exemption and thus does not require continuing review, please be aware of your responsibilities related to the conduct of the research and when additional IRB review is required. Prior to starting research activities, please review the Investigator Responsibilities for Exempt Human Subjects Research guidance (https://kb.wisc.edu/images/group99/shared/BSIR_Exempt.pdf) which includes a description of the types of changes that must be submitted to ensure the research continues to comply with the conditions of the exemption and/or category(ies) of exemption.

If you have general questions, please contact the Education and Social/Behavioral Science IRB at 608-263-2320. For questions related to this submission, contact the assigned staff reviewer.

Appendix B: Questionnaire Part I

Your unique code number

Please create your unique 10-digit code number following the instructions below. The code number will help connect all parts of the research project in which you choose to participate. The way that the code is created will allow you to recreate the code at a later time (should it become relevant) by following the same steps. At the same time, since only you know the information that goes into the code, your identity will remain confidential.

- a. The 1st and 2nd and 3rd digits are our current German course number, such as 101, 203, etc.;
- b. The 4th and 5th digits are your DAY of your birth, e.g. 21, 31, 07, etc.;
- c. The 6th and 7th digits are the last two digits of your phone number;
- d. 8th and 9th digits are the last two digits of your student ID
- e. 10th digit is your self-identified gender, male =0, female =1, other=3

Example: A student is taking German 101; the student's birthdate is November 7th (07); the student's phone number is 608-888-6666; the student's I.D. is 907 888 5268; and the student identifies as female (1).

Her code name will be 101 07 66 68 1.

YOUR CODE NUMBER

(a) _ _ _ (b) _ _ (c) _ _ (d) _ _ (e) _

Section 1: Your background as a student

You can use the draw tool or insert a circle/box or highlight your answer choice. Fill in the document with writing when appropriate (i.e. tables...)

1.1 When are you completing this questionnaire?

- a. Fall 2020.
- b. Spring 2021.

1.1 Please indicate your current enrollment status:

- a. First-year student.
- b. Sophomore.
- c. Junior.
- d. Senior.
- e. Graduate Student.
- f. Other _____.

1.2 Please indicate your student status:

- a. Domestic student.
- b. International student.
- c. Guest student.
- d. Other _____.

1.3 Please indicate all academic major/s (first column) and certificates (second column) that you intend to pursue. List one per line and indicate whether you have declared them yet (third column).

Your intended academic major/s	Your intended certificate/s	Already declared?

1.4 Please indicate your current age in years: _____

Section 2: Your experiences learning and using German

2.1 In your formal schooling, at what levels did you have **the opportunity to study German** (even if you did not take it at the time)? Please mark all that apply with an X in the table below.

Kindergarten	Elementary School	Middle School	High School	College

2.2 In your formal schooling, at what levels did you **actually take German**? Please mark all that apply with an X in the table below.

Kindergarten	Elementary School	Middle School	High School	College

2.3 Please share whether and how you have used German in the past, use German currently, or expect to use German in the future **outside** of formal instruction. Please enter one activity per row (left empty column); indicate where and with whom (middle column); and the duration and/or frequency of the activity. Please give as much detail as you can but also feel free to leave cells empty.

Time frame	For what sort of activity? (e.g., friends, work, travel, study abroad, etc.)	Where (city and/or country) and/or with whom (German friends, clients, etc.)?	When and/or for how long or how regularly, approximately?
Past German use			
Current German use			
Future/expected German use			

3.2 Please indicate what – if any – arguments you have heard **in favor of** the study of German. Please list them as well as the sources/people that you have heard say these things. The sources/people do not need to be matched to the specific arguments. Simply, list people and arguments in each respective column.

Arguments <u>in favor of</u> studying German, as you have heard them:	Sources/people from whom you have heard arguments <u>in favor of</u> studying German:

3.3 Please indicate what – if any – arguments you have heard **against** the study of German. Please list them as well as the sources/people that you have heard say these things. The sources/people do not need to be matched to the specific arguments. Simply, list people and arguments in each respective column.

Arguments <u>against</u> studying German, as you have heard them:	People from whom you have heard arguments <u>against</u> studying German:

3.4 Please explain what people or what experiences have **influenced your attitude** towards two aspects of German, each described in one of two tables. For each, please indicate whether the influence was negative or positive by assigning a score between 0% (= entirely negative) to 50% (= neither clearly positive nor clearly negative) to 100% (= entirely positive).

a) Influences on your attitude towards the **German language**:

What people or experiences have influenced you?	How did they influence your attitude? 0% = extremely negatively, 100% = extremely positively

b) Influences on your attitude towards **native German speakers**:

What people or experiences have influenced you?	How did they influence your attitude? 0% = extremely negatively, 100% = extremely positively

3.5 What does the term **'role model'** mean to you in the context of language study? Did you ever have, or do you currently have a role model in your studies of German? If so, what were their abilities or characteristics?

What does the term 'role model' mean to you in the context of language study?	
Who has been or is a role model to you in your studies of German? Please list one per row.	What particular abilities or characteristics of that person inspired you?

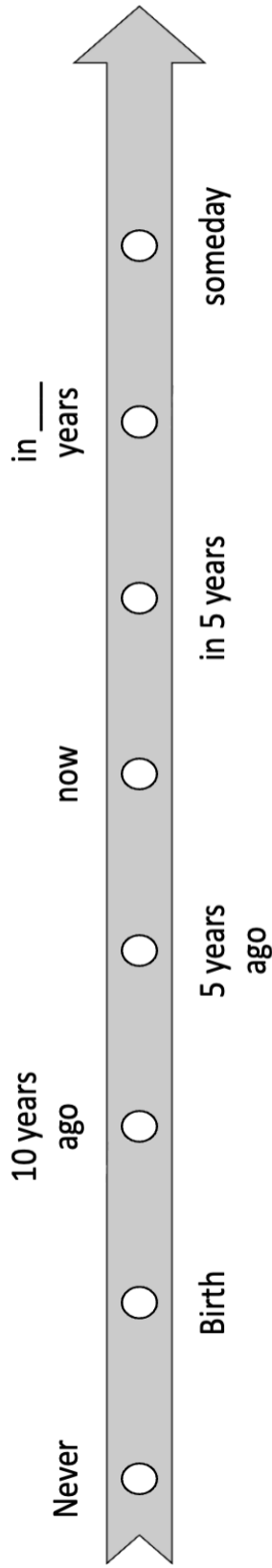
Section 4: Your ideas about ideal German

4.1 Please briefly describe what features in your personal opinion characterize **ideal spoken German**.

4.2 Please indicate how close to **ideal linguistic ability** you believe you **currently** are in spoken Standard German and how close to **ideal knowledge about German culture** you believe you currently are.
Please assign a score between 0% (=I currently have no knowledge/no skill at all) to 100% (= I already have ideal knowledge/ideal skill).

