Language learning motivation and projected desire: an interview study with parents of young language learners

Recent studies on language learning motivation have foregrounded notions of identity formation and self-fulfillment. This paper takes two different theoretical frameworks as points of departure (Dörnyei's 'L2 Motivational Self System' and Kramsch's 'desire in language'), but it looks at the motivation/desire of the parents of young language learners, rather than at the learners themselves. Based on in-depth interviews about language and identity with 9 parents of various linguistic and social backgrounds in Brussels (Belgium), the data reveal that these parents frequently had vivid mental images of what their multilingual children could achieve in the future (in contrast to their own 'monolingual' achievements). Additionally, they imagined their children having future access to a range of identity options thanks to this multilingual education. In this way, we show that 'desire in language' is not limited to the construction of an inwardly generated identity; it can also be projected outwardly onto other individuals, in this case by parents onto their children.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language learning motivation has been researched in a myriad of ways, but mostly in quantitative, social psychological studies in which various models of language learning motivation have been tested and applied in relation to L2 achievement (Gardner & Lambert, 1959; Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Gardner, 1985; Clément, 1980; MacIntyre, Dörnyei, Clément & Noels, 1998; Dörnyei, 2003; Dewaele, 2009). Recently, however, the focus on L2 outcome within these studies has come under increasing pressure from scholars in a socio-cultural paradigm, who have foregrounded notions of self and identity in their research and have shown the relationship between identity and motivation to be both revelatory and highly complex (e.g. Dörnyei & Ushioda 2009; Pavlenko & Blackledge 2004; Ushioda 2011). While previous theories of L2 motivation are being radically overhauled, one of the most influential models in this regard has been Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System (2005, 2009). Conceptually, it is inspired by the theory of 'possible selves' by personality psychologists Markus and Nurius (1986), who proposed that possible selves 'represent individuals' ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming', thereby establishing a conceptual link between cognition and motivation (Markus & Nurius 1986: 954). This re-orientation towards identity and identity (re)construction in the motivational field aligns with a more general shift in second language acquisition (SLA) research, i.e. the so-called social turn (Firth & Wagner 1997, Block 2003), which champions an approach that turns 'the language learner' into a 'whole person', i.e. a cognitive, social, affective, and physical being who finds her- or himself within (a) distinct social, cultural, political and historical context(s) (e.g. Block 2007, Firth & Wagner 2007, Lantolf & Pavlenko 2001, Norton 2013, Pavlenko 2000).

If we wish to focus on the whole person rather than the learner, we must include research on language learning motivation that does not simply look into the generalizability of the L2 learner/user population, but instead reveals the complexity and variation of an individual's unique trajectory (cf. Coleman 2014). In this light, the relevance of personal stories of L2 users should be underlined (Ushioda 2009), yet so far they have been underused to approach the construct of motivation. Personal stories can be gathered through a variety of qualitative data techniques, most notably interview, diary and observation studies (see also Pavlenko 2007, 2008). Kramsch (2006, 2009), a scholar in the post-structuralist paradigm, drew partly on language learning memoirs to expound her theory on the *multilingual subject*, a term she posits to capture the various and varying 'subjective dimensions' of the multilingual language speaker or learner. Speaking of such subjective dimensions, Kramsch does not believe that the term 'motivation' sufficiently covers the strong feelings of attraction and rejection she

found among language learners towards the language(s) they were learning (2009: 205). She therefore favours the term *desire in language* (borrowed from Kristeva 1980), claimed to represent the need to identify (positively or negatively) with others, their language, and their ways of speaking. In this way, desire is about 'exploring various possibilities of the self in the real or imagined encounters with others' (Kramsch 2006: 102).

This paper reports on data from in-depth interviews that were collected in the context of a much larger research project on language and identity in Brussels, the multilingual capital of Belgium. The project [add REF author] consisted of a multiple case study that involved informants of various socio-economic backgrounds who all had consciously enrolled their children in Dutch-medium education (DME) in Brussels. DME is reputed for its standards in language teaching, and parents frequently opt for this kind of education with a view to making their children multilingual, even though said parents often do not speak the school language(s) (well) themselves (Janssens 2013, add REF author). In this paper, we take the theoretical frameworks of Dörnyei (2005, 2009) and Kramsch (2006, 2009) into language learning motivation as points of departure, not to probe into the motivation of the young L2 learners themselves, but rather to investigate what identity options their parents imagine for them. By looking at the gathered data through the prism of the 'L2 motivational self system' (Dörnyei) and 'Desire in language' (Kramsch), we hope to better uncover the hopes, dreams, aspirations and projections that inform this parental wish to have multilingual children, and to investigate whether either theoretical construct holds up if the motivation is experienced *vicariously*, as it were. In line with Ushioda's (2009) recommendation, we believe that discourse data should be approached from a variety of theoretical frameworks, all of which can potentially render the data more illuminating.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Before the turn of the millennium, the social psychological perspective on language learning motivation had been dominant since the late 50s, particularly as embodied in the research by Gardner and Lambert (1959, 1972, 1985). Gardner and Lambert made a crucial distinction between two orientations: an *integrative* one, reflecting language learners' willingness to interact and identify with (members of) the target L2 community, and an *instrumental* one, where the emphasis lies on the practical, utilitarian value of learning the language. However, as various scholars have pointed out, both this dichotomy and the conception of the target L2 community as a culturally distinct 'external' reference group, are increasingly difficult to maintain in light of worldwide globalization processes and the growing status of English as a

lingua franca (Coetzee-Van Rooy 2006, Dörnyei 2009, Pavlenko 2006, Ushioda 2006, 2009). In an era of online communication networks and world Englishes, it becomes tricky to locate this L2 community that learners wish to identify with. Moreover, as Dörnyei points out (2009), the monolingual bias within Gardner & Lambert's model is further upended as people are frequently compelled to develop bicultural (or even multilingual) identities, where part of their identity remains steeped in their culture of origin but other parts may be tied to a global identity which makes them feel part of an (online) international community (cf. Kramsch 2009, Norton 2013). As Ushioda puts it, within such a new world order 'our 'integrative' motivation to participate in these worlds may be better explained in terms of our desired self-representations as de facto members of these global communities, rather than in terms of identification with external reference groups (2011: 201). Within theories of language learning motivation, all of the above firmly shifts the focus from external to internal processes of identification.

