

Longitudinal relations between students' motivation for English, French and German in multilingual Switzerland

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Switzerland is a historically multilingual country that encourages multiple language learning (EDK, 2004). Still, this learning almost always occurs in conjunction with English, which is believed to lead to negative interferences with students' motivation to learn other languages (Ushioda, 2017). This appears to be a general European phenomenon (Duff, 2017), as cross-sectional research from several countries has shown that students usually report lower motivation to learn other languages than English (Busse, 2017; Dörnyei et al., 2006; Henry, 2010; Lasagabaster, 2017). However, less is known about longitudinal relations between students' motivation for several languages, therefore, it is unclear whether students' motivation for English is indeed interacting with the development of motivation for other languages. Moreover, this motivational development might not be the same for all students. Previous studies indicate systematic individual differences in students' motivation depending, for instance, on their gender, their language background or their experience with learning several languages (Brühwiler & Le Pape Racine, 2017; Lanvers et al., 2019; Rjosk et al., 2015). The present study focuses on upper-secondary students in the German-speaking part of Switzerland and uses multivariate latent growth modeling to analyze data gathered from 850 students ($M_{age}=15.61$ years, $SD=0.62$; 54.5% female) in the spring of 2012 (Grade 9), 2013 (Grade 10), and 2014 (Grade 11). First, we explore the longitudinal relations between students' motivation for English (foreign language), French (foreign but national language), and German (national language), drawing on the concept of intrinsic value beliefs, which refers to the motivation that is driven by the activity itself, regardless of external incentives (Wigfield & Eccles, 2002; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Second, we explore potential relations between students' development of intrinsic value beliefs in the three language subjects and their linguistic background (i.e., whether they grew up with more than one home language). Results indicate significant longitudinal relations in the development of intrinsic value beliefs between the three language subjects. Analyses suggested that students who reported higher intrinsic value beliefs in English in Grade 9 showed steeper decreases in their intrinsic value beliefs for French from Grade 9 to 11. However, stronger increases in English intrinsic value beliefs over time were associated with stronger increases in French and German value beliefs. While multilingual students reported higher initial levels of intrinsic value beliefs for French, they also showed steeper decreases in their levels of intrinsic value for French and English over time compared to their monolingual peers. These findings indicate that students' motivation for several language subjects might interact with each other over time and underline the importance for more collaboration between language educators and language teachers to find solutions to minimize the potentially growing imbalance between languages in educational settings (Busse, 2017; Ushioda, 2017).

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