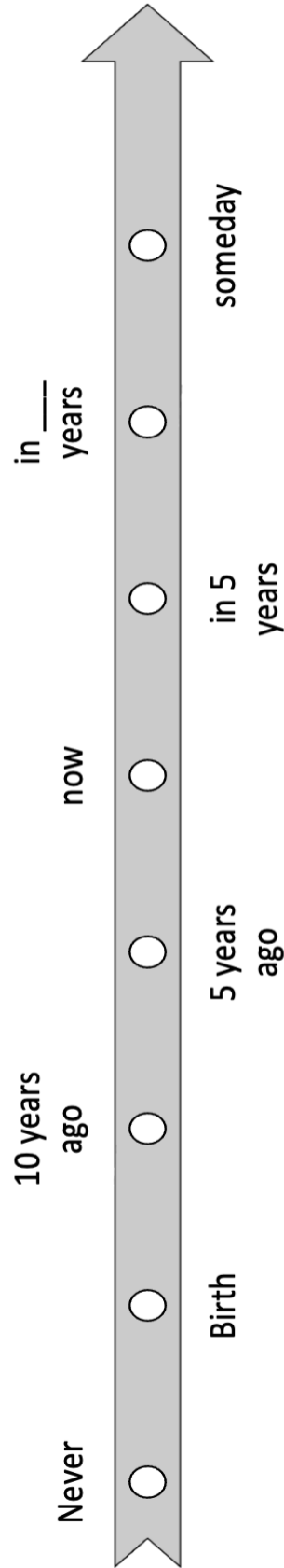
Aspect ↓	0% = currently no knowledge/skill, 100% = already ideal knowledge/skill
Accent	
Grammar	
Vocabulary	
Knowing what is appropriate or inappropriate to say under certain circumstances	
Knowing cultural products of German-speaking people – books, art, tools, food, laws, dress, music, types of dwellings etc.	
Knowing cultural practices of German-speaking people – what they do and how they act in specific settings, such as celebrations, transactions, conversations, use of space etc.	
Knowing cultural perspectives of German-speaking people – how they view the world, including attitudes, values, ideas etc.	

4.3a Please mark on the following timeline **when** you had/have/will have your **most ideal accent** when you speak German in your lifetime. Feel free to place marks in between suggested timepoints so as to best show your estimate. **You can use the draw tool or insert a circle/box.**



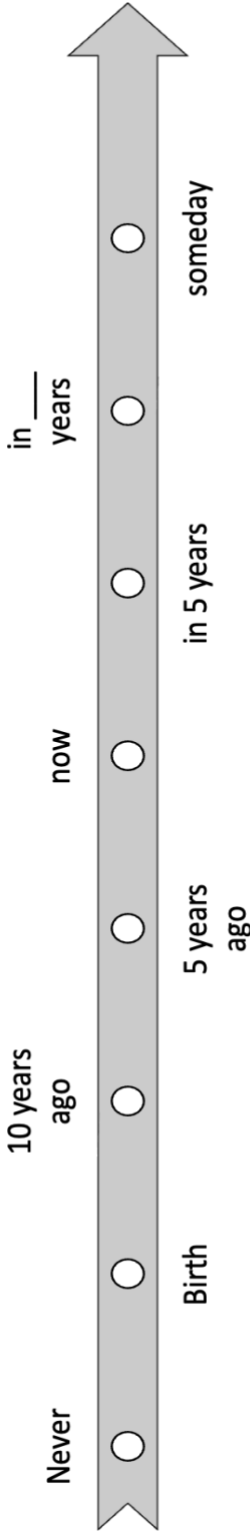
4.3b Briefly explain your choice.

4.3c Please mark on the following timeline **when** you had/have/will have your **most ideal grammar** when you speak German in your lifetime. Feel free to place marks in between suggested timepoints so as to best show your estimate. **You can use the draw tool or insert a circle/box.**



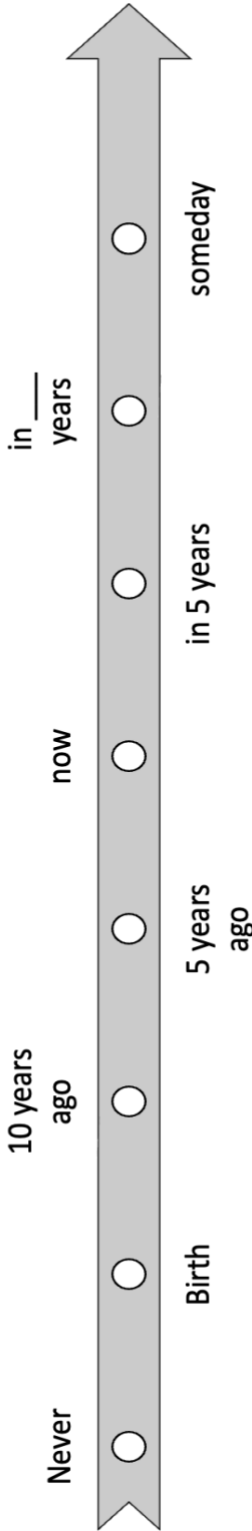
4.3d Briefly explain your choice.

4.3e Please mark on the following timeline **when** you had/have/will have your **most ideal vocabulary** when you speak German in your lifetime. Feel free to place marks in between suggested timepoints so as to best show your estimate. **You can use the draw tool or insert a circle/box.**



4.3f Briefly explain your choice.

4.3g Please mark on the following timeline **when** you had/have/will have your **most ideal understanding of what is appropriate or inappropriate** to say under certain circumstances when you speak German in your lifetime. Feel free to place marks in between suggested timepoints so as to best show your estimate. **You can use the draw tool or insert a circle/box.**



4.3h Briefly explain your choice.

4.4 Please indicate how you would judge your **current** skills in each of these aspects of German relative to the groups of people or individuals indicated in the columns below.

Aspect ↓	Please assign a score between 0% (= I am better than none of them/all are better than me) and 100% (= I am better than all of them/all are worse than me).			Please assign a score between 0% (= I am currently much worse than them) and 100% (= I am currently much better than them), with 50% (= I am the same as them).	
	compared to other students in your current class	compared to native speakers of German your age	compared to native speakers of German older than you	compared to your current teacher	compared to you at your most ideal (having your most ideal German ever in the future)
Accent					
Grammar					
Vocabulary					
Knowing what is appropriate or inappropriate to say under certain circumstances					
Knowing cultural products of German-speaking people					
Knowing cultural practices of German-speaking					
Knowing cultural perspectives of German-speaking people					

4.5 Please indicate how **close to the ideal of the following** different aspects of linguistic and cultural ability you would need to be in different types of German (see below) for you to be **personally satisfied** for each aspect and type of German. Please assign a score between 0% (= I don't care to attain even a basic level) to 100% (= I would like to attain the ideal).