As mentioned, the theoretical model on L2 motivation that has been the most influential so far and which embodies this shift from an identification with an external reference group towards an internal process of self-identification is Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System (2005, 2009). It distinguishes between three components, (Dörnyei, 2005: 105-108): the 'Ideal L2 Self', or 'the representation of all the attributes that a person would ideally like to possess (e.g. hopes, aspirations, desires)' (Dörnyei, 2005: 100); the 'Ought-to L2 Self', defined as the embodiment of all attributes one believes one ought to possess (i.e. various duties, obligations, or responsibilities) in order to meet social expectations; and the 'L2 Learning Experience', which informs day-to-day motivation and includes the influence of parents, teachers, peers, and our daily learning experiences in general. The first two components are said to act as dynamic future self-guides that channel motivation and direct behavior (cf. Markus & Nurius 1986), and they are frequently distinguished on the basis of a promotion/prevention focus. Whereas the Ideal L2 Self shapes motivation through attractive images of oneself using the L2 in social, personal or professional contexts (i.e. promotion), the 'Ought-to L2 Self' chimes in with more externally regulated types of motivation, and represents a desire to see oneself as a competent user of the L2 in order to avoid possible negative outcomes (i.e. prevention). Both images are said to serve as powerful motivators because of our innate desire to reduce the discrepancy between how we envisage our current and desired future selves (cf. Higgins 1987, 1996).

In Dörnyei's conception, the notion of the ideal L2 self collapses the distinction between integrativeness and instrumentality; the imagined person who is competent in the L2 can be fully integrated into the L2 community and work for an international company at the same

time. Nevertheless, the distinction Dörnyei makes between 'internal' (ideal) and 'external' (ought-to) pressures on the imagined L2 self is not so easy to delineate, and to date few studies have investigated the interrelationship between these two concepts (for an exception, see Kim 2009). Dörnyei himself concedes this point as he writes (together with Ushioda in the conclusion to their 2009 volume): 'at what point in the internalisation process can we claim with confidence that a desired possible self is 'ideal', that is, fully owned by the learner, rather than 'ought-to', that is, imposed on the learner by others?' (2009: 352).

At its core, an integrative disposition was considered to involve a form of emotional and subjective identification with an L2 community. This may seem closely related to Kramsch's (2006, 2009) appropriation of Kristeva's (1980) concept of *desire*, which in Kramsch's work on the experiences of multilingual speakers is identified as a profound need (beyond notions of motivation) to identify with another linguistic and cultural reality (cf. Wolcott 2014). However, the distinction between an external point of reference and the drive towards internal self-fulfilment is upended here too, as Kramsch writes: 'This *need of identification with others, with their language, their way of speaking* is so strong that Kristeva gave it the name 'desire' (Kristeva 1980). Desire in language is *the basic drive toward self-fulfilment*. It touches the core of who we are.' (2006:101, italics added). At the same time, Kramsch notes that this desire can also be shaped by a negative identification with the other language, as can be the case among immigrant learners, for instance. Fearing that a new language could threaten their own identity, they might learn new words but preserve their own accent and grammar (Kramsch, 2009). Desire therefore consists of strong feelings of either attraction to or revulsion of the other language, and these feelings are in turn shaped by the way we imagine an L1 speaker of this other language, i.e. the Other, to be. Kramsch sees this 'Other' as an 'imagined' other; he or she may be triggered by a flesh and blood native speaker but will still be influenced by cultural stereotypes and fantasies (2009: 15). It is this image, and the potential (dis)empowerment that is associated with it, that will then influence learners' desire to gain access to – or steer clear from – an imagined L2 community (cf. Anderson 1983; Norton 2013).

Even though Kramsch is not interested in a taxonomy of motivation, let alone validating it through quantitative data and psychometric measurements, both herself and Dörnyei place imagination at the centre of their conception of what drives individuals to become foreign language users. Indeed, they are both interested in the dynamic interface between imagination and identity formation (cf. also Pavlenko & Blackledge 2004; Norton 2013).[1] Dörnyei (2009:

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[1] For a thorough discussion of the distinction between the concepts of motivation and desire in terms of their lineages and epistemological stances, see Motha & Lin (2014).

15) in fact forwards the inclusion of images and senses in the construct of language learning motivation as a crucial difference between possible selves theory and former social-psychological theories. As learners visualize themselves as competent L2 users in the future, these projections are psychologically real in their current imaginations: i.e. 'possible selves are represented in the same imaginary and semantic ways as the here-and-now-self, that is, they are a reality for individual people: people can 'see', 'hear' and 'smell' a possible self' (Dörnyei 2009: 12). Drawing on Markus and Nurius (1986), Dörnyei further suggests that possible selves need to be as vivid, specific and well-elaborated as possible if they are to be motivationally effective (2005: 100).

In the study this paper reports on, the parents of children enrolled in Dutch-medium education in Brussels constitute the object of enquiry. Past studies on bilingualism and bilingual acquisition have frequently acknowledged the importance of parents as an environmental factor in the language acquisition process. However, even if parental behaviour and beliefs are expected to have an influence on their offspring (King et al., 2008; De Houwer, 2009; Fogle, 2012), there is still relatively little SLA research which uses parents as informants or singles them out as vital stakeholders in the language learning experience. In the field of educational psychology, Eccles and Wigfield (2002) discuss a variety of motivation theories from the point of view of the learner in their seminal overview article on motivation, but these general motivation theories do not delineate the precise role of the parents. However, in the ample research specifically dedicated to parental involvement in children's education, findings consistently show parents to have a positive influence on academic motivation and success (e.g. Fan & Chen, 2001; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbush, & Darling, 1992).

In Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1995, 1997) proposed model of the parental involvement process, the notion of 'role construction', in casu a parenting role, is a key feature, and this role construction as concerns their involvement in children's education is premised on parental beliefs about what they should do in relation to this education. This also echoes Mills' (2003) research, where educational aspirations for one's children were found to be fundamental to the idea, or role construction, of being a 'good mother'. In a later version of Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's model (Walker et al., 2005), the factor 'parents' personal history with and affective responses to school' was added to the construct, which was coined 'valence toward school'. As we will see, the parents' personal learning trajectory and their experience with schooling will be highly relevant to this present research as well. Perhaps more importantly still, in a meta-analysis of quantitative studies into the relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement, Fan and Chen (2001) reveal that parental

aspirations/expectations for children's education is in fact the factor within parental involvement that most strongly correlates to academic success.

As our parents-informants selected Dutch-medium education for their children, it is very likely they aspire to certain goals and ideals, linguistic and otherwise, for their offspring; we might even venture to say they probably imagine a range of identity options for their children, some of which will be preferred over others. We are therefore interested in looking at how parents motivate their choice to enroll their children in Dutch-medium education, and what (linguistic) identities and futures they may project onto their children. In the process of doing so, we expect to hit upon the interface between language, motivation, (projected) identity formation, and imagination. If foreign language learning is frequently an attempt to 'claim a more complex and satisfying identity' (Kinginger 2004: 222), we aim to show that one might easily add 'for one's children' to this equation.

3. METHODOLOGY

As mentioned, this paper uses interview data that were collected in the context of a larger research project, whose primary aims were to look into how parents of different linguistic and social backgrounds experience having children in Dutch-medium education in Brussels [add REF author]. This involved probing into matters of identity, (linguistic) ideology, and family language policies. It made use of a variety of ethnographic data gathering techniques, including in-depth interviews and non-participant observations, and as such it was set up as a multiple case study involving five 'parental nodes', consisting of four mother-father pairs and a single mother. In the original study, the cases were purposively chosen in order to ascertain in what ways a different background impacts (or not) how these parents experience having-children-in-Dutch-medium-education-in-Brussels and how they perceive their own linguistic identity and that of others. The data relevant for this present paper were gathered from the first planned phase of the overall project, which involved open-ended semi-directed interviews with seven of the parents (four parental nodes) around their personal language learning trajectories, their current language practices within the family and beyond, and their linguistic experiences in Brussels. The interviews were conducted between July and December 2010 in varieties of Dutch, French, and Spanish.[2] For this paper, we systematically scanned the transcripts for instances where informants formulate reasons for enrolling their children in DME, give voice to the (linguistic) identity/identities they claim – or desire – for

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[2] The interviewer (first author) is a native speaker of Dutch, but may generally be said to master both other languages well enough to converse fluently with the informants in their respective languages.

themselves, and, in particular, the instances where they express the identity options they imagine for their (multilingual) children. Such a thematic analysis (cf. Pavlenko, 2007; Talmy, 2010; Duff, 2012) allowed us to uncover recurrent motifs in the participants' stories and helped us to observe the themes from an emic perspective. In what follows, we isolate single excerpts that exemplify our findings

4. RESULTS

4.1. PN A: Alain (38) & Béatrice (40)

Alain and Béatrice were both born and bred in Brussels in a mostly French-speaking environment. They have two children: a daughter (7) and a son (4.5). Béatrice is the Belgian deputy director of a French publishing house and Alain works as a researcher at the university. French is the language commonly spoken at home, as well as with relatives and most of their friends. According to Alain and Béatrice, they ended up sending their children to a Dutch-medium school through sheer coincidence. They were looking for a pre-school for their daughter nearby and apparently the Dutch-speaking one in the neighborhood left a far better impression on them than the Francophone one.

The prospect of having bilingual, even multilingual children as a result of this choice, is presented as a given throughout the interview. It is imagined and constructed by their parents in two important ways. First of all, since both parents were born in Brussels and have lived in the city most of their lives, they strongly relate to the notion of 'being from Brussels'. Béatrice is particularly proud of her Brussels' roots, and she celebrates the hybridity (Bhabha, 2004) that these roots entail, crystallized in the concept of a 'zinneke' (excerpt 1). A 'zinneke' was originally a local Brussels word to name mixed-breed street dogs that were thrown in the river *Zenne/Senne*, but at one point it became a nickname for the inhabitants of Brussels themselves, themselves of 'mixed' origins.