When considering the three types of German, start with Standard German (that is what you are taught in class) and include TWO national or regional varieties of German of your choice. Please name your choices. National varieties include 'German German', 'Austrian German', and 'Swiss German.' Regional varieties refer to an area within a nation – choose your own label but examples include Bavarian, Viennese, etc.

Variety → Aspect ↓	0% = I don't care, 100% = I want the ideal		
	Standard German	National or regional variety of German 1 [Please name it]: _____	National or regional variety of German 2 [Please name it] _____
Accent			
Grammar			
Vocabulary			
Knowing what is appropriate or inappropriate to say under certain circumstances			
Knowing cultural products of German-speaking people			
Knowing cultural practices of German-speaking people			
Knowing cultural perspectives of German-speaking people			

4.6 Please indicate how **appropriate** it would be for you to use or show **the ideal linguistic abilities** in spoken Standard German and **the ideal cultural abilities** if you had, in fact, attained it in a variety of situations (see below). For each aspect and situation, please assign a score between 0% (= totally inappropriate) to 100% (= totally appropriate).

Situation → Aspect ↓	0%= totally inappropriate, 100% = totally appropriate							
	In German class in front of the whole class	In German class when working with other students	Outside of German class with the German teacher	Outside of German class with American friends who know German	Outside of German class with friends who are native speakers of German	When visiting Germany	When visiting Austria	When visiting Switzerland
Accent								
Grammar								
Vocabulary								
Knowing what is appropriate or inappropriate to say under certain circumstances								
Knowing cultural products of German-speaking people								
Knowing cultural practices of German-speaking people								
Knowing cultural perspectives of German-speaking people								

4.7 Please indicate how you would feel if you encountered a **non-native speaker of German** with ideal linguistic and cultural abilities in spoken Standard German. Check **all reactions** that apply for each aspect.

A non-native speaker with ideal German... ↓	Would give me hope.	Would motivate me to work harder.	Would surprise me.	Would trigger no reaction.	Would intimidate me.	Would seem to me like a show-off.	Would...? [Please describe.]
Accent							
Grammar							
Vocabulary							
Knowledge on what is appropriate or inappropriate to say under certain circumstances							
Knowledge of cultural products of German-speaking people							
Knowledge of cultural practices of German-speaking							
Knowledge of cultural perspectives of German-speaking people							

Section 5: Native speakers of German

5.1 In the far-left column below, please name some personal **qualities** that are commonly thought to characterize **native speakers** of German. Then, rate each quality according to the criterion and scale described in each column of each of the two tables provided on the following two pages.

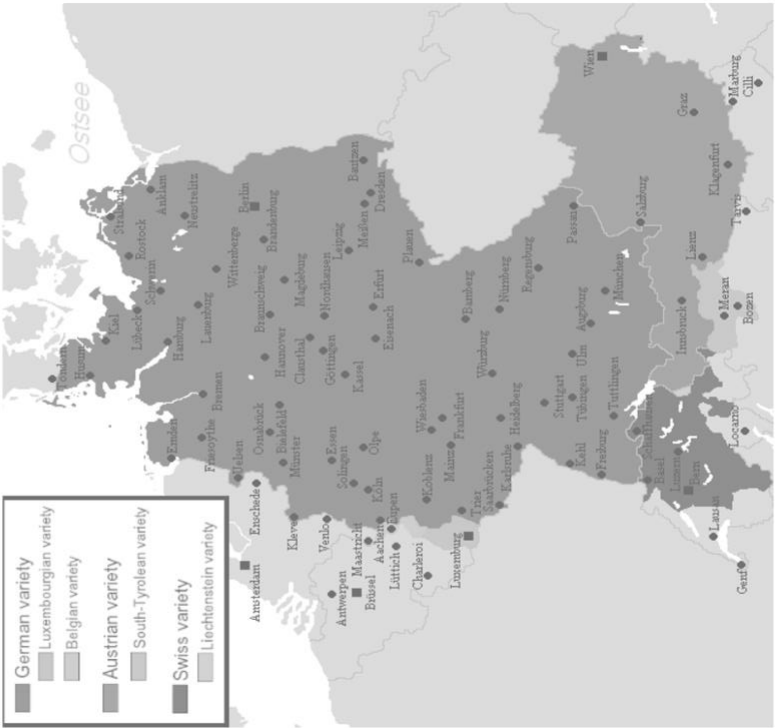
[illegible]

5.2 Please consider what it means to you to be ‘**accepted**’ by native speakers of German as a member of their language community. Then, indicate how important and how likely, respectively, such acceptance has been, is, and will be to you at different stages of learning German.

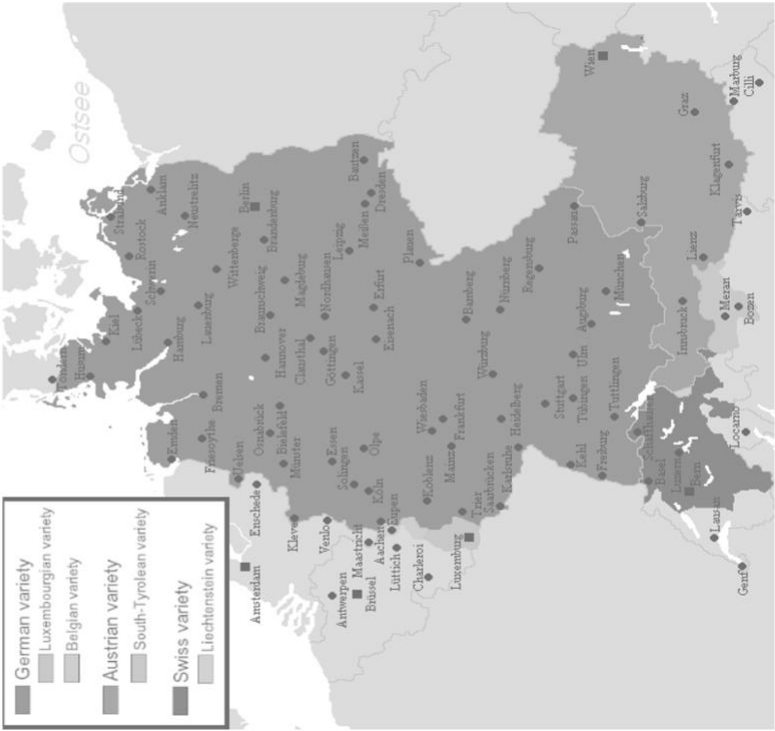
Please describe here what it means to be ‘accepted’ by native speakers of German as a member of their language community. You can provide an abstract definition and/or give examples of how this acceptance shows.		
	Please indicate how <i>important</i> (in the first column) and <i>likely</i> (in the second column) it was/is/will be for you to be accepted by native speakers of German as a member of their language community at each of the timepoints shown in the far-left column. Use the scales specified.	
Timepoints in your German studies ↓	Importance of acceptance Please assign a score on a scale from 0% (= totally irrelevant to me at this timepoint) to 100% (= essential to me at this timepoint).	Likelihood of acceptance Please assign a score on a scale from 0% (= certain NOT to happen) to 100% (= certain TO happen).
Before you started your studies of German		
At the very beginning of your studies of German		
Now		
By the end of your formal studies of German		
After your formal studies of German. If possible, explain what milestone/s you envision.		