Excerpt 1

Béatrice	moi je suis plutôt une zinneke, donc je suis un peu, je me considère entre les deux	*me I'm more like a zinneke, so I'm a little, I consider myself to be in-between the two*

The two, "les deux" in excerpt 1, refers to the Dutch-speaking community on the one side and the French-speaking community on the other. By claiming an identity option in-between, Beatrice identifies with a hybrid identity position within an (imagined) community, a position

that resonates with notions of a third place (cf. Bhabha 2004). Clearly, as Brusselers, the image of the "zinneke" is accessible and familiar to these parents. In times of urbanization and the revival of a city identity, it may be an attractive and hip image, symbolizing the urban citizen who – in times of language-related nationalism – defines him/herself beyond the traditional confines but is not without roots, even if these roots are related to a city, not to a nation. In fact, we can observe that this *zinneke* image is dynamically constructed and enhanced by the ongoing project of having children in Dutch-medium education. In terms of identity, both Alain and Béatrice project the same hybrid 'Brussels' identity onto their kids, or even an enhanced version of this, as they observe them speaking a mélange of Dutch and French. The following excerpt, in which Alain refers to a kid's birthday party, illustrates this:

Excerpt 2

| Alain | hier à l'anniversaire. c'était moitié français, moitié néerlandais, ça partait dans tous les sens, ça. c'était du Bruxelles en plein, quoi ! | *yesterday at the birthday party . it was half French half Dutch, it went in all directions. that was so Brussels, you know!* |

Secondly, the prospect of having multilingual kids is also invoked to counter perceived personal shortcomings as regards language learning. Despite Béatrice's claims to having hybrid Brussels roots, she herself acknowledges to be a frustrated language learner. The multilingual linguistic future that she imagines for her children is likely to be partly derived from this frustration. In the interview, the choice for Dutch-medium education is framed by a parental desire to remove obstacles for one's children. It is even presented as a gift ("un cadeau") only a parent can give:

Excerpt 3

| Béatrice | j'aimerais bien parler cinq langues <laugh>. c'est pour ça d'ailleurs que je suis contente que les enfants fassent ça, sans y penser . je trouve ça génial .. je me dis, quelle cadeau on leur donne . c'est super d'être .. d'apprendre des langues | *I'd love to be able to speak five languages <laugh> . that's why I'm happy that the children can do it, without thinking . I think it's great .. I say to myself what a present we give them . it's great to be .. to learn languages* |

The identity imagined for the children here comes close to one of a polyglot who can speak and switch between languages "without thinking", easily, naturally, almost as if it's a birthright. If this imagined possible self is shaped by a frustrated desire on the part of the parents, it is nevertheless an identity option they can project onto their children, and therefore

realize vicariously. Speaking five languages fluently is obviously not a birthright, and Béatrice is very happy they have been able to bestow this possibility on her children as a gift.

4.2. PN B: Aisha (42)

Aisha is the mother of five children (aged between 8 and 22), and the only single parent among the informants. She was born in the Northern Moroccan Rif area but came to Belgium when she was still a baby; she has lived in Brussels for her entire life, where she works as a seamstress. The linguistic background of Aisha's family was reportedly monolingual Berber until her own generation; the migration process entailed various degrees of multilingualism for herself and her children. As a child, Aisha spoke Berber at home with her parents, as well as with relatives and neighbors who originally came from the same region in Morocco. Both her parents are illiterate and speak only limited French, so she often had to act as interpreter or translator between her parents and outsiders, such as neighbors or teachers. She and her siblings went to school in French and had courses of Dutch in secondary school, though she considered these to be insufficient for her needs. The language most spoken at home now is French. Aisha presents the enrollment of her children in a Dutch-medium school as a conscious and informed choice that has the explicit intention of widening the range of possibilities available to them. She emphatically compares this to the limited number of possibilities she herself encountered as a result of attending a vocational school. She thus explicitly frames her decision within her own experiences and language (learning) trajectory, which she at various points refers to in terms of a feeling of "manque" (*a 'lack(ing)'*), leading to "frustration" on her part. It is a frustration she decidedly wants to save her children from, as can be seen in the following excerpt:

Excerpt 4

| Aisha | donc ça, ça a été vraiment un manque, et que je me suis dit : mes enfants n'auront jamais ce problème, c'est exclus. dans ma tête c'était comme ça, je voulais pas que mes enfants vivent ce que j'ai vécu, cette frustration. je me suis dit : je veux, on est en Belgique, il y a-, les gens parlent le néerlandais et le français. ils ((the children)) doivent se communiquer ((sic)) dans les deux langues parfaitement | *so that, that was really something I lacked, and so I said to myself: my children will never have this problem, it's out of the question. in my head it was like that, I didn't want my children to experience what I had experienced, this frustration. I said to myself: I want, we are in Belgium, there are people who speak Dutch and French. they ((the children)) have to be able to communicate in both languages perfectly* |

In Aisha's story, her personal frustration, which derives from negative experiences and a lack of opportunities, is presented as the primary motivation for providing her children with the opportunity to learn Dutch. She thus posits her decision as one that will prevent, even *guarantee* the prevention, of a negative outcome. She provides vivid examples of such negative linguistic experiences in the interview, including her frustration at not being able to communicate with Dutch-speaking colleagues at work, and feeling a certain shame towards her daughter at not knowing even a minimum of English words. Later attempts to counter this omission ("manque") were also thwarted by practical difficulties and structural constraints, such as the absence of parents who could pay for tuition fees. Sending her children to Dutch-medium school – with the social and cultural corollaries she knows (or imagines) that this involves – is thus for Aisha a way of imagining her children's language identity and re-imagining her own.

Aisha's parental choice can also be explained as a desire to enhance her children's professional opportunities by offering them the possibility to learn languages (in particular Dutch and English) and skills (cf. her emphasis on communication) which are deemed more useful on the local (imagined) language market. However, the boosting of opportunities is not limited to language learning in Aisha's story. It emerges as a more widely applicable theme that guides much of her conversation, which is 'to give oneself the best possible odds' of succeeding in life ("mettre les chances de son côté", see excerpt 5). Dutch-medium education is described as a way of learning how to communicate in many languages, and as such it is considered a crucial strategy in her desire to push 'the odds' in her children's – and by extension her own – favor.