5.3 Please consider these maps of German-speaking areas of Europe (the maps are identical). In each map, **outline** the area or city in which the **ideal** in terms of each of these aspects of language and culture can be found according to your personal preference. There is no one right answer. If you are unsure, feel free to leave a map blank. If you have heard of an area or city as 'the ideal' but can't locate it on the map, write in its name regardless of where it is located (I will find it). **You can use the draw tool or insert a circle/box.**

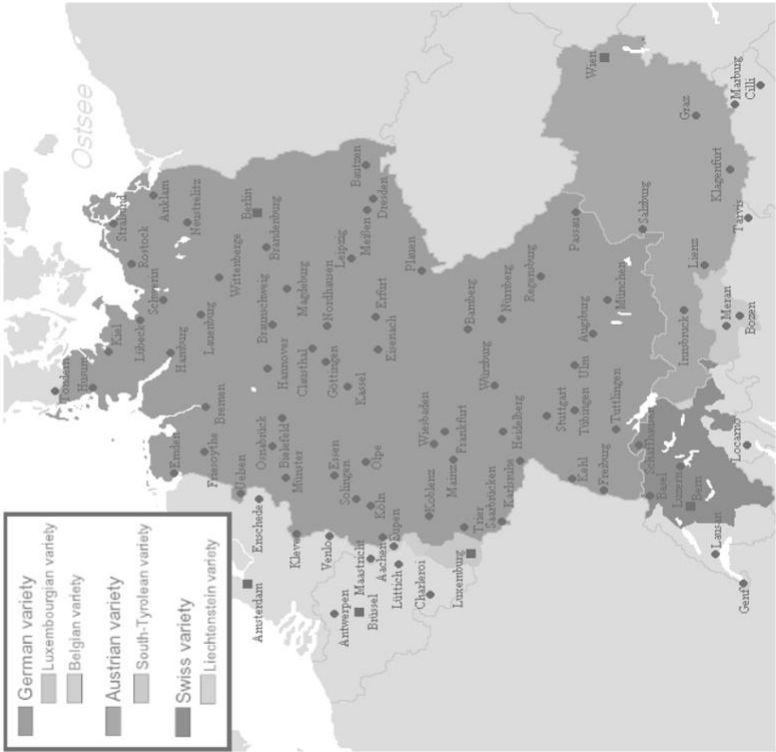
a) most accurate accent



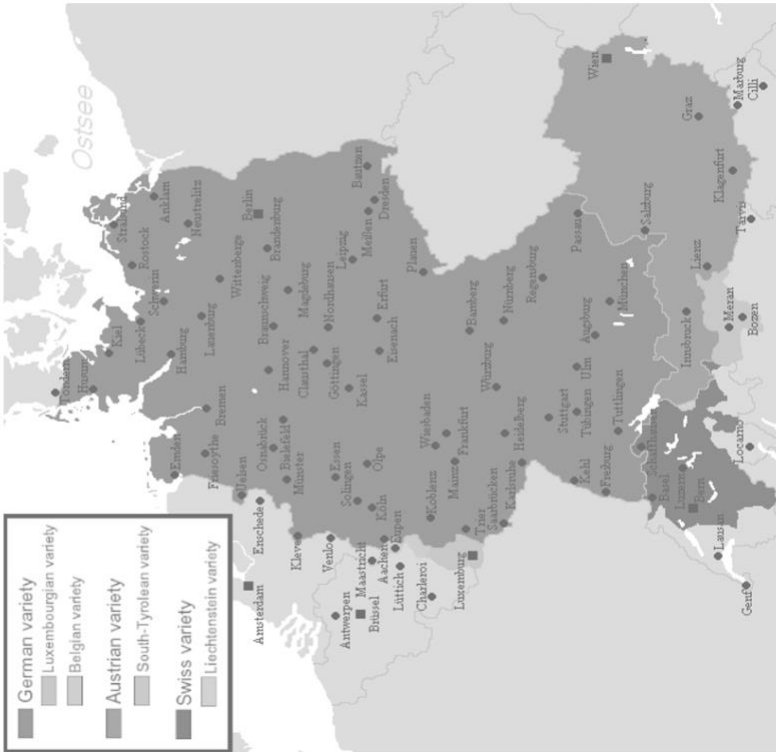
b) most accurate grammar



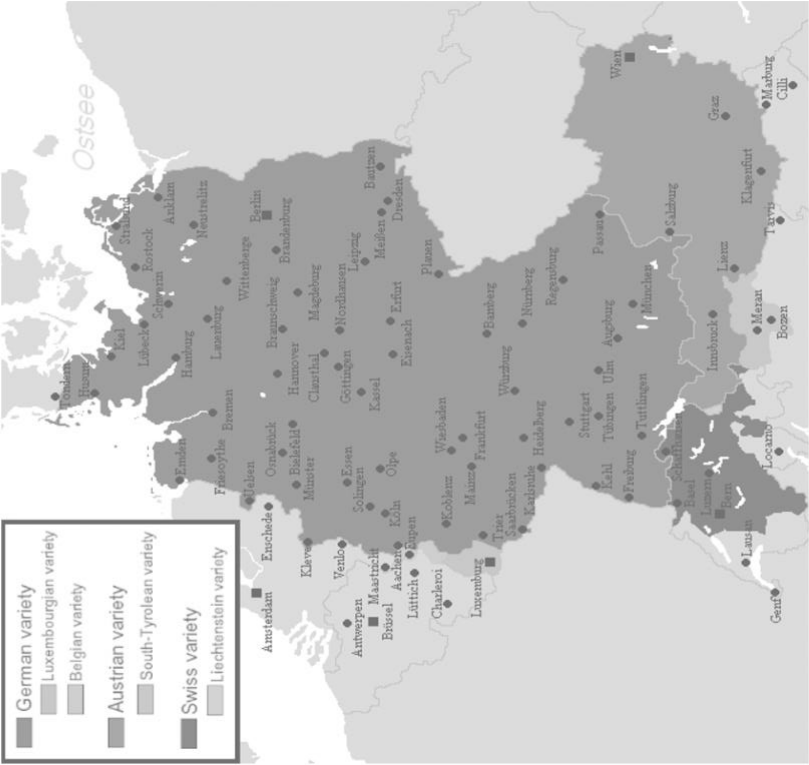
d) most accurate knowledge of what is (in)appropriate to say under certain circumstances