Excerpt 5

| Aisha | je trouve qu'on doit mettre les chances de son côté, et parler le plus de langues possibles | *I think you should push the odds in your favor, and speak as many languages as possible* |

4.4. PN C: Hadise (40) & Aydemir (42)

Hadise and Aydemir are both children from Turkish immigrants who came to Belgium in the early 60s. They have four children (aged between 3 and 18). Due to the fact that their respective families arrived in different towns in Belgium, their histories of language learning are quite different. Hadise went to a Dutch-speaking school, and learnt French only after her marriage, when the couple came to live in Brussels. Aydemir went to a Francophone school in Brussels, where he learned very little Dutch. However, both learned Turkish with their

parents and relatives and Turkish is also the language they speak to each other. Their current language practices show a similar pattern, in the sense that Turkish is used for most of their home and social life, and French and Dutch for work- and school-related matters, respectively. Turkish is also used with relatives and friends, and in the many Turkish shops that can be found in their neighborhood. Aydemir works for a transport company, while Hadise is employed at a school's after-school programme. They provide two reasons for choosing Dutch-medium education for their children. Firstly, the fact that Hadise grew up and went to school in Dutch-speaking Flanders is claimed to facilitate the follow-up of homework. Secondly, perhaps more importantly, the (perceived) importance of Dutch on the job market is repeatedly mentioned. Aydemir elaborates on this second reason by telling a vivid anecdote about an experience he had at a job fair in a town in the periphery of Brussels. Apparently, the person responsible for hiring people started off by sending out all applicants who did not speak any Dutch. This experience had a significant impact on Aydemir, as is revealed in the following excerpt:

Excerpt 6

INT	[et donc du coup eh . ça vous a fait réfléchir]	*[and so, euh, this got you thinking]*
Aydemir	[moi j'ai eu peur(?) ça va-,] ça fait réfléchir franchement	*[me I got scared(?) it goes-,] it really gets you thinking*
INT	et le [néerlandais, eh ?]	*and [Dutch, eh?]*
Aydemir	[et là] . ils devaient pas être engagés pour être ingénieur ou dans les bureaux, hein, c'était juste des ouvriers qui prendent ((sic)) de- des valises, des bagages, des, rien de spécial, hein .. pas de qualification ou rien, l'ouvrier de base	*[and there] . they weren't going to be hired as engineers or in offices, right, they were just workers who take suitcases, luggage, nothing special, right .. no qualification or whatever, basic jobs*
INT	ouais, le critère langagière, ouais, de base, quoi . d'accord . et donc, du coup, le choix pour une école	*yeah, a basic, yeah, language criterion . okay . and so, the choice for a school*
Aydemir	ça, ça m'a influencé beaucoup aussi	*that, that has influenced me a lot as well*
INT	ouais, cette expérience-là?	*yeah, that experience?*
Aydemir	ouais ouais	*yeah yeah*

Again (cf. Aisha (PN B) above), we see how an emotionally charged personal experience is advanced within a parent's narrative to frame his or her choices. For these parents, sending

their children to a Dutch-medium school is not just a matter of abstract considerations of the 'importance of Dutch on the job market', but it is rooted in personal experiences such as the one described above. It may even entail imagining their children raising their hands at a job fair like the one mentioned in the excerpt above when asked who speaks Dutch. Dutch-medium education, then, is regarded as the means to obtain this goal.

A second issue that is particularly relevant to Hadise and Aydemir's case when it comes to imagining future identities for their children is their way of combining their Belgian citizenship (to which they explicitly adhere) with a strong sense of belonging to Turkey. When Hadise reflects on the 'Turkishness' of her children, she frames it within a broader notion of 'Turks always being really Turkish', thus explicitly presenting her children and herself as being part of 'the Turkish community'. The Turkishness is presented by Hadise as a very natural thing: *"it's really on the inside they have it. You can't teach it, they just have it"*. 'Turkishness' is therefore presented as a given, as something ineffable that is not taught in classes. Within this family the notion of 'being Turkish' is linked to the transmission of the Turkish language, yet even if deemed important, the Turkish language is not considered vital to Turkish identity construction. At the same time, however, Aydemir imagines his children as fully accepted Belgian citizens and Dutch-medium education seems to be part of the way to accomplish this. It shows that these parents imagine multiple identity options for their children, where they will feel at home in several communities, enjoying both a sense of continuity with the elder generation and the empowerment of belonging to a non-immigrant community as well.

4.4. PN D: Wim (39) & Lieselot (39)

Wim and Lieselot grew up in different towns in Flanders and met at university. They have three children, two girls (age 8 and 7) and a boy, who is five, and have been living in Brussels since 1997. Wim has recently set up his own law firm with an associate, and Lieselot is a civil servant. Regarding the language background of their families, both were born and raised in Flanders and spoke (a Flemish variety of) Dutch at home. Their current language use involves mostly Flemish (Dutch) and to a lesser extent French, the latter due to the French-speaking environment of Brussels. At home they exclusively speak Flemish (Dutch), both with each other and with their children. Apart from the occasional leisure activity, the children have until now had relatively little contact with French. The situation for Wim and Lieselot is rather different from that of their counterparts. As they both speak Dutch as their first language and speak the language at home with their children, they can be considered to

belong to the original target group for Dutch-medium education in Brussels. Wim, however, states explicitly that opting for Dutch-medium education for their children was not a deliberate decision. However, he then immediately adds that he does consider it important to have a solid foundation in one's mother tongue, as he believes his children will inevitably learn French in Brussels anyway. To them, their children growing up in Brussels is what makes the difference with respect to their own cultural and linguistic trajectories:

Excerpt 7

INT	wat denken j-, als ge hier ((in Brussels)) zou blijven wonen? zouden jullie kinderen .. euh . diezelfde band dan met Vlaanderen hebben, of niet, of net dan Brusselaarkes .	*what do you think, if you stayed here ((in Brussels))? would your children .. euh . have the same link with Flanders, or not, or just Brusselers .*
Wim	ja	*yes*
INT	meertalige Brusselaars waarschijnlijk	*multilingual Brusselers probably*
Wim	die hebben euh, ja, die hebben-, allez i-i-ik benijd hen omwille van die totaal andere euh omgeving waarin dat ze opgroeien in vergelijking met het vrij eentonige waar dat wij opgegroeid zijn. ik vind dat voor hen (goed ?) en dat is een	*they have euh, yes, they have, allez ((interj.)) I-I-I envy them because of the totally different euh environment in which they grow up in comparison with the rather monotonous one where we grew up. I think it's (good?) for them and it's a*
Lieselot	een verrijking, vallà	*an enrichment, there you go*
Wim	da-dat gaat, o-ongetwijfeld gaan die, dat zijn, dat gaan geen Vlamingen zijn	*i-it goes, un-undoubtedly they're gonna, they are, they're not going to be Flemings*
INT	ja . ja, en hoe gaat dan, denkt ge, hun band zijn met euhm ((Flanders))	*yes . yes, and how do you think their link with euhm ((Flanders)) will be?*
Lieselot	met . met	*with . with*
Wim	bwoa, ik denk dat dat vrij . natuurlijk allemaal verloopt. ze hebben natuurlijk ook contacten via, via grootouders en naar de grootouders gaan dus .. […]	*well, I think it it will take a rather . natural course all of that. they have of course also contacts via . via grandparents and going to their grandparents so .. […]*

| Lieselot | ja, en ook, allez, via, via vrienden en vriendinnen komen ko- komen ze sowieso in een netwerk dat tweetalig is, hè. hè, dat hadden wij eigenlijk, eh, . qua vriendenkring totaal niet natuurlijk. dus hier sowieso automatisch, allez, belanden ze daar toch in, dus euh, ook al is hun talenkennis dan misschien niet perfect, maar. | *yes, and also, allez ((interj.)), through, through friends they come co- come into contact anyway with a network that is bilingual, right. right, we didn't really have that, eh, . in terms of a network of friends totally not of course. so here anyway automatically, allez ((interj.)) they end up in it, so euh, although their language knowledge may not be perfect, but.* |

Like many of the other parents involved in this study, Wim and Lieselot also refer to their own trajectory to frame their (linguistic) aspirations for their children. As they imagine their children's present lives, they emphasize the enriching experience they believe growing up in Brussels to be, in contrast to Wim's take on his own childhood, which allegedly took place in a 'monotonous' ("eentonige") environment. Wim even states that he envies his children, indicating a regret for opportunities he himself missed out on. Lieselot refers to her children's current networks as being bilingual, quite different from her own circle of friends when she was little. As they forward the hybrid nature of social (linguistic) life in Brussels as an enriching experience they are offering to their children, they have no trouble marrying this image of an (idealized) 'mixed' environment with the maintenance of a link with their own Flemish background (cf. *'I think it will take a rather natural course'*). Wim posits that their children will 'not be Flemings', but the link with Flanders will remain 'natural' thanks to frequent contacts with family outside of Brussels. As such, in terms of identity options, their children are projected to benefit from the best of both worlds.

5. DISCUSSION

We will now try to synthesize and interpret the selected excerpts in relation to key notions within Dörnyei's (2005, 2009) theory of L2 motivation and Kramsch's (2006, 2009) conception of desire in language learning. By looking at these parental narratives through the lens of concepts that were originally drawn up in relation to language learners themselves, we wish to shed more light on the motivational forces that drive parents in their aspirations to raise multilingual children.

5.1. The L2 Motivational Self System

Together, the narratives show that the now discredited distinction between integrative and instrumental motivation is indeed hard to maintain. Aisha (PN B) and Hadise and Aydemir

(PN C) link a knowledge of language to improved job prospects in the future, and as such their accounts may seem to weigh in more heavily on the side of an instrumental orientation. However, their emphatic steeping of these (imagined) prospects in their own personal language learning trajectories, as well as the social and cultural affordances that they imagine these prospects will entail, show that instrumental and integrative motivation cannot be untangled. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that the parents of non-immigrant backgrounds in our sample do not at any point frame their wish to have multilingual children in terms of the economic or professional benefits that this may reap. The immigrant parents, on the other hand, clearly do associate the mastery of Dutch, and any other language made available to their children at school, as a doorway to positions of power (and wealth). This difference likely stems from the varying levels of economic capital held by our respondents.[3]

Similarly, the posited distinction between a possible 'Ideal L2 Self' and 'Ought-to L2 Self' in Dörnyei's model is just as difficult to demarcate, for here too it becomes difficult to pinpoint at what point (societal) expectations regarding language knowledge have become internalized by these parents to the point where they fully 'own' the Ideal L2 self they project onto their children (cf. Ushioda & Dörnyei 2009). If we mold notions of the 'Ideal L2 Self' and the 'Ought to Self' onto either a promotion or prevention focus, respectively, we may tentatively distinguish between the parents in our sample based on their (recent) immigrant background. On the basis of their accounts, we may forward that Aisha (PN B) and Hadise & Aydemir (PN C) seem mostly driven by a desire to save their children from the frustrations that they themselves have experienced – although Béatrice (PN A) also mentions regrets in this respect. The learning of Dutch (and other elite languages) is thus forwarded as enabling an escape from less-than-ideal conditions. These conditions may be related to thwarted professional (and hence economic) opportunities, but they also involve an inability to communicate and express oneself. A knowledge of languages is therefore also seen as the key towards unlocking your full potential, and as such it is clearly related to identity formation and self-fulfillment. The parents in PN A (Béatrice & Alain) and PN D (Wim & Lieselot) in particular,