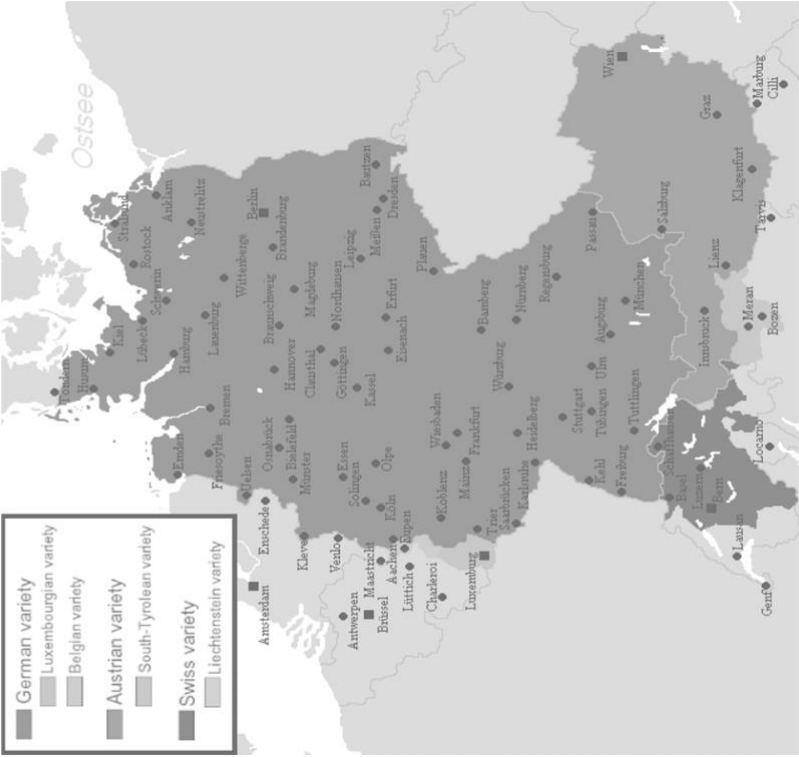
c) best vocabulary



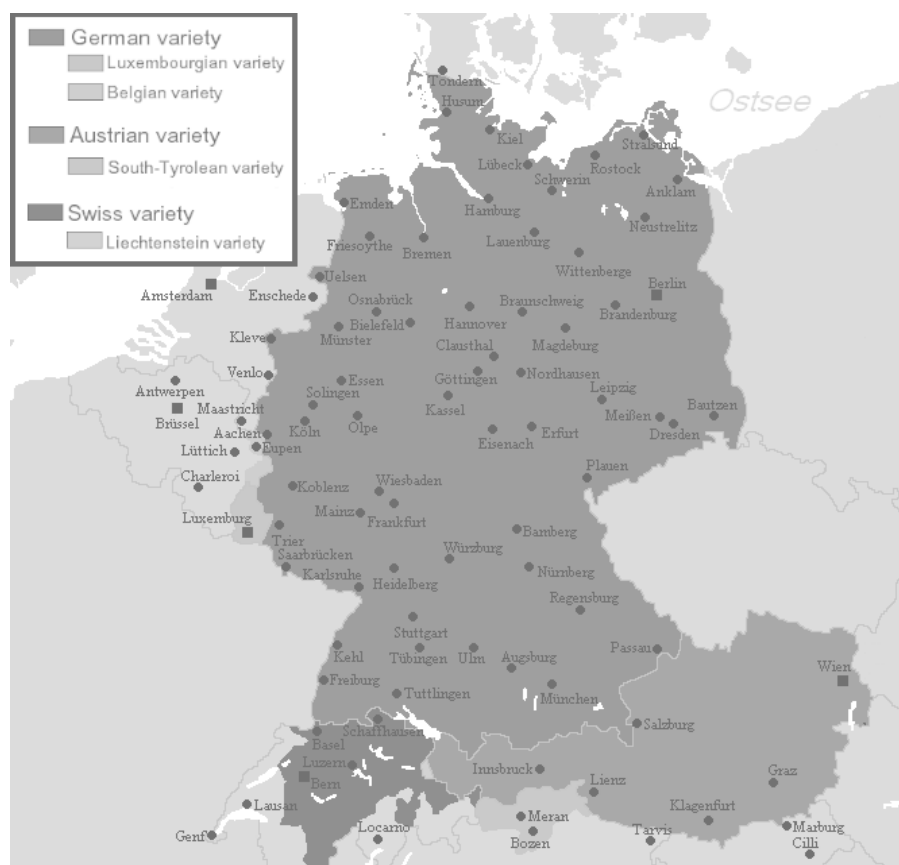
e) most appealing cultural products (books, art, tools, food, laws, dress, music, types of dwellings etc.)



f) most appealing cultural practices (what they do and how they act in specific settings, such as celebrations, transactions, conversations, use of space etc.)



g) most appealing cultural perspectives (how they view the world, including attitudes, values, ideas etc.)



Section 6: Your goals in using German

6.1 What kind of job do you currently plan to pursue in the future? In what country or countries would it be and what language(s) do you imagine yourself using and for what purposes? By when do you hope to attain this job?

What is your ideal job in the future? (Mention a profession, company or organization, etc.)	In what country/countries?	What language(s) would you use and for what purposes (e.g., email communication, conferences, etc.)	When?

6.2 Please indicate how much you **did/do/will aspire** to each to each of the goals stated below at different times during your studies of German.

Please assign the appropriate percentage (any percentage between 0-100%) on a scale with these markers:

0% = I do/did not aspire to this goal at all.

100% = I totally aspire/aspired to this goal.

How much did you aspire to each of these goals (one per column) at these points in your German studies (one timepoint per row)?	0% = I do/did not aspire to this goal at all, 100% = I totally aspire/aspired to this goal						
	A native-like accent	Native-like grammar	Native-like vocabulary	Native-like knowledge of what is (in)appropriate to say under certain circumstances	Native-like knowledge of cultural products of German-speaking people	Native-like knowledge of cultural practices of German-speaking people	Native-like cultural perspectives of German-speaking people
Goals → Timepoints ↓							
Before you started your studies of German							
At the very beginning of your studies of German							
Now							
By the end of your formal studies of German							
After your formal studies of German. If possible, explain what milestone/s you envision.							

6.3 Please indicate **how much** you **expect/expected to attain** to the goals stated below at different times during your studies of German.

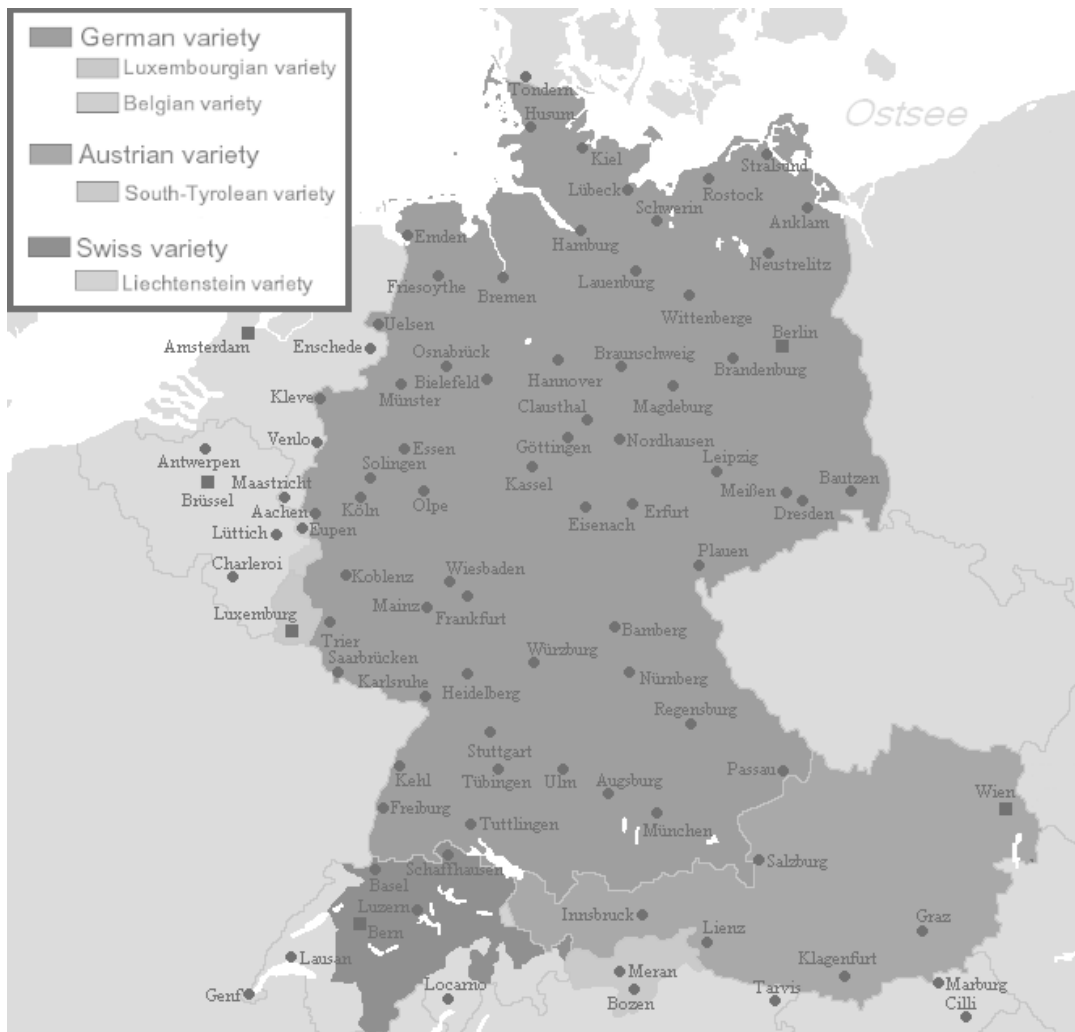
Please assign the appropriate percentage (any percentage between 0-100%) on a scale with these markers:

0% = I did/do not expect to attain this goal at all.

100% = I expect/ed to attain this goal fully.

How much do you expect to attain each of these goals (one per column) at these points in your German studies (one timepoint per row)?	0% = I do not expect to attain this goal at all, 100% = I expect to attain this goal fully						
	A native-like accent	Native-like grammar	Native-like vocabulary	Native-like knowledge of what is (in)appropriate to say under certain circumstances	Native-like knowledge of cultural products of German-speaking people	Native-like knowledge of cultural practices of German-speaking people	Native-like cultural perspectives of German-speaking people
Goals → Timepoints ↓							
Before you started your studies of German							
At the very beginning of your studies of German							
Now							
By the end of your formal studies of German							
After your formal studies of German. If possible, explain what milestone/s you envision.							

6.4a Here is a map that shows German-speaking areas in Europe. If you could take on an identity of a native speaker of German from any German-speaking area, which city or general region would 'the German-speaking you' be from? Please circle the city or area on the map below. **You can use the draw tool or insert a circle/box.**



6.4b Explain what inspired your choice.

6.4c Explain what inspired you to **EXCLUDE** specific other areas.

6.4d Please rate how precisely the city or area that you identified above corresponds with a deliberate consideration of each of the aspects of language and culture listed in the table below. Please assign to each aspect a score from 0% (= I did not at all consider this aspect when I selected the location of my German-speaking self) to 100% (= this aspect was decisive when I selected the location of my German-speaking self).

	0% = I did not at all consider this aspect when I selected the location of my German-speaking self, 100% = this aspect was decisive when I selected the location of my German-speaking self						
Aspect →	Accent	Grammar	Vocabulary	Knowledge of what is (in)appropriate to say under certain circumstances	Knowledge of cultural products of German-speaking people	Knowledge of cultural practices of German-speaking	Cultural perspectives of German-speaking people
Your score →							

6.5 Please **visualize** the following four types of people: A **monolingual** American, a **multilingual** American, a **monolingual** German, and a **multilingual** German. Then, please rate the degree to which you (a) **resemble/d** this type of person, and (b) **aspire/d to resemble** this type of person at different timepoints in your German studies.