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[3] As pointed out by an anonymous reviewer, it is clear that the background of our participants differs considerably in terms of ethnicity, religion, and social class, and that this background as such enables or disables access to power. We are aware that motivation, or desire, is not solely created by the individual, or should not be seen as the simple manifestation of an individual's emotional self. Rather, it is contextually embedded and shaped by social, political, historical, institutional, and economic contexts (Chowdhury & Phan 2014; De Costa 2016; Motha & Lin 2014). However, since the principal remit and purpose of this paper is to lay bare whether and how the notion of desire can be experienced vicariously, i.e. projected from one person onto another, the present contribution cannot explore the individual backgrounds of our participants, and the wider social-political context in which they find themselves, any further. For more information on the macro and micro-contexts of the participants' lives, we refer to [add REF author]. Furthermore, the data collected with Parental Node A is discussed from the point of view of politics and ideology in [add REF author].

who arguably inhabit different positions of social power than the parents in PN B and PN C, seem to be promotion-focused throughout: they picture their children as bona fide members of a global, multilingual community, an (imagined/idealized) community with which they identify and clearly wish to belong to themselves.

5.2. Desire in language

Our data reveal that it may be tricky to shoehorn personal narratives into an existing taxonomy that was developed from (and for) quantitative data. Kramsch's (2006, 2009) notion of desire in language learning was derived from the personal accounts of individual language learners, and as such it may be more suitably used to shed light on parental aspirations vis-à-vis their children's language knowledge and linguistic identity as revealed by interview data. As mentioned, Kramsch contends that the term motivation is 'too weak to cover the strong feelings of attraction and rejection found in learners' (2009: 205) towards the L2s they were learning or speaking, preferring the term 'desire'. Within the context of our study, we therefore looked at the (linguistic) desire – as conceptualized by Kramsch – experienced by the parents and professed for their children.

Desire can manifest itself in various ways. According to Kramsch, it can be a means to escape from a current situation, or in other words, 'the urge to escape from a state of tedious conformity with one's present environment to a state of plenitude and enhanced power' (2006: 101). Aisha (PN B) had initially set herself the task of learning foreign languages, but this desire was repeatedly hampered by practical constraints. Her desire, and the affordance of power and control she imagines the realization of this desire entails, is now projected onto her children. The parents in PN D explicitly contrast the (multilingual) childhood of their children to the "monotonous" environment they themselves grew up in. In fact, several of our informants talk of a desire to enhance their children's opportunities, e.g. 'opening as many doors as possible' (Béatrice, PN A), or 'pushing the odds in one's favour' (Aisha, PN B), essentially by giving them the gift of languages. As they frame this desire within their own personal stories, they wish to empower their children with tools and identity options they themselves have had to do without.

Kramsch establishes that desire in language learning tends to involve a very strong emotional and subjective identification with a real or imagined person or community, which Kramsch denotes as 'the Other'. The desire to get closer to this Other, or even blend in with, would then provide the impetus for language learning. However, 'the Other' does not necessarily

have to be a clearly-delineated foreign language or community; it can also be a multilingual subjectivity that is associated with emotional and social fulfillment. Wim & Lieselot (PN D) and Béatrice (PN A) in particular express a desire to reach beyond the confines of a monotonous home environment (PN D) or a monolingual L1 community (Béatrice) and enter a new multilingual (urban) community, away from traditional notions of belonging. In some respects, this echoes adolescent learners' attraction to the perceived 'coolness' of native speakers of a certain language, and their perception that entering this new and exotic world would allow them to become cool (and more powerful) too (cf. Kramsch 2006: 102; see also Kinginger 2004).

In Alain & Beatrice's account, despite their championing of a 'hybrid' identity, we also see a worldview emerge that involves 'homogenous and monolingual cultures, or in-groups and out-groups, and of individuals who move from one group to another' (Pavlenko 2002: 279), revealing a monolingual or monocultural bias (cf. Dörnyei & Ushioda 2009). In fact, throughout the interviews all parents profess a monoglossic rather than heteroglossic (mixed) view of languages (see [add REF author]). As Kramsch shows, a desire for language learning is typically also heavily conditioned by cultural stereotypes or fantasies. The parents in PN A and D in particular imagine their children as being part of a(n international,) multilingual community where they easily and 'naturally' switch between languages and associated cultural environments. The notion of something being 'natural' surfaces a number of times in these parental accounts, and it seems to indicate a longing for their children to feel at home, both in their own skins and their communities. We can interpret this desire for their children to adhere to 'naturalness' as a desire for their children to reach a 'physical, cognitive and social equilibrium' (Kramsch 2009:75). The fulfillment of the self then becomes the main driving force of desire, just as self-fulfillment is central to Dörnyei's L2 motivational Self system. We see our parents vividly imagining their children as versatile polyglots who will feel at home in many different linguistic communities, and therefore do not have to content themselves with just one identity option.

Crucially though, throughout the data, it is hard to draw a line between where the informants' desire for themselves ends and for one's offspring begins. As our respondents strongly desire self-fulfillment for their children, and the access to wealth and power this may entail, the attainment of this goal by the children could be considered a means for the parents to experience it vicariously themselves. Different from Kramsch (2006, 2009), is that we see here that 'desire in language' is not limited to the construction of an 'inwardly generated identity' (or 'subjectivation', cf. Taylor, 1992: 49, cited in Kramsch, 2006: 102). Rather, it can

also be projected *outwardly*, in our case by parents onto their children. In this sense, it could be argued that the parents in question are continuously re-constructing their own (projected) identities through imagining a (linguistic) future for their children. At the same time, however, this desire remains solely a projection or an expression of these parents' *own* innermost aspirations, awarenesses and conflicts, as the future (language) identities they conceptualize or imagine for their children obviously reveal more about themselves than about their offspring.

The finding that desire in language can also be projected outwardly resonates with research in cognitive neuroscience which has shown that people frequently attempt to understand other people's minds by using their own thoughts and experiences as a proxy for those of others, a process called 'self-projection' (Waytz & Mitchell 2011, p. 197). This self-projection is believed to have a neurobiological base; research shows that the human brain does not actually distinguish events that are perceived in reality from simulated events that are vividly imagined; mental imagery and actual perception activate the same neural pathways (Cox 2012, cited by Dornyei & Kubaniova 2014). Similarly, recent studies also show that people use the same neural machinery to imagine the future (i.e. prospection) and remember the past (i.e. retrospection), leading to the hypothesis that a crucial function of long-term memory is to "imagine, simulate and predict possible future events" (Schacter, Addis & Buckner, 2007, p. 657; see also Schacter 2012). As such, the possible future selves one imagines, a key notion in recent motivation theory, cannot be untangled from one's past self or selves. In SLA research in Japan, for instance, it has been shown that students with learning histories that they experienced as negative integrate these into their "self-narratives", increasing the stress associated with learning and diminishing success (Falout, 2016). As a corollary, some research suggests that only by attending to learners' past selves and editing such negative self-narratives can positive future self-guides emerge and successful learning be achieved (Cozolino, 2013, p. 21, as cited in Falout, 2016).

As we have seen, the parents in our study invoke vivid images of their own past language (learning) experiences, with many of them engaging in overtly negative self-narratives. Yet even if their (classroom) learning has come to an end and they can no longer 'edit' their own self-narratives, we venture to propose that their children may in fact provide them with the opportunity to bypass this editing need altogether. Instead, by 'gifting' their children the opportunity to become successful language learners, thereby projecting their own language learning desire onto said children, the children in turn may provide their parents with an opportunity to simply change the narrative and experience linguistic success vicariously.

Similarly to what is borne out by cognitive neuroscience, our data also suggest that the boundaries between the past, present, and future, perceived reality and imagined future, as well as the self and other, can be considered porous. We may conjecture that through emotional identification with one's children the cognitive mechanism of self-projection would certainly apply to parents, but of course this notion cannot be substantiated at present.

CONCLUSION

To be clear, we did not wish to delineate the role of parents as determinants of the 'Ought-to self' or 'Learning environment' within Dörnyei's model in this paper, even if that would have been an interesting study in its own right. We equally did not aim to measure the language learning motivation – or language learning desire – of their children, let alone to gauge to what extent these parents play a part in shaping this motivation or desire. But in line with current calls for a more relational and situated perspective on motivation, we wished to contribute to an analysis of motivation that takes into account multiple angles and participant perspectives (cf. Turner 2001; Ushioda 2009). The use of discourse data – and the personal stories within these data – allowed us to approach the construct of motivation and desire by proxy.

To this end, we revisited some influential theories on language learning motivation, and applied these to shed more light on interview data regarding language and identity that had previously been collected from parents of young language learners in Brussels. Our aim was to investigate how the parents expressed their own linguistic aspirations for their offspring. We saw that the distinction between a (projected) Ideal L2 Self and Ought-to L2 Self, as posited by the L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei 2005, 2009), could not be upheld on the basis of our data, nor were we able to firmly draw a distinction between what was previously called an instrumental as opposed to an integrative motivation. However, even if the data reveal that these parents may have been thwarted in their motivation to become 'ideal multilingual selves' themselves, they appear to believe they are realizing this dream vicariously through their own children.

When we look at the data through the lens of Kramsch's theories on 'desire in language' (2006, 2009), we also see that our parents have clear ideas about the multilingual identities their children have, and about the access that these identity options afford to a range of multilingual communities. Both these (imagined) identities and communities are emphatically associated with empowerment and possibility. The language learning experiences of the

parents themselves and those ascribed to their children become inextricably intertwined through the expression of emotion, the invoking of memories, and the formulation of hopes and dreams for one's offspring. As such, the data clearly show that desire in language can be projected outwardly as well as inwardly. Our qualitative findings find some support in neurocognitive research, which proposes that distinctions between a remembered past and an imagined future, as well as between the self and other, are not upheld as such by the human brain. Incidentally, our findings may also lead us to wonder to what extent language teachers too project their own aspirations and memories onto their learners, and what effect this has on the academic success of said learners. Researchers such as Borg (2006) and Kubanyiova (2015), for instance, have looked at what teachers do in the classroom in light of their past histories and mental lives, and Dörnyei & Kubanyiova (2014) have forwarded the ability to create vivid and elaborate mental images as pivotal to being a 'visionary' – and therefore motivating – teacher. Further research with both parents and teachers could address what the actual impact of outward projection is on the language learning motivation, language learning success, and identity construction of children and learners alike.

TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

The following conventions were used when transcribing the recorded data:

((words))	Double parentheses enclose transcriber's comments.
<laugh>	Angle brackets enclose descriptions of vocal noises (e.g. laughter, chuckle, inhale) or other noises on the recording that are relevant for the analysis (e.g. hands clapping).
xx	x's indicate strings of talk for which no hearing could be achieved.
?	A question mark indicates a relatively strong rising intonation (interrogative).
!	An exclamation mark indicates rising intonation (exclamatory).
..	Dots indicate silence (more dots indicate a longer silence).

Most of the transcriptions were carried out by the first author, whereby the raw transcripts were later transformed to a more reader-friendly version. Commas (and the occasional period mark) were added both to the transcripts and their translations. To guarantee readability, most spoken word forms were also rendered into standard written forms.

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