For (a): Please assign a score between
 0% = I do/did/won't resemble this person at all, and
 100% = I do/did/will resemble this person completely

For (b): Please assign a score between
 0% = I do/did/won't aspire to resemble this person at all, and
 100% = I do/did/will aspire to resemble this person completely

	Monolingual American		Multilingual American		Monolingual German		Multilingual German	
	(a) The degree to which you resemble/d this type of person	(b) The degree to which you aspire/d to resemble this type of person	(a) The degree to which you resemble/d this type of person	(b) The degree to which you aspire/d to resemble this type of person	(a) The degree to which you resemble/d this type of person	(b) The degree to which you aspire/d to resemble this type of person	(a) The degree to which you resemble/d this type of person	(b) The degree to which you aspire/d to resemble this type of person
Goals → Timepoints ↓								
Before you started your studies of German								
At the very beginning of your studies of German								
Now								
By the end of your formal studies of German								
After your formal studies of German								

6.6a Please describe **in your own words** what personal characteristics you imagined for each of the four types of people.

Types of people	Personal characteristics
Monolingual American	
Multilingual American	
Monolingual German	
Multilingual German	

6.6b Now, please elaborate on the characteristics that you associate with each of the four types of people, as outlined in the table below. If you have already commented on a specific feature in the table above, you need not write it down again.

Types of people	What language/s does each type speak?	What is a 'typical' ethnic background?	What is a 'typical' age?	What is the 'typical' educational background?	What are some 'typical' perspectives, beliefs, dis/likes, preferences, etc.?
Monolingual American					
Multilingual American					
Monolingual German					
Multilingual German					

6.7 In the far-left column in the table below, you will find a list of potentially transformational experiences in your young-adult life. First, please **add experiences** to the list if applicable. Then, rate respectively, how much transformational potential each experience holds for you and whether the transformation is for the better or the worse. Last, give examples of personal qualities and social connections that may weaken or disappear and those that may strengthen or develop as a result of this transformation.

	How transformational is each experience for you personally?	In what ways do you expect these experiences to transform you?	Give examples of personal qualities that...		Give examples of social connections that...	
			...will weaken/disappear as a result of this experience.	...will strengthen/develop as a result of this experience.	...will weaken/disappear as a result of this experience.	...will strengthen/develop as a result of this experience.
Potentially transformational experiences ↓						
Studying at UW-Madison.						
Learning a foreign language (such as German).						
Traveling to different countries.						
Getting my first full-time job.						

Thank you for your participation!

Please return this survey by sending an empty email from your wisc email (empty subject and empty textbox) with your completed survey attached (please do **NOT** label your file with your name or initials!) to the following email address:

Sophia_.edsikbsltlxqi4o3@u.box.com

This email will automatically upload your word document to a box folder anonymously, no need to sign in or do anything else. You should get a confirmation email from box that your upload was successful shortly after. If this is not the case, feel free to send another email. Don't worry about duplicates; I will make sure to check your unique code for doubles.

If this does not work for you for some reason please reach out to me via email:

strietholt@wisc.edu

Appendix C: Questionnaire Part 2

Your unique code number

Please create your unique 10-digit code number following the instructions below. The code number will help connect all parts of the research project in which you choose to participate. The way that the code is created will allow you to recreate the code at a later time (should it become relevant) by following the same steps. At the same time, since only you know the information that goes into the code, your identity will remain confidential.

- f. The 1st and 2nd and 3rd digits are our current German course number, such as 101, 203, etc.;
- g. The 4th and 5th digits are your DAY of your birth, e.g. 21, 31, 07, etc.;
- h. The 6th and 7th digits are the last two digits of your phone number;
- i. 8th and 9th digits are the last two digits of your student ID
- j. 10th digit is your self-identified gender, male =0, female =1, other=3

Example: A student is taking German 101; the student's birthdate is November 7th (07); the student's phone number is 608-888-6666; the student's I.D. is 907 888 5268; and the student identifies as female (1).

Her code name will be 101 07 66 68 1.

YOUR CODE NUMBER

(b) _ _ _ (b) _ _ (c) _ _ (d) _ _ (e) _

Section 7: Focal Group

7.1 Please read the following profiles A-G, each representing a different person, and rate how strongly you identify or have identified with each of these people at different points throughout your language learning career. Please assign a percentage score on a scale from 0% (= not at all like me at this point in time) to 100% (= virtually identical to me at this point in time).

Timepoints → Profiles ↓		0% = not at all like me, 100% = virtually identical to me at the following points in time:				
		Before you started your studies of Ger- man	At the very be- ginning of your studies of Ger- man	Now	By the end of your for- mal studies of Ger- man	After your for- mal studies of Ger- man
A	A is a native English speaker who is a high-achiever at their job at a tech company. They are successful, competent, and easy-going. They learned German in high school and college and are now using their language skills occasionally when doing business with foreign clients.					
B	B is a bilingual English and Spanish speaker who works in a local community project as a translator for people who don't speak English. They are creative, warm and extroverted. They learned their languages at home and use them every day both at their job and at home.					
C	C is a native English speaker who works in marketing. They are practical, fearless, and they also tend to procrastinate quite a lot. They learned Spanish in high school but did not continue in college. They currently do not actively use their language skills.					
D	D is originally from Germany but has been working in the US as an engineer for a few years now. They are driven, family-oriented, and can be quite sarcastic. They learned English in school in Germany and are now using it in their everyday life and at work in the US.					
E	E is a multilingual English, Korean, and Chinese speaker who works at a successful start-up. They are analytical, intellectual, and funny. They learned their languages at home and use them to communicate with friends and family.					
F	F is a native English speaker who owns their own business. They are savvy, hard-working, and goal-oriented. They never learned a second language.					
G	G is a native English speaker who is currently in college. They are bright and a quick-learner, though they can be intimidating at times. They learned Spanish in middle school and high school and are now continuing with it in college. They achieved near-native fluency in Spanish through schooling and use it exclusively in school.					
H	H is a native English speaker who works for a local business. They are sharp-minded, witty, and they easily lose interest. They learned French in high school and in college where they studied abroad in France for a year. They used their language skills abroad, though most locals spoke English with them.					

7.2 Imagine that you are writing a soap opera about a former German major ten years past their graduation. If you were to pitch this story to someone, how would you describe the main character? Provide some talking points for each of the topics listed below. Bullet points are okay.

Topics on which to comment	Talking points
This person's current situation (professional and/or personal).	
Personal qualities and attitudes.	
Specific skills that distinguish this person from their peers.	
Appearance.	
Job/s the person has/had.	
Influential people they have had interacted with and in what capacities (e.g., significant other, boss, etc.)	
Actions that have led to the current situation.	
The role that German has played or plays in their life.	
...anything else?	

Thank you for your participation!

Please return this survey by sending an empty email from your wisc email (empty subject and empty textbox) with your completed survey attached (please do **NOT** label your file with your name or initials!) to the following email address:

Sophia_.edsikbsltlxqi4o3@u.box.com

This email will automatically upload your word document to a box folder anonymously, no need to sign in or do anything else. You should get a confirmation email from box that your upload was successful shortly after. If this is not the case, feel free to send another email. Don't worry about duplicates; I will make sure to check your unique code for doubles.

If this does not work for you for some reason please reach out to me via email:

strietholt@wisc.edu

Appendix D: Interview Protocol

Interview protocol

A. Introduction

- Thank participant for agreeing to the interview and for their participation so far
- Explain about being recorded
- Tell them about compensation
- Tell them who you are and what your study is about
- Ask them to give you the last four digits of their participation code so you can match their answers

B. Interview Part I: Profiles

Give participants time to review the profiles

#	Lead question (tier 1)	Follow-up question (tier 2)	Secondary follow-up question (tier 3)
1a	Do you recall when you first read these different profiles of different language learners if any profile stood out to you?		
1b		Which ones and why?	
1c			Which one stood out as particularly positive or particularly negative? Why?
2a	How do you feel about these profiles now?		
2b		Do any stand out as particularly positive or negative to you? Why?	
2c			Why do you think your answer has (not) changed since you took the survey?
3a	If you were to create a 'horror' profile of your own – drawing on		

	characteristics from all profiles, what characteristics would you give that profile or the person who fits it?		
3b		What, in your opinion, makes these characteristics particularly horrible?	
3c			What is this based on - your personal experience, others' opinions...?
4a	If you were to create an 'ideal' profile of your own – drawing on characteristics from all profiles, what characteristics would give that profile or the person who fits it?		
4b		What, in your opinion, makes these characteristics particularly horrible?	
4c			What is this based on - your personal experience, others' opinions...?
5a	Which characteristics – regardless of whether you consider them good or bad – would you say are the most or the least changeable?		
5b		Under what circumstances or conditions would these be changeable?	
6a	Which characteristics – regardless of whether you consider them good or bad – would you say are the most or the least changeable as a result of language study ?		
6b		Under what circumstances or conditions would these be changeable?	
6c			Why (not)?

7a	Let's assume language study CAN 'change' people. What would have to happen for that to be the case? (I.e. HOW would you have to study a language for that to happen? Would you need certain skills, attitudes, expectations...?)		
7b		What conditions would need to be fulfilled, what actions would need to be taken? By whom?	
8a	Generally speaking, do you think there is a connection between language study and personal transformation? If so, can you elaborate?		
8b		Do you think this is a common goal for language learners? For whom and why?	
8c			Do you think this is a goal more so for learners of German than for other languages?
8d		Do you think this is a goal for a particular type of person? If so, what are their characteristics, attitudes, skills...?	
8e		Do you think it's an appropriate goal?	
8f		If said yes: Do you have this goal? If said no: Why don't you personally have this goal?	
8g		If said yes: How do you view this kind of transformation? Good? Bad?	

Tell participants that they only need to answer the next questions if they are comfortable talking about it

#	Lead question (tier 1)	Follow-up question (tier 2)	Secondary follow-up question (tier 3)
9a	Are there any personal characteristics, attitudes, or beliefs that have changed as a result of your German study? Can you speculate why?		
9b		How much have they changed?	
9c			In what way?
10a	How do you feel about these changes? Are they for the better, the worse, neutral?		
10b		Do you find 'change' as a result of language study rewarding/exciting (positive) ... or do you also see some disconcerting/unsettling (negative) aspects to 'change' as a result of language study?	
11a	Do you believe that others around you perceive these changes? What makes you think so?		
11b		How do you think that these others feel about these changes?	
12	Was this change part of your original objectives of language study? (or did it 'just happen'?)		

C. Interview Part II: Percentages

Before giving the previously assigned percentages to the participants

#	Lead question (tier 1)	Follow-up question (tier 2)	Secondary follow-up question (tier 3)
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11	Which profile would best describe you NOW (at the time of the interview)? How?		
12	What percentage would you assign?		
13a	How do you feel about your assessment that Profile X (WHICHEVER THEY SAY IN 11) best describes you now?		
13b		What about that profile do you find appealing/unappealing?	
14	Which profile would you MOST like to be like? Why?		
15	Which profile would you LEAST like to be like? Why?		

Give participants their numbers/data from before

Instruction: Please take a look at the percentages that you assigned to different profiles at different times to show how well they reflected who you are.

#	Lead question (tier 1)	Follow-up question (tier 2)	Secondary follow-up question (tier 3)
16a	Can you talk me through your thought process behind these percentages?		
16b		Which of these percentages stand out to you and why?	
17	Retrospectively, is there any percentage you would like to change? If yes, which one and why?		
18	Personalized question 1: highest score total AT TIME X. which aspects or characteristics of the profile accounted for this particular score? What made it stand out compared to the others?		

19a	Personalized question 2: Your highest score is X at timepoint Y. Why did you never give a higher score than x?		
19b		What would need to happen/what words would have to change in your highest profile to achieve a higher score?	
20	Personalized question 3: lowest score total at timepoint Y. Which aspects or characteristics of the profile accounted for this particular score? What made it stand out compared to the others?		
21	Are there any other percentages you would like to address?		
22a	How did you feel while filling this out?		
22b		How are you feeling now while looking back on it?	
23	In my dissertation, I will attempt to explain the trajectories (ups and downs) of responses. What could I say about your trajectory in terms of the story behind it?		

D. Interview Part III: The Soap Opera

Before showing their data to the participants

#	Lead question (tier 1)	Follow-up question (tier 2)	Secondary follow-up question (tier 3)
25a	Do you remember how you described your profile?		

25b		If yes, what was it like? Can you retell it? If no, what would you say at this point in time?	
25c			What was your inspiration behind creating this profile?

Show data to the participants and give time to review

#	Lead question (tier 1)	Follow-up question (tier 2)	Secondary follow-up question (tier 3)
26a	What are your initial thoughts after reading your previous answers?		
26b		Would you change anything now?	
27	You've described this former German major as X (personalize). Why did you choose these specific characteristics, attitudes, and skills?		
28	How attainable do you think is the life of this person you've described here?		
29	Do you think this life is the goal of most German learners? Why?		
30a	How much would you like to be this person?		
30b		If this was starring YOU, and it was the ideal life of YOU, what would be different?	
30c			Would you like/prefer these changes? Why?
31a	If you compare your created profile to the profiles that we discussed earlier, what are some differences or similarities?		

31b		Which profile overall fits your goals best?	
32a	How would you feel if you could snap your fingers and immediately transform into this person?		
32b		What would have to change for you to be able to achieve this?	

E. Organization

- Thank participants once again for participation
- Let them know about gift card compensation and email address to receive said gift card
- Ask them if they'd be open to another follow-up interview in case there are any other questions